Sedentary lifestyle is hazardous to your health

The chair may look like a harmless piece of home or office furniture, but health experts say spending too much time sitting can be hazardous to your health.

If you sit for more than six hours a day and have a waist of more than 37 inches, you are 94 percent more likely to die if you’re a woman and 48 percent more likely to die if you’re a man.

Who knew that sitting could be so deadly? It’s not just the time you spend sitting at work. Add in the time spent sitting while commuting to and from work, plus any screen time once you get home. You can easily spend more time sitting than sleeping.

A sedentary lifestyle affects not only your physical well-being, but your mental well-being and your productivity at work, says North Dakota Worksite Wellness Administrator Pete Seljevold of Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota.

• If feasible, get a standing work station or adjust your work station.
• Stand during phone calls or when reading.
• Have standing meetings or walking meetings.
• Set a timer on your desk or cell phone. Every hour, get up and move for three to five minutes. You can get some water to drink or use the restroom. You could take your 15-minute “coffee” break to go for a walk.

April is Physical Activity Month. Make it your goal to become more active each day.

Find a healthy balance with eating and exercise

A healthy lifestyle is all about balance.

To maintain a healthy weight, you will need to balance the calories you eat with exercise. If you want to change your weight, you will need to tip the balance scale in one direction or another. To maintain your weight, keep your scales even.

If you want to lose weight, keep in mind:

• It takes approximately 3,500 calories below your calorie needs to lose a pound of body fat.
• To lose about 1 to 2 pounds per week, reduce your caloric intake by 500 to 1,000 calories per day, but make sure you never drop below 1,200 calories per day.
• You may need to increase your exercise.
To make sure you are getting enough exercise, aim for at least three days of cardio activity, two days of resistance/weight training (with one day rest in-between) each week. You can increase the length and intensity of your workouts to lose weight, and change up your exercise to keep your muscles lean and to prevent plateaus.

If you don’t enjoy exercising by yourself:

- Try group fitness.
- Consider working with a personal trainer.
- Sign up for an event and train for it with a buddy.

To find out how many calories you burn in your workouts, you can check out the calculator at SuperTracker.usda.gov. BCBSND members who have access to HealthyBlue can use the calculator at www.ndpershealthyblue.com.

Remember, healthy weight, disease prevention, stress management and better sleep hinge on balancing eating and exercise.

Healthy recipes

This nutritious recipe from the American Diabetes Association features potatoes and cauliflower.

Easy Half-Mashed Potatoes

The prep time is 15 minutes and the recipes serves 11.

Ingredients
24 ounce (1 lb 8 oz) bag fingerling petite potatoes, cut into 1-inch rounds with skin-on
16-ounce bag frozen cauliflower florets
1/3 cup skim milk
5 tablespoons Smart Balance margarine
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

Instructions
Add potatoes to a large soup pot. Cover with cold water and bring to a boil.
Cook for 15 minutes. Add cauliflower to pot, return to a boil, and cook for 5 more minutes. Drain potatoes and cauliflower and return to pot. Add remaining ingredients and mash mixture with a potato masher. Mix with an electric mixer on low-speed for about 1 minute

Nutrition facts

Serving Size: 1/2 cup

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Mark your calendar for National Walk@Lunch Day

Research shows that sitting too much is bad for your health, so plan to take part in the National Walk@Lunch Day on April 29! This event is part of a nationwide initiative to encourage Americans to take time to walk during their lunch breaks to help improve their health.

This Blue Cross Blue Shield program encourages employees to improve personal health and reduce unnecessary medical costs due to physical inactivity.

Walking is easy to do, yet it is so beneficial to your health. Getting 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, such as a brisk walk, at least five times a week has significant health benefits, lowering the risk of developing or dying from cardiovascular disease, hypertension or Type 2 diabetes and improving the health of muscles, bones and joints.

NDPERS, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota, Healthy North Dakota, and businesses large and small across the nation will encourage employees to wear comfortable shoes and take a walk at lunch.

Join us at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 29, in Memorial Hall of the Capitol in Bismarck and begin walking to build a healthier North Dakota — and a healthier you!

Redeem your HealthyBlue points by June 30

BCBSND has been honored to serve NDPERS for almost four decades, and we remain committed to excellent customer service as we support the transition of NDPERS members to a new carrier.

Please redeem your HealthyBlue points by June 30.