

General Health Facts

- Adults 18 and older need 30 minutes of physical activity on five or more days a week to be healthy; children and teens need 60 minutes of activity a day for their health.
- Significant health benefits can be obtained by including a moderate amount of physical activity (e.g., 30 minutes of brisk walking or raking leaves, 15 minutes of running, 45 minutes of playing volleyball). Additional health benefits can be gained through greater amounts of physical activity.
- Thirty to sixty minutes of activity broken into smaller segments of 10 or 15 minutes throughout the day have significant health benefits.
- Moderate daily physical activity can reduce substantially the risk of developing or dying from cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers, such as colon cancer. Daily physical activity helps to lower blood pressure and cholesterol, helps prevent or retard osteoporosis, and helps reduce obesity, symptoms of anxiety and depression, and symptoms of arthritis.
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death among men and women in the United States. Physically inactive people are twice as likely to develop coronary heart disease as regularly active people.
- 37% of adults report they are not physically active. Only 3 in 10 adults get the recommended amount of physical activity.
- Poor diet and inactivity can lead to overweight/obesity. Persons who are overweight or obese are at increased risk for high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, respiratory problems and some types of cancer.
- 41 million Americans are estimated to have pre-diabetes. Most people with pre-diabetes develop type 2 diabetes within 10 years, unless they make changes to their diet and physical activity that results in a loss of about 5-7 percent of their body weight.
- Obesity continues to climb among American adults. Nearly 60 million Americans are obese. More than 108 million adults are either obese or overweight. That means roughly 3 out of 5 Americans carry an unhealthy amount of excess weight.
- The percentage of adults in the United States who were overweight or obese (body mass index greater than or equal to 25) in 1999-2002 was 65 percent. Overweight and obesity cuts across all ages, racial and ethnic groups, and both genders. A new study in the Netherlands found that excess weight cuts years off your life.

- 16 percent of children and teens aged 6 to 19 were overweight in 1999-2002, triple the proportion in 1980. Fifteen-percent of children in the same age group are considered at-risk for overweight. The percentage of overweight African American, Hispanic, and Native American children is about 20%.
- More than 10 percent of children between the ages of 2 and 5 are overweight, double the proportion since 1980.
- Health risks associated with being overweight or obese include type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma, arthritis.
- The major barriers most people face when trying to increase physical activity are time, access to convenient facilities, and safe environments in which to be active.
- School and worksite interventions have been shown to be successful in increasing physical activity levels.
- Type 2 diabetes, once called "adult onset" diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, once thought to be age-related, are now diagnosed in children and teens.
- Physical activity among children and adolescents is important because of the related health benefits (cardio-respiratory function, blood pressure control, weight management, cognitive and emotional benefits).
- According to a study done by the National Association of Sports and Physical Education (NASPE), infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.
- Young people are at particular risk for becoming sedentary as they grow older. Encouraging moderate and vigorous physical activity among youth is important. Because children spend most of their time in school, the type and amount of physical activity encouraged in schools is important.
- Only 25 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 engaged in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more of the previous 7 days in 2003.
- Only 28 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 participated in daily school physical education in 2003, down from 42 percent in 1991.

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