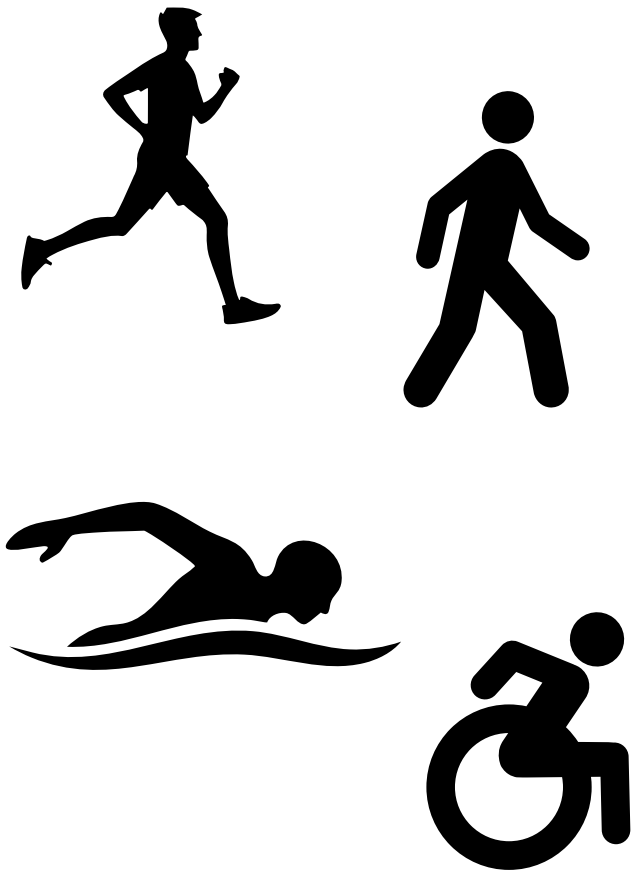
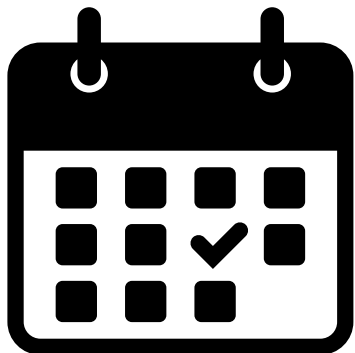


# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION**



**DECEMBER 2025**

# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION**

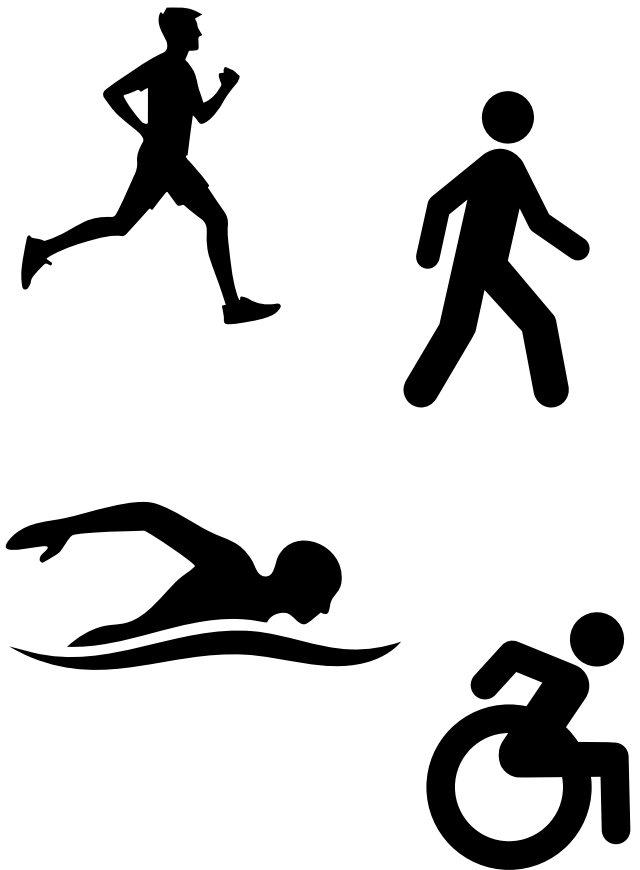
## **Purpose of the SOP:**

**This SOP outlines the steps to be taken by Medical Practitioners in the offering of exercise prescriptions to patients presenting for care at Health Facilities**

## **Scope:**

**This SOP is applicable to:**

- All patients, and particularly patients living with non-communicable diseases**
- All medical practitioners trained in exercise prescription writing**



# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION

## Background:

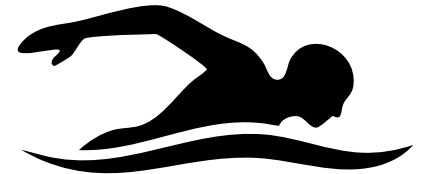
Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are lifelong conditions that affect individuals globally. NCDs cannot be spread from one person to another but develop as a result of several factors, including genetics, family history, lifestyle choices and injuries.

The main risk factors for non-communicable diseases that are modifiable are:

- Unhealthy diet
- Tobacco use
- Alcohol abuse
- Inadequate physical exercise
- Air pollution

Physical inactivity is associated with NCDs and mortality associated with NCDs—physical inactivity causes 9% of premature mortality worldwide. By eliminating physical inactivity globally, many cases of prevalent NCDs could be prevented.

In Jamaica, eliminating physical inactivity could add 1 year to a Jamaican's life expectancy (Lancet, 2012).



# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION - PREPARATION - Before consultation**



1 REVIEW MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, BEARING IN MIND SPECIFICATIONS FOR AGE AND SPECIFIC ILLNESSES E.G. DIABETES, HYPERTENSION AND CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

2 REVIEW THE ITINERARY FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SPECIALISTS FOR THE REGION/PARISH

3 REVIEW THE DIRECTORY OF APPROVED FITNESS INSTRUCTORS WITHIN THE PARISH

4 ENSURE A COPY OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS IS AVAILABLE FOR USE FOR EACH PATIENT SEEN

5 REVIEW THE MEDICAL RECORD FOR EACH PATIENT. LOOK AT

- AGE,
- SEX,
- OCCUPATION,
- PAST MEDICAL HISTORY,
- PAST SURGICAL HISTORY,
- COMORBIDITIES,

**AND HISTORY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IF NOTED.**

**LOOK AT THE PATIENT'S VITALS AND ENSURE THE PATIENT IS STABLE.**



# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION - During consultation**



- 1 INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE PATIENT AND REQUEST THEIR PRESENTING COMPLAINT
- 2 TAKE A DETAILED HISTORY
- 3 DO A REVIEW OF SYSTEMS (CARDIOVASCULAR, RESPIRATORY, GASTROINTESTINAL, ENDOCRINE, MUSCULOSKELETAL AND CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEMS)
- 4 ASSESS THE PATIENT'S READINESS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ANY GOALS THE PATIENT MAY HAVE FOR PHYSICAL FITNESS
- 5 APPLY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT TOOL



# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION - During consultation**

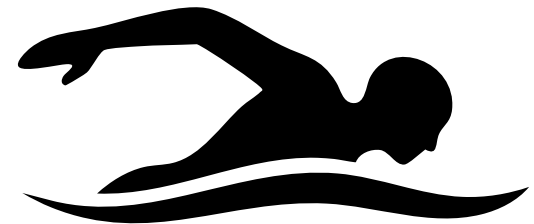


**1** **PERFORM A DETAILED PHYSICAL EXAMINATION (FROM HEAD TO TOE) AND DOCUMENT FINDINGS.**

**2** **DISCUSS EXAMINATION FINDINGS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT WITH THE PATIENT.**

**3** **DRAFT AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION PLAN FOR THE PATIENT ACCORDING TO FINDINGS FROM HISTORY, EXAMINATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT.**

**4** **DISCUSS AND FINALISE PLAN WITH PATIENT AND ISSUE THE EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION. (REMEMBER TO USE THE FITTE PRINCIPLE - FREQUENCY, INTENSITY, TIME, TYPE AND ENJOYMENT - FREQUENCY, DOSAGE, DURATION, THERAPEUTIC GOAL AND ENJOYMENT).**



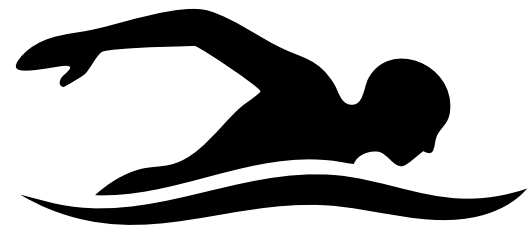
# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION - During consultation**



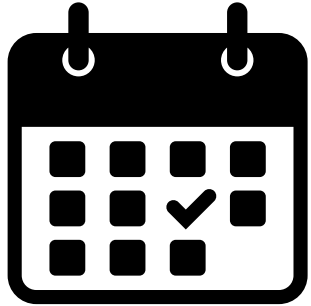
**5 AS INDICATED, FOR PATIENTS WITH COMORBIDITIES WHO HAVE BEEN ASSESSED AS READY AND ARE AT LEAST AT THE CONTEMPLATION STAGE, FOR WHOM EXPERT ADVICE MAY BE NEEDED, REFER THE PATIENT TO THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SPECIALIST ACCORDING TO THE ITINERARY FOR THAT PERIOD.**

**(FOR URGENT CASES, CONFER WITH THE MEDICAL OFFICER IN CHARGE/MEDICAL OFFICER (HEALTH) FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION PLAN FOR THE PATIENT).**

**6 HAVE THE PATIENT REPEAT INSTRUCTIONS TO ENSURE UNDERSTANDING .**



# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION - *Post-consultation***



1

**INFORM THE PATIENT OF THE UPCOMING SCHEDULED VISITS BY THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SPECIALISTS.**

2

**AGREE ON A FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT DATE.**



# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION - Roles and Responsibilities**

## **COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDES**

- 1. Support the parish team in sharing the IEC on physical activity with patients.**
- 2. Encourage patients to attend health centres for guidance on physical activity.**

## **PARISH MEDICAL OFFICERS/FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONERS**

- 1. Complete physical assessment of the patient.**
- 2. Provision of exercise advice, exercise plan and prescription to each patient,**
- 3. Recommendation of follow-up dates for review of exercise progress according to the plan**
- 4. Referral of high-risk patients to physical activity specialists as indicated, for assessment and advice on exercise plan and prescription.**

## **NURSES**

- 1. Review exercise prescriptions for patients, encourage them to adhere to the plan, and keep follow-up appointments.**

# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION - Roles and Responsibilities**

## **HEALTH EDUCATION OFFICERS**

- 1. Promote physical activity in health education sessions for patients**
- 2. Support the planning of training sessions on exercise prescription by the Ministry of Health and Wellness**

## **PARISH/REGIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SPECIALISTS**

- 1. Advice to patients on physical activity according to the itinerary for the region and parish**
- 2. Review of referred high-risk patients for assessment and advice on exercise plan and prescription.**
- 3. Support for training sessions by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in exercise prescription (including fitness assessments and exercise demonstrations).**
- 4. Recommend fitness instructors and suitable green spaces for exercise for patients to the Health Promotion and Education Unit.**

# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION - Roles and Responsibilities**

## **MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

- 1. Development of standards of delivery of exercise prescription service**
- 2. Training for medical officers in the delivery of the exercise prescription service.  
(Health Promotion & Education and Non-Communicable Diseases and Injury Prevention Units).**
- 3. Development and provision of a directory of Ministry of Health and Wellness-approved fitness instructors, as well as suitable green spaces for exercise for patients  
(Health Promotion & Education Unit).**

# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WRITING AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION - Resources**

## **1. Ministry of Health and Wellness Physical Activity Manuals:**

- **Physical Activity Daily Guide For Medical Practitioners**
- **Physical Activity Basic Resource Guide**
- **Physical Activity & Pregnancy**

*Available from <https://www.moh.gov.jm/physical-activity/>*

## **2. Ministry of Health and Wellness Physical Activity Recommendation and Assessment Tools for Stages of the Life Cycle**

## **3. Ministry of Health and Wellness (2025) National Screening Guidelines for Priority Non-Communicable Diseases in Primary Health Care, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**