

Spring/Summer 2015

Welcome to the second issue of MRSCICS Matters, the newsletter of the Midwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury Care System (MRSCICS). This newsletter is designed to keep you in-the-know about SCI-related information and updates on SCI Model Systems activities. In this issue you'll read about RIC's sports and fitness program, nutrition and weight management following spinal cord injury, our newest interviewer, and an opportunity to get involved in an ongoing research study. Enjoy!

The Adaptive Sports and Fitness Program at RIC

The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (RIC) is home to one of the longest running adaptive sports programs in the country, the Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Sports Program (also known as the RIC Adaptive Sports Program). Created in 1981, the program has grown to offer recreational and competitive adaptive sports opportunities for adults and youths, as well as a universally designed, community-based fitness center located in the heart of downtown Chicago, three blocks south of RIC.

The RIC Adaptive Sports and Fitness Program is a vital community resource and an active link in RIC's mission to advance *Ability*. The program promotes staying active and healthy, in part by living through fitness and sport. It's a great place to learn that disability is not a barrier to reaching optimal health.

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Weight Management and Nutrition in People with Spinal Cord Injury: FAQs

Why is nutrition important after a spinal cord injury?

- Nutrition can impact health.
- Persons with SCI are at higher risk for diabetes, high cholesterol, & obesity.
- Weight can decrease mobility and independence.
- Weight can increase expenses.
- Weight increases risk for pressure sores & bone loss.

What are the benefits of weight management?

- Lowered risk for early death, some cancers, heart disease, diabetes, pressure sores, urinary tract infection.
- Decreased feelings of stress, anxiety, and loneliness.
- Better muscle strength, endurance, self image, and sleep quality.
- Better management of muscle spasms, chronic pain and bowel program.

What happens after spinal cord injury?

- Metabolism slows down due to inactivity and a decrease in muscle mass. Your body needs fewer calories each day because it uses less energy. This plays a part in weight gain.

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Due for a Follow-up SCI Database Interview?

Read about how to contact us if you're due for an interview.

SCI Weight and Nutrition

Find answers to many of your questions about SCI weight management.

More Research Opportunities

Find out about other research opportunities that you may qualify for. (page 4)

Are you due for a National SCI Database follow-up interview?

If you're coming up on your 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, or 40 year anniversary of injury, you may be due for your next follow-up interview. If you don't want to wait for us to contact you, please call or email **Kelsey Stipp** (312-238-1405, kstipp@ric.org) to set up a time and date to complete your interview. We conduct interviews by phone call, in-person, or mail packet.

Weight Management and Nutrition in People with Spinal Cord Injury: FAQs

How much should I weigh?

- Because of decreased muscle mass, body weight guidelines for the general population must be adjusted for persons with SCI. Talk to your doctor to figure out your ideal weight.

How do I manage my weight?

- Calorie control!
 - To lose weight, you must reduce your daily calorie intake.
 - Men with SCI = less than 1,800 calories/day
 - Women with SCI = less than 1,500 calories/day
- * These are general guides. Please work with your healthcare providers to find out your ideal daily calorie intake.

What are the guidelines for healthy eating?

- Balance calories
- Eat healthy foods
- Limit foods and drinks with high sugar and high fat.

How do you balance calories?

- Enjoy your food, but eat less. Eat slowly, and pay attention to your hunger and fullness.
- Eat small portions - avoid large portions. Use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass. Portion out foods before you eat.
- Eat smarter when eating out: Check nutritional info online before going. Choose a smaller size option. Share a dish. Take home part of your meal.

What are some ways to eat healthy foods?

- Eat at least 5 fruit and vegetable choices per day. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Eat red, orange, and dark-green vegetables.
- Make at least half your grains whole grains. On the ingredients list, “wheat” is not the same as “whole grain”!
- Whole grains, fruits and vegetables are a great sources of fiber. For more fiber, choose the actual fruit or vegetable instead of dried fruit or juice.
- Switch to fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.
- Dark green vegetables and low fat dairy are great sources of calcium. Calcium may help prevent bone loss (osteoporosis).

What about protein?

- Persons with SCI need the same amount of protein as the general population.
- Eating enough protein may help prevent pressure sores and maintain lean body mass. Increased protein intake may help wound and pressure sore healing.
- Choose a variety of lean/low fat protein foods: Lean meats, poultry, eggs, fish, tofu, and beans. Beans are high fiber and a great substitute for meat.

How do I limit foods and drinks with high sugar and high fat?

- Get less sodium from foods. Daily sodium intake should be 1500-2300mg.
- Use spices or herbs to season food.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks. There are 10 packets of sugar in one 12-ounce soda can!
- Eat fewer saturated (animal) fats. For cooking, use olive oil, canola oil, or cooking spray instead of butter.
- This is a lot of change.

What are some starting points for good nutrition?

- Changing your eating habits can be difficult, but it can be done! Make changes gradually.
- Plan meals and grocery shopping. Don't shop hungry! Write and stick to a shopping list.
- Do Not Skip Meals! This leads to overeating.
- Eat routinely, 2-3 meals spread across the day.
- Eat a low fat, high fiber diet and drink plenty of water and fluids. This may help prevent constipation.
- Learn how to read a food label. Pay attention to the number of servings in a package, serving size, and calories per serving.

How do I manage my weight?

- Move more!
- Physical activity in SCI can help you lose weight, increase strength, lower cholesterol, and reduce your chance of heart disease.
- Be active in any way you can: workouts, sports (including adaptive sports), electrical stimulation exercises, wheeling around the mall or your neighborhood, etc.

Learn more:

- The National Center on Health, Physical Activity, & Disability (NCHPAD): <http://www.ncpad.org>
- Northwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury System http://sci.washington.edu/info/forums/reports/nutrition_2011.asp
- Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Spinal Cord Injury www.sci-health.org
- University of Alabama, Birmingham – SCI Model System www.uab.edu/medicine/sci/daily-living/nutrition
- Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center www.msktc.org/sci

This information was adapted from the presentation Weight Management and Nutrition in People with Spinal Cord Injury by Trevor Dyson-Hudson, MD. Director of Spinal Cord Injury Research and Outcomes & Assessment Research at Kessler Foundation (West Orange, NJ). This presentation was developed with support from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), U.S. Department of Education, grant no. H133A120004.

Sports and Fitness (continued from p. 1)

The RIC Adaptive Sports Program offers eleven different sports programs:

- **Archery*** – The program provides instruction and opportunities to try out skills in competition.
- **Boccia*** – A sport of concentration and strategy, it is ideal for people who have disabilities affecting all four limbs.
- **Cycling/Road Racing*** – This year-round program trains indoors at the Fitness Center in winter and takes to the trails in summer.
- **Wheelchair Basketball*** – Fast, competitive, fun—this sport meets fall/winter and is a great way to stay active in the cold.
- **Golf** – Disability needn't keep you off the green. For players of all levels, the program meets weekly throughout the summer.
- **Sled Hockey*** – The RIC Blackhawks offer an entry level team for newer athletes as well as their Midwest Sled Hockey League competitive team.
- **Wheelchair Softball** – Current "World Series" champs, the RIC Cubs (the first adaptive softball program sponsored by a major league team), meets and competes throughout summer.
- **Wheelchair Rugby*** – Intense and highly competitive, this contact sport is for people who have a disability affecting all four limbs.
- **Military Sports Programs** – An annual three day intensive sports camp for military service personnel who have a physical disability.
- **Caring for Kids** – A non-competitive program that introduces kids ages 6-17 years to a variety of sports, cultural, and community activities year-round, including a popular summer camp.
- **Junior Competitive Sports** – This joint RIC and Chicago Park District program, offers kids the chance to learn and compete in wheelchair basketball, wheelchair softball, and road racing.
- **Rock climbing** – coming soon!

*Indicates a Paralympic sport

The RIC Adaptive Fitness Center grew out of the sports program in 1996. In 2012 it moved to a new purpose built facility that features a full range of commercial grade strength and conditioning equipment, usable by wheelchair users and non-wheelchair users alike. The center offers group classes: Seated Zumba, Seated Gentle Yoga, Seated Stretch, and Community Educa-

tion; and one-on-one services: Personal Training, Functional Fitness, Lokomat Training, and AlterG Training.

Getting involved is easy! The RIC Adaptive Sports and Fitness Program is open to anyone with a physical disability. The RIC Adaptive Sports Programs currently have no membership fee, however a small fee may be associated with participating in certain events or sports. Adaptive equipment is provided.

The RIC Adaptive Fitness Center has a one-time \$35 initiation fee to become a member. Once a member, a small yearly fee keeps this membership active. All members must have a current medical form on file with the program. To learn more and download the medical form, visit the RIC Adaptive Sports and Fitness membership page. <http://www.ric.org/services/sports-and-fitness/membership/>

To learn more about any of the RIC Adaptive Sports and Fitness Programs, visit www.ricsports.org or call 312-238-5001.

Meet MRSCICS Team Member: Kelsey Stipp!

Origin:

Born and raised in Lexington, Kentucky (source of that charming drawl).

Future interests:

To pursue a PhD in Clinical Psychology.

Favorite thing about living in Chicago:

There's always people around and something entertaining going on close by.

Best part of working at RIC:

The belief in advancing ability. There are no empty promises or limits on possibility. The work is focused on making the most of each person's own ability.



The LIFE Center at RIC Now Offers Free Online Memberships!

Having a disability can be challenging. Finding information should not be one of those challenges. Searching for help and navigating healthcare and community living can be intimidating. In response to the need for trusted resources in key areas of life, RIC developed the LIFE (Learning, Innovation, Family, Empowerment) Center. The Center supports successful transitions throughout life to inspire all to achieve their greatest and fullest participation in LIFE.

The LIFE Center's collection of more than 7,000 resources is available on the LIFE web, an online education portal created to support RIC patients' ongoing care and recovery, which is available to everyone. The LIFE Center website offers a free membership, available worldwide to persons with disabilities, caregivers, and health professionals. Membership includes access to patient and family education materials, condition specific resources, research news, and upcoming events. Members can create personal reading lists, access online journals and use our video library. To become a member, go to <https://lifecenter.ric.org/> and click on "Join now." You can contact the LIFE Center at 312-238-LIFE (312-238-5433).

We want to hear from you!

What topics are you interested in hearing about in future newsletters?
Would you like more information on any of the topics you read about here?
Need to update your phone number, email address or mailing address?
Would you like to receive the digital version of the newsletter in your email?
Let us know, contact **Allison Todd** (312-238-1226; atodd@ric.org).

Want to get involved in more research at RIC?

Contact **Kelsey Stipp** (312-238-1405, kstipp@ric.org) to learn more about the Center for Rehabilitation Outcomes Research's (CROR) registry. After enrolling in this registry, you will be contacted about CROR's upcoming studies in which you may be eligible to participate.

Also visit www.ric.org/research/clinical-trials/ for a full listing of RIC's research studies and clinical trials.

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