

# Dakota Wellness Program

## MAY 2025

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Join Sanford Health Plan  
Wellness team members for  
our monthly 15-minute  
wellness webinar.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER TODAY!](#)



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PUBLIC EMPLOYEES  
RETIREMENT SYSTEM

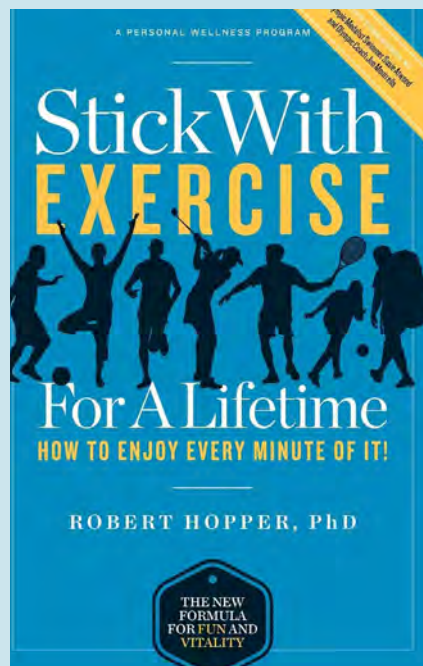
**SANFORD**  
HEALTH PLAN

# Starting and Sticking to Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is essential for health. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise per week, such as brisk walking, jogging, or swimming. Breaking sessions into 10-minute increments can make it easier to achieve. Strength training twice a week using weights, resistance bands, or bodyweight exercises helps maintain muscle and bone strength.

Balance and flexibility exercises, like yoga and tai chi, improve stability and reduce injury risks. Reducing sedentary time is crucial, so incorporate movement into daily tasks like housework or short walks.

Choosing enjoyable activities increases consistency. Start with 10 minutes daily and gradually increase. Overcoming barriers like lack of time or motivation can be done by scheduling workouts, using reminders, or involving friends. Affordable options like walking or community fitness programs make exercise accessible. By setting realistic goals, staying active becomes a lifelong habit.



## Book Club

***Stick with Exercise for a Lifetime: How to Enjoy Every Minute of It!* (Personal Wellness Program) by Robert Hopper, PhD**

“*Stick with Exercise for a Lifetime: How to Enjoy Every Minute of It!*” by Robert Hopper, PhD, is a guide that emphasizes finding joy in physical activity to maintain a lifelong exercise habit. Dr. Hopper suggests that the key to consistent exercise is choosing activities you genuinely enjoy, whether traditional workouts or alternative options like dance classes or sports. The book outlines seven best practices to ensure exercise success. By following these principles, Dr. Hopper aims to help readers transform exercise from a chore into an enjoyable and sustainable part of their lives.

### Discussion questions

1. Which of the seven best practices for sticking with exercise resonates most with you, and why?
2. How can making exercise more enjoyable improve long-term adherence to fitness routines?
3. What are some barriers that prevent people from enjoying exercise, and how can they be overcome?



## Ask the Expert: What is the history of hand-washing?

Hand-washing is a simple yet vital practice in preventing infections. Though common today, it was once controversial. In the 1840s, advocating for hand hygiene often cost a doctor his career. Early 19th-century hospitals, often called “houses of death,” lacked sanitation, with poor ventilation and limited clean water. Patients faced mortality rates three to five times higher than those cared for at home. Doctors did not wash their hands and would often proceed straight from dissecting a corpse to delivering a baby, spreading deadly infections like puerperal fever. Despite medical advancements, infection outbreaks persist. Establishing hand hygiene as a key prevention strategy was a long and difficult struggle in medical history.



## When Kindness Becomes a Habit, it Improves Our Health

Research suggests that making kindness a habit benefits both mental and physical health. Helping others—like volunteering or small acts of generosity—can boost happiness and well-being. Studies show it also improves brain health and reduces cognitive decline, especially in older adults. The Baltimore Experience Corps trial found that senior volunteers, maintained memory and executive function better than non-volunteers. Volunteering promotes physical activity, lowers mortality risk, and improves cardiovascular health. It may also reduce stress and social isolation, key risk factors for disease. Research on younger people is limited, but studies show similar benefits. Experts suggest prioritizing kindness as a public health strategy for overall well-being. At the very least, it will make the world a little bit better place for many others, and we might just make it a little bit better for ourselves.



## Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

As a member of Sanford Health Plan, you have access to a FREE diabetes prevention program designed to help you make small lifestyle changes that can lead to significant health improvements. Change Your Weigh is an evidence-based program offered in partnership with the CDC’s National Diabetes Prevention Program. This yearlong group-coaching program focuses on simple strategies to help you lose weight, increase physical activity and decrease your risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

### The group virtual program includes:

- Weekly meetings for the first four months
- Monthly meetings for the last eight months
- Support from a trained lifestyle coach and class peers

**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN** for spring and summer program start dates.



Learn more

◀ Scan the QR Code or visit

[sanfordhealthplan.com/diabetes-prevention](https://sanfordhealthplan.com/diabetes-prevention).

# Preventive Health

## May is Better Sleep Month

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate Americans are experiencing extensive sleep loss. Quality sleep impacts both good health and overall well-being. Quality sleep can protect physical and mental health and quality of life. Sleep also plays a critical role in success at work and enhances job performance and productivity.

### Here are some simple steps to improve sleep quality:

- **Stay active:** It is important to get regular physical activity daily, just not within two hours of bedtime
- **Get natural sunlight:** Exposure to natural light helps regulate the sleep-wake cycle
- **Avoid things that disrupt sleep:** Abstain from nicotine, alcohol, caffeine and heavy meals in the evening, which can hinder your ability to fall and stay asleep
- **Eat at consistent times:** Regular eating contributes to healthy sleep rhythms
- **Create a comfortable bedroom:** Sleep friendly environments include a cool room, no electronic devices, a comfortable mattress and quiet or white noise
- **Have a relaxing bedtime routine:** Consider relaxing routines before bed like a warm bath, reading a book, or soft music

### Thick and Creamy Chia Seed Pudding

Total Time: 5 minutes | Servings: 2

#### Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup full fat coconut milk\*
- 1/4 cup unsweetened plain almond milk (or oat milk or cashew milk)
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds

#### Instructions:

In a 2-cup container whisk together the milk, maple syrup and vanilla until well combined. Add the chia seeds and whisk again. Whisk briefly every 5 minutes for the first 20 minutes. Cover with an airtight lid and place in your refrigerator for at least 4 hours or overnight. Divide into two bowls and enjoy plain or for a more filling meal top with hemp seeds, fresh fruit (blueberries or mango are my favorite and my kids love banana slices and strawberries), unsweetened shredded coconut, granola, almond butter and/or raspberry chia jam. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one week.

#### Notes:

Use canned full fat coconut milk that is room temperature. Shake the can vigorously before opening and measuring for this recipe. Save extra coconut milk for a smoothie, soup or stew.

#### Nutrition

Calories: 263kcal | Carbohydrates: 14.8g | Protein: 4.1g | Fat: 22.4g  
Trans Fat: 0g | Cholesterol: 0mg | Sodium: 37.6mg | Sugar: 6.1g  
Calcium: 13% | Iron: 22% | Vitamin D 3% | Magnesium 21%  
Potassium: 6% | Zinc 11% | Phosphorus 16% | Riboflavin (B2) 13%



## Monthly Observances

**Asthma and Allergy**

**Arthritis**

**Physical Fitness and Sports**

**Blood Pressure**

**Employee Health and Fitness**

**Mental Health**

**Sleep**

**Stroke**

**Vision**

**May 11-17 Women's Health Week**

**May 16 National Bike to Work Day**

### QUICK LINKS

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### CONTACT US

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