

**WIC partnership with Park Rx encourages physical activity with Portage Parks**

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As part of our ongoing effort to promote healthy lifestyles among our women, infants and children, Portage County WIC is pleased to partner with Portage Park District's Park Rx Program. The Park Rx Program offers individuals, groups and families the opportunity to become more active, meet new friends, explore new parks and become healthier along the way!

WIC supports new mothers as they adjust to their new role. One component of the Portage County Community Health Improvement Plan, Healthy Eating Active Living priority is to encourage healthy weight reduction among postpartum WIC mothers. Our registered, licensed dietitians and peer helper offer targeted nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and healthy recipes. Staff always encourages mothers to resume physical activity once released by their physician.

As we know, physical activity is a huge component of healthy lifestyles. However, joining a gym or fitness club is a luxury that those with limited incomes cannot afford. We are so fortunate to have access to numerous hiking trails throughout Portage County, free of charge! This is a perfect solution for new mothers, who can arrange to meet friends for a quick walk along the trail with baby in the stroller or wearable carrier.

WIC strives to establish healthy habits among children, as well. This past summer, WIC hosted an event for breastfeeding mothers. Mothers and babies were able to participate in outdoor yoga. It was evident that the infants and the mothers enjoyed this opportunity to connect with each other and with nature. Older children participated in a mini scavenger hunt offered by Portage Park District, and their excitement upon completion was contagious! The Park Rx scavenger hunt (available on Portage Park District website) is a great way to keep kids engaged and learning while hiking.

Portage County WIC truly strives to support the family. Family meals give families an opportunity to slow down and connect in this busy, overscheduled world. Likewise, family hikes can strengthen family bonds, while encouraging healthy habits. Why not pack a healthy picnic to enjoy together at the park next spring?

To learn more about WIC, please contact our office at (330) 297-9422.