Between work, school, activities, social events and daily responsibilities, families today are busier than ever. It’s easy to be so focused on the daily schedule and to-do list that healthy habits are forgotten. No matter how busy your family may be, it’s important to put wellness at the top of the list. Keep your family healthy through proper nutrition, regular physical activity, adequate rest and preventive care.

NUTRITION
Eating right can be a challenge for today’s busy family. Whether you cook at home, dine out or do the drive-thru, you can ensure your family is getting proper nutrition by following a few simple tips.

- Include plenty of fruits and vegetables, lean protein, whole grains, and low-fat or nonfat dairy with meals.
- Meals should be balanced and regularly-timed. Enjoy healthy snacks in between meals to prevent hunger and overeating at the next meal. Do not skip meals.
- Foods that are steamed, grilled or roasted are better choices than those which are fried or sautéed.
- When dining out or grabbing food on the go, skip the high-fat toppings (i.e., mayonnaise, cheese, bacon, croutons). Ask for sauces, condiments and dressings on the side. Select healthier sides like extra vegetables, soup or side salad instead of French fries. Be aware of portion sizes and avoid supersizing.
- Choose water or unsweetened beverages instead of soda, juice, sweetened tea, sports drinks and energy drinks, which contain a lot of sugar.
- Freeze soups, casseroles and stews to thaw and heat. Use a slow cooker so dinner is ready when you walk in the door. Find other ways that save time and allow you to enjoy healthy meals at home on those busy days.
- Keep healthy snacks on-hand, such as cheese sticks, snack crackers and hummus, fruit, cut-up veggies, yogurt, pretzels, and nuts.
- Eat together as a family as often as possible. Make mealtime fun by including theme nights. Don’t allow electronics at the dinner table and enjoy good conversation while you reconnect as a family.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
Physical activity is just as important as proper nutrition when it comes to living a healthy lifestyle. It is recommended that you get 30 minutes of physical activity five days per week. You can break it up into 10-minute intervals if that’s easier for your schedule. All movement counts! Include more activity in your — and your family’s — day by:

- Planning family activities that get everyone moving — Frisbee, tag, hiking, biking, swimming, sled riding and skiing are great outdoor activities, while charades and interactive video games can be enjoyed indoors.
- Walking as much as possible — take a lap around the field at your child’s soccer game, get off the bus one stop early, park farther away, take the stairs instead of the elevator, do an extra loop around the mall before leaving.

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• Adding movement to your everyday tasks — dancing around while cleaning, stretching during commercial breaks, pacing while talking on the phone
• Making extra trips up and down the stairs when bringing in groceries or doing laundry
• Limiting screen time — set a limit for video games, cell phone, computer and television use, encourage kids to get outside and play
• Joining an intramural sports league, taking classes at the local fitness center or YMCA, signing up the kids for dance, soccer, baseball, gymnastics or other physical activities

To find out more about physical activity guidelines for all ages, visit cdc.gov.physicalactivity/basics/index.htm.

SLEEP
Sleep is fundamental to overall health and wellness. Skimping on sleep can lead to poor mood, difficulty concentrating, impaired performance and decreased immune function, and it puts you at greater risk for accidents and injuries. Sleep is important for everyone in the family — young children, teenagers and adults. Ensure everyone in the home is getting adequate rest. Visit cdc.gov/features/sleep to find out if you are getting enough sleep.
• Establish a bedtime routine that includes set sleep and wake times. Stick to the schedule, even on the weekends.
• If your child wakes up during the night, be consistent and do the same thing to get him/her to go back to sleep. Avoid bringing the child into bed with you.
• Bedrooms should be for sleep only. Do not eat, work, pay bills or perform other tasks in the bedroom. Keep electronics out of the bedroom.
• Pets should sleep on the floor or in another designated location, not in bed with you.
• Naps may seem like a great way to make up for lost sleep, but use caution. Naps should be limited to no more than 20 minutes and should be taken early in the day so they won’t interfere with bedtime.

PREVENTIVE CARE
Preventive care is essential for maintaining good health. Regular checkups with your doctor, along with immunizations and screenings, can keep you on the path to wellness. Early detection can save lives. Most chronic conditions and diseases can be treated and managed successfully when caught in the early stages. Immunizations protect against harmful, even deadly, viruses and bacteria. Keep your family safe and healthy by scheduling an appointment with your health care provider today. Visit your member website for a copy of the Preventive Schedule, which contains information on the recommended screenings and immunizations for everyone in the family.
• Schools and daycare facilities will require an up-to-date record of your child’s immunizations, screenings and physicals. Keep a copy on-hand at home.
• Make your child’s well visit appointment around his/her birthday so it’s easy to remember.
• Preventive care includes regular dental checkups and eye exams.