**STEP UP FOR YOUR HEALTH**

**Small Steps Lead to Big Results**

If you have respiratory illness, diabetes, heart disease, cancer or other health conditions, following your prescribed medications AND making lifestyle changes is critical to your recovery and lowering your risks to more illnesses. Your lack of physical activity, poor diet and smoking has increased your risks to these illnesses. You can also take actions to reduce these risks.

Being active, making smart food choices, not smoking and using medications wisely will start you on the road to recovery and good health immediately. These recommendations will help you get started.

1. Eat a proper diet to stay healthy and a maintain a healthy weight

* Have fruits and vegetables every day.
* Serve fruits or vegetables with every meal.
* Choose fruits as snacks.
* Grill meats, poultry and fish. Avoid frying foods in heavy oils.
* Processed and fast foods are loaded with fats, salt and sugar and should be limited.
* Drink water, and coffee and tea without sugar. Limit sodas, juices and energy drinks. Diet drinks, fruit juices and milk are fine in moderation.

2. Be active every day for at least 30 minutes.

* Try getting 10-15 minutes of activity a few times a day.
* Small activities add up. Walk instead of ride. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk after dinner, dance, or play a sport.
* Exercise increases energy and flexibility plus builds strength preventing injuries and protecting joints.

3. Stop smoking, if you smoke.

* Quitting is the best single thing you can do for your health.
* Within days of quitting smoking, your body begins to repair itself from the damages of tobacco use.
* Second hand smoke puts loved ones at risk for the same diseases as being smokers themselves.
* Find community programs or web-based tips for quitting smoking.

4. Use medications wisely.

* Take medications only as prescribed. Take them the same time each day so you don’t forget.
* Make a list of all the medicines you take (including prescription or over-the-counter medicines, vitamins or herbs) and take it with you to each visit.
* Tell your doctor if the medication makes you feel sick.
* Don’t stop medications because you feel ok.
* You don’t always need to get medicines when you visit a health provider.

Improving your health and reducing further risks takes you, your family and the health provider working together. Medicines alone will not cure you. Know your risks and take actions now.

Start taking steps today. Small steps toward health behavior lead to big results.