

## **The Benefits of Physical Activity on Immunity**

Physical activity with moderate intensity and frequency can improve our immune system. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) suggests adults should get at least 150 – 300 minutes of moderate-intense aerobic activity each week. This recommendation also mentions at least 2 days per week of muscle-strengthening activities.

The major benefits of exercise on our immune system is:

- 1) Exercise makes us more resistant to infection and equips our cells to better handle infectious agents. It raises our body temperature which can prevent bacteria from growing and helps the body to address infection.
- 2) Exercise can contribute to better overall sleep quantity and quality.
- 3) Exercise can decrease the risks of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and other diseases by reducing cardiovascular risk factors, prevent or delay the development of type 2 diabetes & increase HDL (good) cholesterol. This is of particular importance because having one or more of these conditions may make it more difficult for our immune system to ward off infections and viral illnesses such as COVID-19.
- 4) Exercise can decrease stress and reduce feeling of anxiety and depression.
- 5) Exercise reduces inflammation, which is a normal immune system response our body uses to address toxins.

Health Tip: A brisk walk daily can result in better sleep, improved mood, lower stress, and increased circulation of immune cells in the body, resulting in less infections and fewer health conditions.