

The Importance of Physical Activity

Lack of physical activity, combined with a poor diet, is the second leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States and is a huge economic burden on the state.¹

The facts

- Physical activity is very important for good health. People who are physically active tend to live longer and have lower risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression, and some cancers.²
- Inactive adults have a higher risk for early death, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression, and some cancers.²
- Physical activity helps with weight control.²

The statistics

Nationally,

- Less than half (48%) of all adults meet the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines.³

In Minnesota⁴ in 2011,

- Only 21 percent of adults met the physical activity guidelines
- 54 percent of adults participated in 150 minutes or more of aerobic physical activity per week
- 30 percent of adults participated in muscle strengthening exercises more than twice per week
- 33 percent of 12th grade girls and 55 percent of 12th grade boys⁵ report participating in moderate physical activity five or more days per week at least 30 minutes a day



**If physical activity were a pill,
 it would be the most widely
 prescribed medication in
 America.**

Increasing physical activity

Increasing physical activity in Minnesota means supporting people who want to make healthy choices. MDH helps support communities through:

- **Active Transportation**

Active transportation integrates physical activity into daily routines such as walking or biking to destinations such as work, grocery stores or parks.

- **Safe Routes to School**

Walking and bicycling to school helps families stay active and healthy and kids arrive to school focused and ready to learn.

- **Active School Day**

Active School day includes:

Physical Education (PE). Quality PE promotes enjoyable participation in physical activity and helps students develop the knowledge, attitudes, motor and behavioral skills, and confidence needed to improve physical fitness and adopt and maintain a physically active lifestyle.

Active Classrooms. Active school time strategies can also incorporate short activity breaks during the school day, during transition time, and within classrooms. These physical activity breaks can improve students' concentration skills and classroom behavior while increasing activity level for all students.

Active Recess. When students are given the chance to move around and be active, they return to the classroom more attentive and able to concentrate.

Recommendations

According to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, people need to do two types of physical activity each week to improve your health— aerobic and muscle-strengthening.

Adults need at least:

2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (i.e., brisk walking) every week and muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

Or

1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (i.e., jogging or running) every week and muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

Or

An equivalent mix of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity and muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms).

For more information, visit

www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html

For information on Physical Activity in Youth, see the fact sheet:

www.health.state.mn.us/physicalactivity/facts.html

Photo credit: The Bike Walk Ambassador Program and Dudley Edmondson

References

¹ Finkelstein, E., Fiebelkorn, I., & Wang G. (2004). State-level estimates of annual medical expenditures attributable to obesity. *Obesity Research*, 12:18-24.

² Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans (2008). <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/factsheetprof.aspx>

³ <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/data/facts.html>

⁴ 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey

⁵ 2007 Minnesota Student Survey