Benefits of Exercise

Exercise is planned, structured, and repetitive bodily movement that improves or maintains one or more components of physical fitness. (American College of Sports Medicine, 2006) Benefits that may occur with regular exercise, stated by the American Heart Association and American Cancer Society are listed below. All individuals respond differently to exercise even when participating in the same program.

Exercise improves
- Flexibility
- Cardiovascular function
- Respiratory function
- Functioning of your immune system
- Strength of muscles and tendons
- Skin tone, making your skin look more elastic
- Sleep patterns
- Self-esteem and a greater sense of self-reliance and self-confidence
- Ability to relax
- Personal satisfaction and self-image
- Perceptions of acceptance by others
- Productivity
- Quality of life for people with arthritis
- Overall quality of life

Exercise reduces
- Risk for heart disease
- Thrombosis
- Mortality rate
- Risk for obesity
- Risk of colon cancer
- Risk of developing diabetes
- Body weight or body fat
- Risk of cancer through maintenance of a healthy body weight
- Risk for osteoporosis in females and males
- Depression and anxiety
- Frustration with daily problems; allows for a more constructive response to disappointments and failures

Exercise also
- Prevents/helps control high blood pressure
- Prevents/helps control high cholesterol
- Builds and maintains healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- Promotes a younger and healthier body
- Helps you manage stress more effectively
- Provides an easy way to share activities with family and friends and an opportunity to meet new friends

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu