

Staying Physically Active

as the Days Grow Shorter and Colder

The winter months mean shorter days, colder temperatures and unfortunately, less physical activity. There is not much you can do about the day length or mercury level, but there are definitely strategies for you and your family to stay active no matter what time of year.



Benefits of Winter Activity

- Staying active keeps your immune system in tip-top shape, helping to keep you healthy during cold and flu season.
- Just say no to winter weight gain!
- Ward off the seasonal blues – physical activity is a wonderful stress reliever and mood lifter.
- Build and maintain relationships– daily walks or exercise routines with a friend or family member can bring great joy all year long.
- Continual, year-round physical activity can help you to avoid injuries.

Ideas for Families to Stay Physically Active in Winter Months

- Walk around your neighborhood or find a “walkable” indoor venue.
- Try a winter sport such as sledding, snowshoeing, or cross-country skiing.
- Join a health club, sign up for a Recreation Council exercise class, explore something new like martial arts, dance, or gymnastics.

Not sure where to go?

The *Healthy Carroll* publication lists physical activity programs, services and facilities in Carroll County, many of which offer options for both children and adults. This resource is available in print and online at www.HealthyCarroll.org

Smart Winter Walking

Taking the right steps for outdoor activity can make the difference between a fun time or a cold, miserable experience. Some pointers for winter walking are:

• **Smart clothes for your body** - Dressing in the three layers listed below can help you to be more comfortable. They are:

Wicking - Against your skin you want a fabric that removes moisture from your skin (synthetic fabrics).

Insulating - This second layer will help to maintain the body heat you generate with activity (fleece or wool).

Weather protection - This outside layer protects you against wind and precipitation (nylon). Don't forget a hat and gloves!

• **Smart shoes for your feet** - Sturdy boots or walking shoes with thick soles and deep treads are essential. Make sure that your footwear is the right size to fit cold weather socks. Start with a pair of thick wool or synthetic socks; add thin, inner socks when it is really cold.

• **Smart companions for fun and safety** - Walking with a family member or friend provides bonding time, and conversation makes the miles seem shorter in any season. In winter, a companion also provides an added measure of safety in the event that you slip or fall.

L.E.A.N. Carroll

A family approach to healthy weight