



## — 2021 Awareness Walk — Walking Guidelines

Physical activity is important for heart health, and walking is an easy form of exercise for people of all ages. Here are some basic walking guidelines to ensure that you have a safe and comfortable walk.

- If you have cardiomyopathy or congestive heart failure, check with your cardiologist on any precautions you should take.
- Stay home to walk if you are sick or experiencing any COVID-19 like symptoms such as fever, coughing, or trouble breathing.
- Choose your walking route carefully to avoid high traffic areas.
- If necessary, stay local and plan a shorter walk to avoid having to use public restrooms and taking refueling stops.
- Schedule your walk in the morning to avoid crowds and the sun during peak hours.
- Warm-up before walking to limber up your muscles.
- Bring a water bottle and stay hydrated during your walk.
- Watch for signs of heat stroke or heat exhaustion:
  - High body temperature
  - Alteration in sweating (hot and dry or cold and moist skin to touch)
  - Altered mental state (confusion, delirium, irritability)
  - Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
  - Flushed skin
  - Rapid breathing
  - Racing heart rate
  - Throbbing headache
  - Dizziness or fainting
  - Fatigue
  - Weak, rapid pulse
  - Muscle cramps

- Choose lightweight clothing to stay cool and wear sunscreen to protect yourself from the sun's burning rays.
- If walking outdoors, protect against bugs or ticks.
- Rest when necessary; your body will tell you when you need to stop.
- Do cool down exercises after your walk to allow your heart rate to return to normal.