

*Editorial*

**RX FOR HEALTH**

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Editorial Board Member

There is an obesity epidemic in this nation. As a rural nurse, what are you doing personally and professionally to reverse this trend? It's time for nurses to step forward and make a difference in our own health and in the health of others. Here's a beginning prescription for health that can be applied personally and professionally.

There are three factors that people need to incorporate into their fitness routine: 1). intensity (how hard you exercise); 2). frequency (how often you exercise); 3. duration (how long you exercise). Achieving a balance between these three factors will give the best results (Healthwise, 2001).

Bryon Holmes, MS, an exercise physiologist, offered a prescription for health much as a health care provider would prescribe a medication. When you are given a prescription you are told what medication to take, what the dose is (intensity), how often to take it (frequency) and how long to take it (duration).

A prescription for otitis media (infection of the inner ear) for an adult might include:

- Medication: Amoxicillin
- Dose: 500 mg
- Frequency: Twice a day
- Duration: Ten days

For cardiovascular health, the prescription recommended by Bryon was: Medication: Exercise. Anything that gets your heart rate up, e.g., walk, hike, bike, snowshoe, cross country ski, etc. Dose: Intensity. "Talk Test" or 60-70% of your maximum heart rate. What's the talk test? " If you can't talk and exercise at the same time, you are going too fast; if you can talk while you exercise, you are doing fine (not that you'll want to carry on a full conversation). What's maximum heart rate? Maximum heart rate = 200 minus your age. Frequency: Three to four times a week. Duration: Thirty minutes.

For muscular-skeletal health the prescription recommended by Bryon was: Medication: Exercise. Anything at home or in a gym that works your bones and muscles to push, pull and squat. Dose: Intensity: On a scale of 1=10 with 10 being the highest you want to reach an intensity of 6 on the last repetition. Frequency: Two times a week. Duration: Twelve to 20 repetitions with enough resistance to reach the desired intensity.

Benefits of such a prescription for health include:

- Lowers your risk of premature death and death caused by heart disease.
- Reduces your risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and osteoporosis.

- Helps lower high cholesterol and blood pressure levels.
- Improves your mood, relieves stress, and promotes a sense of well-being.
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints.
- Helps you maintain a healthy body weight (Healthwise, 2001, p.22-23).

Want to make some improvements in your physical fitness? Take one step at a time. Pick an activity you enjoy. Set a one-week goal that you can reach. Start today. When you reach your goal, reward yourself. Then set a new goal. For only an hour to an hour and a half a week, you can have a healthier body. So get up and get active! Remember to consult your healthcare provider before beginning any new fitness routine. Take good care of yourself.

Need help setting and maintaining your goals? Contact Kay Rosenthal, Ph.D., R.N., Director, Options for Healthy Living, Inc., for online coaching today, and start on your journey to healthy living with your personal passport for health. Join HealthOptions4U Listserv to receive health information that can be used in your community. Share your knowledge and speak up to make a difference in your communities' health.

## REFERENCES

Bryon Holmes, MS, Exercise Physiologist.

Magee, K. (Ed.). (2001). *Healthwise handbook*. Boise, ID: Healthwise Incorporated.