Getting Started With Exercise

LiveWELL GOALS: 70,000 steps per week minimum
Accumulate at least 150 minutes per week of intentional exercise
Exercise 4 to 5 days each week

Why? Studies with people who have been successful with losing weight AND keeping it off indicate that these goals are minimums. Not just when losing weight, but as a permanent lifestyle change to keep the weight off! Keep in mind you don’t have to reach the goals the first week! Work to gradually increase time and steps until you reach these goals – usually 4 - 8 weeks if you haven’t been exercising previously.

Get as many steps throughout your day as possible.
Open your pedometer, push the yellow reset button until you see a zero, and put it on as soon as you get up each morning. Get as many steps as possible during your day and then take it off just before you go to bed. (Hint: Put it next to your toothbrush and you will always remember it.) Your goal is to reach or exceed 10,000 steps per day. If you are having difficulty with obtaining this goal, talk to your nurse at your weekly visit. In addition, try to slowly increase your steps, for instance increase by 500 steps per day.

For weight loss, keep in mind that up to 12,000 to 14,000 steps may be necessary for long term success. Do know that it is important to take your time and progressively but steadily increase your step counts!

Find the right kind of exercise.
First of all, find an activity or exercise class that you enjoy. The activity or exercise should be something that increases your heart rate. You will usually feel your breathing increase and you may even sweat but you will still be able to carry on a conversation with someone exercising next to you. Some good examples of this type of exercise/activity are walking, aerobics classes (land and water), jump roping, riding a bike, exercise tapes, elliptical trainers, jogging, and swimming.

If you are new to exercising regularly, you might want to wait for 4 - 8 weeks before you start adding resistance exercise or light weight training. It’s best in the beginning to focus on the activities that increase heart rate and burn calories.

How often should I exercise?
Three times per week will improve fitness. This is a good place to start. But for weight loss, at least 5 times per week is recommended, so work up to 5 days a week as soon as you safely can.

How long should I exercise?
Initially, you should not overdo. However, slowly increasing your workout time to at least 30 minutes will provide benefit. If you are interested in weight loss, gradually increase the length of your exercise session to 45 – 60 minutes. You can do it in segments of 10 or 15 minutes several times a day – it doesn’t have to be all one session!