The Pulse Game (20 minutes)

Items needed for this activity:
- Pulse Game sheets (one for each member. Download from http://www.4-h.uiuc.edu/opps/move and scroll to March)
- Pencils/Pens (one for each member)
- Stopwatch or watch with a second hand

Activity setup:
- A large, open area is needed where each member has space to run in place, and to pretend to jump rope in place

Step 1: Information to share with club members (10 minutes)
Today we are going to learn about aerobic activity. Does anyone know what that means? (Wait for responses). Aerobic activity is any type of activity that gets our bodies moving, our hearts pumping, and our breathing quicker. Aerobic activity has many benefits to the body. Because we use our whole bodies in aerobic exercises, we are making our bones and muscles strong in our arms and legs. More importantly, we are making our hearts stronger. When our heart gets pumping from exercise, it is working harder to get the oxygen to our muscles. When we exercise our bodies, we exercise our hearts, too! This exercise makes it stronger, which is very important.

What types of exercises are aerobic exercises? Remember, aerobic exercises are those that get your whole body moving and get your heart beating faster! (Wait for responses). That’s right! Exercises like walking, running, biking, dancing, jumping rope, and swimming are all aerobic exercises we can do.

Does anyone know what a pulse is? (Wait for responses). Your pulse, or sometimes called your heart rate, is the throbbing of arteries as the heart pumps blood through them. It tells us how fast our heart is beating and can give you information about how hard your body is working. Does anyone know how to take a pulse? (Wait for responses). That’s right! If you’ve been to the doctor, they have probably taken your pulse. You take your pulse by putting your index and middle finger on the inside of your wrist or on the side of your neck, and counting the number of beats per minute that you feel.

(Hand out Pulse Game sheets and pencils). A Resting Heart Rate is the number of times a person’s heart is beating per minute when that person has not been moving. The resting heart rate is different from your exertion heart rate, which we’ll take later. Let’s practice by taking our resting heart rate together. (Demonstrate and guide members). Here is how we’ll do it. Sit down quietly and relax. Put your index and middle finger on the inside of your wrist of your opposite hand, below your thumb. Or
place your fingers on the side of your neck. Now feel for your pulse! Make sure you don’t use your thumb because it has its own pulse. I am going to count six seconds on a stopwatch while you count your pulse rate. When I say “go,” begin silently counting the number of beats you feel. When I say “stop,” stop counting. (Make sure all members have found their pulse. Help them if necessary). Okay, let’s take our resting pulse rate. Go. (Let six seconds pass). Stop. Good. Now on your papers, write down the number you counted in the box (point to appropriate box). Now we are going to add a zero to that number to get our heart beats per minute. This is your resting heart rate. The average resting heart rate for youth and adults is anywhere from 60 to 100 beats per minute. Everyone’s resting heart rate is different, and your heart rate can change during the day depending on what activities you are doing.

(If time allows, explain exercise intensity to members and have them fill in the level of intensity their resting heart rate is at. Low intensity is an activity in which the heart rate is below 120 beats per minute. Moderate intensity activities cause the heart to beat between 120 and 150 beats per minute. Vigorous intensity activities are those in which the heart is beating more than 150 beats per minute.)

Great job everyone! What did you discover about the different physical activities? (Wait for responses). Which got your heart moving the most? (Wait for responses). The least? (Wait for responses). Do you think that the same activity could be moderate or vigorous depending on how you do it? (Wait for responses). Right! The way you do an activity affects how hard it is. For example, if you walk slowly, your body might be working a little, but if you walk very quickly, your body will work harder. A good way to tell how vigorously you are exercising is to note how fast you are breathing or to take your pulse.

Great job everyone! 

Get Up & Move!

Step 2: Group Activity 1 (10 minutes) 
Next, we are going to try out different kinds of physical activities to see how they affect your heart rate. You will do each activity for two minutes and then you will immediately take your pulse. I will keep time to let you know when to start and stop each activity, and when to take your pulse.

(For each activity: Inform members when to start and stop each activity. Each should be done for two minutes. Then instruct them to take their pulse for six seconds while you keep the time. Have them write their pulse in the appropriate box on their sheet and calculate their beats per minute and intensity level. The activities are: walking (around room or in place), sit-ups or standing knee-lifts, running in place, pretending to jump rope in place).

Great job everyone!