Huntington’s Disease and Exercise

What is Exercise?

- Activity requiring physical effort, carried out to sustain or improve health and fitness
- Activity that is done outside of one’s normal routine
- Movement of the body is a major component of any type of activity
History of Exercise

• Evidence exists that exercise was present as early as 3500 B.C.
• 776 B.C.-first ancient Olympics
• In 65 B.C.-Marcus Cicero stated ‘It is exercise alone that supports the spirits and keeps the mind in vigor’.
• 1900-first Olympics in Paris
• 1949-first study that linked the lack of physical health and lack of exercise

Benefits of Exercise

• Improved strength
• Improved endurance or stamina
• Improved flexibility
• Improved muscle tone
• Improved mood
• Improved sleep patterns
• Improved mood
• Cardiovascular benefits-decrease blood pressure
• Bone and joint benefits
• Weight loss
• Blood sugar levels
Types of Exercise

- Stretching or Flexibility—moves muscles through full range of motion; loosens tendons and ligaments
- Strengthening—builds up muscle mass; increases muscle tone
- Aerobic Activity—increases lung muscle strength; improves cardiovascular system; tones up muscles throughout the body

Benefits of Exercise in HD

- General Benefits

- Symptom Management

- Falls Management
Symptom Management

- Improves gait mechanics (how you walk)
- Improves gait speed (how fast you walk)
- Improves balance
- Improves flexibility
- Improves grip strength
- Improves motor coordination
- Reduces joint stiffness

Falls Management

- Practicing movement improves mobility and reduces risk of falls
- Balance reactions become more automatic
- Makes you more aware of surroundings and safe movement patterns
- Improved initiation of transitions which makes you safer
- Ability to react to changes in environment is improved resulting in increased safety
Specific Exercise Benefits

- All exercise has some benefits
- Stretching exercises-decrease risk of injury due to muscles already “warmed up”
- Strengthening exercises-increases muscle strength which improves bone strength and helps protects joints
- Aerobic exercise- increases body’s ability to use oxygen efficiently

Levels of Exercise

- Light exercise-not sweating, not breathing hard, can talk and sing, heart rate not increased
- Moderate exercise-breaking a sweat, can talk but can’t sing, heart rate increased
- Vigorous(intense)exercise-sweating(need to change shirt), breathing hard, can’t talk or sing, heart rate increased
Intensity Level

- High-intensity (30 minutes at 70-80% of resting heart rate)
- Lower-intensity (50 minutes at 40-50% of resting heart rate)
- All levels of exercise for any length of time longer than 10 minutes provide some benefits

Aerobic Exercise

- Treadmill training
- Biking-free or stationary
- Swimming
- Running or jogging
- Water aerobics
- Dancing
- Pilates/yoga/tai-chi
- Walking
Exercise Program

- Performed on consistent basis
- Frequency 3-4 times per week
- Should incorporate all three types of exercise-stretching, strengthening, aerobic
- Do not have to do same thing each time
- Warm-up, exercise, cool down each time
- Intensity level can vary depending on daily activity

Exercise Program-II

- Start slowly-build up gradually(goal could be 300 minutes per week-5 hours)
- Make sure your doctor is okay with you beginning an exercise program
- Make sure your footwear is in good shape
- Remember to stretch first
- If sore the next day after exercising-if resolves within 24-36 hours-then keep going at same level; if lasts longer than 36 hours-have done too much and need to back off
Tips for Success

• Get a workout buddy
• Schedule it on the calendar
• Do your exercise to music
• Do activities you like to do ie: gardening, walking, water activities
• Reward yourself for sticking to program

Have Fun

Questions???