## Enjoy what Santa Clara has to offer to improve your health and wellness

Safe sidewalks for walking... bicycle paths... 32 parks and playgrounds ... full-service grocery stores and farmers markets ... exercise and fitness facilities ... sports and recreation programs ... healthy lifestyle information and ideas ... and 300+ days of sunshine! The City of Santa Clara has much to offer to individuals and families who want to improve their health and wellness. Spring is a time of new starts and renewals, so there is no better time to make changes that will benefit you for years to come.

## Physical activity is key to health

Daily life in 2010 in Silicon Valley is hectic and stressful, but most of us do not have jobs or household responsibilities that keep us as physically active as we need to be to maintain optimum health. Regular physical activity prevents disease by lowering the risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and other conditions that can shorten your lifespan and negatively impact your quality of life.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends adults achieve two hours and 30 minutes a week of physical activity of moderate intensity. But in Santa Clara County, only 16% of adults exercise more than two hours a week and 55% are overweight or obese.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity a day for children and adolescents that include aerobic, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activities. But 45% of students in Santa Clara County can't meet fitness standards.



The City of Santa Clara Recreation Department offers a wide variety of courses that combine exercise and fun, and the opportunity to make new friends. To see the classes scheduled for this spring, pick up a copy of the *Recreation Activities Guide* published in April (also in August and December) at all City facilities, view it online, or call 615-3140.



Children of all ages and skill levels are invited to participate in youth sports in Santa Clara. The Santa Clara Police Athletic League (PAL), for example, uses dedicated community volunteers to teach and coach programs from ages 5–18 including soccer, boxing, bowling, girl's softball, judo and wrestling.



The City of Santa Clara has tot lots, playgrounds and other recreational facilities at 32 parks and playgrounds. Parcourses (paths with exercise stations that build muscle strength and cardiovascular fitness) are available in three Santa Clara parks: Central Park on Kiely Blvd., Fremont Park on Fremont St., and Henry Schmidt Park on Los Padres Blvd.



Older adults (50 + ) can take advantage of exercise equipment at the Santa Clara Senior Center which also contains three indoor pools. Physical activity for older adults is extremely important to reduce their risk of chronic illness, disability and dependence. Regular exercise at advanced ages can help prevent falls and extend the life expectancy for frail older adults.

As little as 10 minutes of exposure to sunlight a day can help to prevent Vitamin D deficiencies.

Mayo Clinic



Bicycling at a light speed (10-12 miles per hour) can burn 400-600 calories per hour depending on your weight. The City of Santa Clara contains 20 miles of bike lanes, 7 miles of bike routes and 7 miles of recreational paths to encourage bicycling activity. Extremely popular is the paved San Tomas Aquino/Saratoga Creek Trail that connects to the San Francisco Bay Trail near Highway 237 and extends four miles through the City.

"Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional health."

Academy of Pediatrics



Farmers Markets bring Santa Clara residents freshly harvested seasonal fruits and vegetables as well as gourmet food items. Farmers will talk about the benefits of organic produce and often share recipes and advice on how to store and prepare their products.

"I'm so convinced of the health benefits of basing your diet around seasonal farm-fresh produce that I've even written prescriptions for patients for arugula salad with lemon vinaigrette."

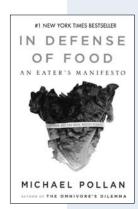
Dr. Preston Maring, founder of the Kaiser Permanente farmers market program and contributor to *Eating Well in Season* 

## Eat healthy, fresh food for good nutrition

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines a "healthy diet" as one that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and free-fat or low-fat milk and milk products. It also includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts and is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

Residents of Santa Clara have easy and convenient access to fresh fruits and vegetables at more than 30 markets in the City as well as at year-round Farmers Markets on Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Jackson Street between Benton and Homestead, and on Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, 710 Lawrence Expressway, rain or shine.

The Santa Clara Public Library has hundreds of cookbooks and DVDs to help residents explore new ways to prepare quick and healthy meals at home. All can be checked out for free. The Kaiser Health & Wellness collection at the Central Park Library contains information on health and medical topics, and there are classes on how to use the Internet to research additional data.



In Defense of Food by Michael Pollan is the featured book for Silicon Valley Reads 2010. Santa Clara Central Park Library will present a program on Wednesday, March 10, as part of Silicon Valley Reads with Laura Stec and Eugene Cordero, Ph.D. talking about their book Cool Cuisine: Taking the Bite Out of Global Warming. It starts at 7 p.m.