

Tammy Camp, M.D.

Why is it important for parents to incorporate physical activity in time spent with their children.

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For parents who incorporate physical activity with their kids actually are teaching their kids the importance of doing physical activity themselves. And so we want for parents to be able to be active with their child, so that their child says, I want to do that same physical activity and has a motivation to participate in physical activity. It leads to important bonding opportunities for those families. And it definitely allows a family to when a family exercises and plays together, they're going to have a whole lot more time where they feel like they can interact in other meaningful ways about other things that are very important. Because they've spent time doing those activities together. Anything that you do together as a family, is really critical to building up those relationships and making kids feel like they have that opportunity to communicate back with their parents. But most importantly, kids who see their parents exercising are more likely to exercise themselves.

What are some age appropriate physical activities?

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You can start even with little babies doing tummy time when they're awake, so that they're active and moving around moving their arms that can be so valuable and so important. As kids get a little bit older, that 18 month to three years five year range, they love to climb, they love to play, so going out and walking with them, taking them to the park, participating with them while they play on a playground. Those activities can all be extremely valuable for kids. Free play is so important. It stimulates their imagination. It allows them to be creative with what they're doing. And it burns off a lot of energy so that they sleep better at night. And so that they are able to capitalize on developing those further motor skills that we think are so important. When you get to elementary aged kids doing physical activity where they are running and playing again, free play, playing tag, playing hide and go seek doing things like that can be very fun. This is also an age where you start to throw the balls and catch balls. And you can even do that in that three to five year age range. But where you're starting to incorporate more skills that are more activities that require a little bit more skill is extremely valuable. And then when you get into that 10 to 14 year old age range, being physically activity, walking, running, jumping rope, all of those activities, those activities can just be capitalized on more and as you grow. And then when you get older maybe participating in competitive sports, we love for kids to be active and do those things. Yes, I know that competitive sports can occur when they're older as well. But really, we want to remember that until you get to an age that it really maybe is more important in school in high school. Really, we want to be competitive, just want to participate just to have fun and enjoy and remember that there's value in just being physically active.

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How can parents prevent overuse injuries?

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The best way to prevent overuse injuries is to allow your kids to participate in multiple different activities. When a kid decides to specialize in one particular activity over and over, then you will have a greater risk of injury. We really think of not specializing in sports until you are past puberty. And the reason for that is that you're growing you're developing. And by not specializing you're not doing the same repetitive motions over and over. So incorporating a variety of physical different types of physical activity into your routine can help prevent those overuse injuries. Just that being physically active with your family can make all the difference with how you feel physically how you feel emotionally, and especially right now when we have so many mental health crises across the country and with kids. Being physically active can really make a difference with how they do emotionally.