

April is STD Awareness Month; STD is short for sexually transmitted diseases. Naturally, this is a topic that many people may not want to discuss with their doctor, let alone a friend or their own children, but STDs do not discriminate. There are over 15 million new cases of STDs in the United States every year infecting people of various ages, race, cultural background, and socioeconomic status. Check out this website, [www.ashstd.org/](http://www.ashstd.org/), for more information about STDs and help with talking to your children about STDs. We need to make every effort to stop STDs and the harmful consequences they have on individuals, families, and communities.

### Exercise Safety and Equipment

For the last couple of months we have been discussing getting started exercising and the difference between aerobic and anaerobic activity. This month we will look at some safety issues to consider no matter the activity you have chosen to improve your fitness and activity level. If you have chosen to exercise utilizing sports, most sports rely on some type of equipment. Here are a few things to consider if sports is your choice: 1) Wear appropriate shoes for the sport and replace before they wear out, 2) maintain your sporting equipment and do regular safety checks, 3) make sure the equipment is the appropriate size for your body, 4) use the correct grip and technique for the activity, an example would be tennis, and lastly, if you are riding a bicycle make sure the tires are properly inflated and the height of the seat allows your legs to almost fully extend while peddling.

For most activities some helpful reminders are 1) stretch before and after without bouncing up and down as you stretch, reducing the risk of tearing the muscle, use steady constant motions, 2) exercise with a friend, 3) let others know where you will walking or exercising and what time you plan to return if you will be by yourself, 4) if you exercise at night, wear light reflective clothing so that you are visible to others, 5) if you do not feel safe where you are exercising pick another time and/or place, 6) once again shoes are important even if you are just walking, make sure you have proper fitting shoes and shoes that are conducive to walking and change before they are worn out, 7) if you walk on a treadmill make sure you use the safety key that turns the machine off in case you slip or fall, and in closing one piece of equipment that may help pass the time or make exercise more enjoyable is an MP3 player, these devices come so small now that you hardly notice them and the allow you to enjoy your favorite music and even an audio book, of course this is considering you are technologically advanced. If you are not, I am sure your children or grandchildren are and they would love to help bring you into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a MP3 player.

### Next Month

Once again I have heard from quite a few of readers enjoying the articles, so to show my appreciation for the readers, I will take requests for next month's article. So if there is a topic you would like for me to write about or cover more in depth related to health, fitness and/or nutrition, call/email me your idea at 243-5510 or [dentonj2@k12tn.net](mailto:dentonj2@k12tn.net) . Until then, keep up the efforts for a healthier you.