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**Health Department initiates *Oak Park Walks* campaign**

In an effort to address the growing obesity epidemic, the Oak Park Health Department, the West Cook YMCA, the Oak Park Public Library and the Park District of Oak Park have joined forces to create *Oak Park Walks*. The campaign promotes physical activity in the form of walking – the cheapest and most convenient form of exercise.

“Regular walking is an excellent way to reduce the risk of heart disease, manage blood pressure and maintain a healthy body weight,” said Jacob Nelson, Health Information Coordinator. “Walking also can reduce stress, provide an opportunity to socialize with friends and family and promote a healthy environment by choosing not to travel by car.”

Village residents are encouraged to plan walks throughout the community or join one of the free walking programs organized by the health department and led by staff at the West Cook YMCA.

To help residents get started on their own walking routine, more than 200 pedometers (step counters) are currently available for check-out to Oak Park Public Library patrons. Pedometers also will be available for purchase at both the West Cook YMCA and the Park District of Oak Park.

For more information about *Oak Park Walks*, visit [www.oak-park.us/health](http://www.oak-park.us/health) – just look for the walking shoes in the right-hand margin – or contact the Oak Park Department of Public Health at 708.358.5487 or e-mail [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us).

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