

# Teen Talk



Winter 2015 | CYWH/YMH

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE BOSTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL LEAGUE'S RESOURCE CENTER

## Finding Time for Fitness

— By Monica

Exercise is good for you - that's a no brainer, right? But how can you fit it into your day when you're already maxed out with school, activities and homework? Here's how:

### 5 Ways for Teens to fit in 60 Minutes of Exercise per day:

#### 1. Break up 60 minutes throughout the day

If you cannot manage to do a 60 minute workout, break it up into workouts of 15+ minutes.

#### 2. Incorporate physical activity into daily routines

Instead of taking the elevator, take the stairs. Try taking short walks during your study breaks.

#### 3. Sign up for a club or sport

Find a sport or club that involves physical activity a few times a week. There are a variety of activities you can join that can suit your schedule and that you will likely enjoy doing; swimming lessons, dance classes, karate etc.

#### 4. Set a time limit for use of electronics

Most teenagers spend a good amount of time in front of a TV or using their cellphones/computers. By minimizing the time you spend in front of a screen, you will have spare time to exercise.

#### 5. Find alternative ways to get where you're going

When warm weather comes around, instead of taking the bus or train to most places, try to walk and/or ride a bike to your destination.

### Five benefits of exercise:

#### 1. Exercise helps to combat health conditions and diseases

Being physically active decreases your risk of stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression and certain types of cancers.

#### 2. Improves your mood

Physical activity stimulates brain chemicals that can help you feel happier and/or more relaxed. Exercising on a daily basis can also help you feel better about your appearance which can improve your confidence and self-esteem.

#### 3. Boosts your energy

Regular physical activity can improve your muscle strength and increase your endurance. Exercise helps to carry oxygen and nutrients to your tissues. As a result your heart and lungs work more efficiently, which gives you more energy throughout the day.

#### 4. Helps to maintain a healthy weight

Exercise helps prevent excess weight gain or helps to maintain weight loss. When you exercise, you burn calories. The amount of calories burned depends on the intensity of the activity.

#### 5. Strengthen your bones and muscles

Exercising on a daily basis helps to maintain bone density as you get older, and it can also lessen joint pain.

## MRKH Conference

10th annual MRKH  
STRONG

This annual conference is an opportunity for young women ages 14-25 who have been diagnosed with Mayer Rokitansky Kuster Hauser Syndrome (MRKH) and their families, to come together for education and support. The conference will be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 28th-29th, 2015 at Boston Children's Hospital.

Registration information can be found at <http://youngwomenshealth.org/mrkh-conference/>



**Boston Children's Hospital**  
Center for Young Women's Health

IN THIS ISSUE:  
FINDING TIME FOR FITNESS  
2015 MRKH CONFERENCE  
BEING AN ALLY  
UNDERSTANDING GENDER

# Being an Ally

— By Astrid

Bullying anyone is hurtful, especially if it makes the victim feel like no one cares. Some teens are particularly vulnerable to bullying. Did you know that LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) youth are twice as likely to be bullied or physically attacked as other groups of teens? Yet they are less likely to report this behavior to school authorities. As a result, bullies often continue to harass their victims without fear of punishment unless bystanders, who observe it, are willing to step forward and put a stop to it. That doesn't mean fighting back, rather it means reporting the incident to an adult and reassuring the individual that you care and will help put an end to the bullying.

Sticking up for someone who is getting harassed can help to preserve their self-esteem. Knowing people care and are willing to help, makes a huge difference. Put yourself in the victim's shoes for a moment. Wouldn't you want to know that others are willing to help keep you safe? If you have a friend or if you know someone who is LGBT and is a victim of bullying, be responsible and tell an adult right away.



Other things you can do to stop bullying:

- Encourage the victim to tell a teacher, parent, close friend and/or their guidance counselor.
- Work with your student council to adopt a school-wide program on anti-bullying.
- Arrange to have a group of students role-play or present bullying prevention activities with emphasis on the important role of the bystander.

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# Understanding Gender

— By Tess



“Congratulations on your pregnancy! What are you having?” is a common question pregnant women are asked, yet one whose answer may not ultimately be correct. Ultrasounds can show the physical markers of a certain sex, yet some children grow up identifying differently from the sex they are labeled as at birth. It is important right from the start that gender non-conforming individuals receive proper care, information, and support from their family, peers and health care team. The GeMS (gender management service) program, at Boston Children's Hospital, works to provide their patients with all of these services. I recently sat down with Francie Mandel, a social worker and the Director of Mental Health Services in the GeMS program, to gain an understanding of their work.

It might be helpful to start with a few definitions. Sex refers to the biological label (male/female) assigned to a child at birth. Gender identity refers to one's sense of self as male, female or other gender, and some people see their gender identity as fluid. Sexual orientation refers to the gender(s) of the people one is attracted to. It is important to recognize that sexual orientation and gender identity are different, as they are commonly confused.

GeMS specializes in providing care to gender non-conforming youth and teens, and develops a plan with the patient and their family to fulfill medical, emotional, informational, and general support needs. Ms. Mandel explained that they employ a model of treatment that combines mental health and medical treatment to best accommodate their patients. GeMS also provides an overwhelming amount of resources to patients, and helps connect them with therapists, support groups, and even colleges that are gender nonconforming and LGBTQ youth friendly.

For more information on sexual orientation and gender identity:  
[bit.ly/sexual-orientation-gender-id](http://bit.ly/sexual-orientation-gender-id)

For more information on GeMS:  
[bit.ly/gender-management-service](http://bit.ly/gender-management-service)

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Special thanks to the Boston Children's Hospital League for their generous support of the Center for Young Women's Health and the Youth Advisory Program.

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[www.teenspeak.org](http://www.teenspeak.org)