



# INSIGHTS

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## When you live healthy - Life is Good!

"When you live healthy, life is good!" That's La Capitale's motto. The employees of RWAM Insurance Administrators and Programmed Insurance Brokers made it theirs as well for 6 weeks in May and June.

In a company-sponsored initiative the employees of PIB and RWAM were given health-risk assessments so that any health concerns could be identified, as well as having a base-line from which to measure their results. They were also given pedometers, put into teams, and challenged with the objective of improving their health through walking.

People need to be active to be healthy. Our modern lifestyle and all the conveniences we've become used to have made us sedentary- and that's dangerous for our health. Sitting around in front of the TV or the computer, riding in the car for even a short trip to the store, and using elevators instead of stairs or ramps all contribute to our inactivity. Physical inactivity is as dangerous to our health as smoking!

Scientists say accumulate 60 minutes of physical activity every day to stay healthy or improve your health. Time needed depends on effort- as you progress to moderate activities, you can cut down to 30 minutes, four days a week.

Physical activity doesn't have to be very hard to improve your health. This goal can be reached by building physical activities into your daily routine. Just add up the periods of at least 10 minutes each throughout the day. After three months of regular physical activity, you will notice a difference- people often say getting started is the hardest part, but taking a single step isn't that tough. Soon enough you will be walking a bit further, and feeling the better for it.

Did you know that 63% of Canadians are not active enough to achieve the health benefits they need from physical activity? Your body is designed to move, and it's surprising how little time it takes to stay healthy and reduce the risk of disease if you are regularly physically active.

Consider this: you're awake about 15-19 hours a day, but you only have to be active for one hour, and that 60 minutes of activity doesn't have to be done all at once.

You can add up your activities, 10 minutes at a time, to get that daily total.

Improving your health through physical activity is easier than you think. You will gain significant health benefits just by adding physical activity to your daily routine. Your benefits will increase as you add more activities to your day. The best news of all is that physical activity doesn't have to be hard to improve your health.

No matter what you are doing now, the tips below will help you become more active, enjoy better health and get the most out of life.

RWAM and PIB understand that employees are their most valuable asset. They get that there are links between employee health, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and ultimately corporate results.

When I stopped to think about that, it seemed ludicrous that my employer was more concerned about my welfare than I was. Now I choose to walk when I can. My objective when the contest began was 6,000 steps-a-day. I did a little better than that. Many of my colleagues did much, much better.

The contest was a huge success. The pedometer became a badge of honour. Employees talked amongst each other about the number of steps they had the day before, and how they accomplished them. Stories were told, comradeships were built, and habits were formed. The results - at the end of 6 weeks, enough steps were taken to take us around the world - twice!

Simply taken just one step at a time.

Until next time...

Source: Handbook for Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living



## Things our bodies need to stay healthy

### Beta Carotene

**What it does:** In the body, beta carotene is converted to vitamin A, a nutrient essential for healthy vision, immune function, and cell growth. It also acts as an antioxidant that neutralizes free radicals.



**How much you need:** There's no Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for beta carotene.

**Food Sources of Beta Carotene:** Eat plenty of dark green vegetables, orange vegetables, and fruits (papaya, mango) weekly to meet your vitamin A needs and reap beta carotene's potential antioxidant benefits.

### B12

**What it does:** Vitamin B12 is used in making DNA, the building block of genes, and in maintaining healthy nerve and red blood cells.



**How much you need:** 2.4 micrograms a day for people

14 and older provides all the body needs—although some researchers have argued that a daily intake of 6 micrograms would ensure absorption.

**Food sources of B12:** B12 is bound to protein, so foods like meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products like yogurt and milk are the principal sources.

### Chromium

**What it does:** Chromium is required by the body for the process that turns food into usable energy, helping insulin prime cells to take up glucose.



**How much you need:** Despite disappointing findings on chromium supplements and weight loss, the body still needs it. The daily recommended intake for adults is 50 to 200 mcg.

**Food sources of chromium:** Best sources of chromium are whole-grain breads and cereals, meat, nuts, prunes, raisins, beer, and wine.

### Vitamin K



**What it does:** Vitamin K is used by the body to produce an array of different proteins. Some of them are used to create factors that allow blood to coagulate—critical in stemming bleeding and allowing cuts and wounds to heal.

**How much you need:** The current recommended daily intake of vitamin K is 90 micrograms for women and 120 for men.

Luckily, vitamin K deficiency is extremely uncommon.

**Food Sources of Vitamin K:** Kale, spinach, broccoli, asparagus, arugula, green leaf lettuce, soybean oil, canola oil, olive oil, and tomatoes.

### Potassium

**What it does:** Potassium is involved in almost every vital body process: maintaining blood pressure, heart and kidney function, muscle contraction, even digestion.

**How much you need:** Surveys show that most Americans get less than half the recommended amounts of potassium, which is 4,700 milligrams (mg) daily for adults and teens.

**Food sources of potassium:**

Foods that are closest to their original states are best, so be sure to choose whole, unprocessed foods as often as possible, especially fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, whole grains, fish, and lean meats.



### Magnesium

**What it does:** Necessary for some of the body's most basic processes, magnesium triggers more than 300 biochemical reactions—most importantly the production of energy from the food we eat.



**How much you need:** Around 300 mg/day (women) and 350 mg/day (men), with the upper limit for supplemental magnesium at 350 mg.

**Food sources of magnesium:** The mineral is abundant in avocados, nuts and leafy greens including acorn squash, kiwi, and almonds.

### Vitamin C

**What it does:** Researchers have long known that vitamin C is an essential building block of collagen, the structural material for bone, skin, blood vessels, and other tissue.

**How much you need:** The current recommended daily intake for men is 90 mg and for women it is 75 mg. The body can only absorb a maximum of about 400 milligrams a day.

**Food Sources of Vitamin C:** Virtually everything in the produce section including oranges, green bell peppers, strawberries, broccoli, cantaloupe and tomatoes, turnip greens, sweet potatoes, and okra.



### Vitamin D

**What it does:** Early on, most of the concern focused on bones, since vitamin D, working along with calcium, helps build and maintain them.



**How much you need:** Official recommendations now call for 200 IU for children and 600 IU for people over 71, with other groups falling somewhere between.

**Food sources of vitamin D:** We rely on fortified milk and breakfast cereals to get most of our dietary vitamin D. Apart from a few kinds of fish, including herring and sardines, there aren't many natural food sources, which leaves supplements and direct sunlight.

### Folate/Folic Acid

**What it does:** Folate is necessary for the production of new cells, including red blood cells. Folate deficiency remains a major cause of spinal-cord defects in newborns.

**How much you need:** Many dietitians recommend taking a multivitamin with 400 mcg of folic acid; 1,000 mcg per day is the safe upper limit for folic acid.

**Food sources of folate:** Rich sources of folate include liver, dried beans and peas, spinach and leafy greens, asparagus, and fortified cereals.

### Zinc

**What it does:** Zinc is integral to almost every cell of the human body, from keeping the immune system healthy to regulating testosterone.



**How much you need:** The recommended dietary intake for men is 11 mg/day, for women 8 mg/day.

**Food Sources of zinc:** Oysters, cooked beef tenderloin, turkey, chickpeas, roast chicken leg, pumpkin seeds, cooked pork tenderloin, plain low-fat yogurt, wheat germ, tofu, dry roasted cashews, and Swiss cheese.

### Vitamin E

**What it does:** Scientists have not yet elucidated all of vitamin E's roles, but they hypothesize that it has a role in immune function, DNA repair, the formation of red blood cells, and vitamin K absorption.



**How much you need:** The RDA in men and women is 23 IU, or 15 milligrams, and because many E-rich foods come from nuts and oils, some low-fat diets may be inadequate in vitamin E.

**Food Sources of Vitamin E:** Wheat germ oil, sunflower seeds, cooked spinach, almonds, safflower oil, and hazelnuts.

Source: MSN Health & Fitness - Eatingwell.com