

SPORTS PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Sports participation provides many physical, psychological, social and emotional health benefits for youth. Importantly, sports provide opportunities for youth to obtain the recommended amount of daily physical activity associated with positive health outcomes.

WHAT IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

Physical activity is any body movement that requires more energy than resting.

Exercise is a type of physical activity that is planned and structured. Lifting weights, taking an aerobics class, and playing on a sports team are examples of exercise.

Physical activity intensity refers to the rate at which the activity is being performed or the amount of effort required to perform an activity or exercise.

- **Moderate intensity** physical activity requires working hard enough to noticeably accelerate heart rate and break a sweat.
- **Vigorous intensity** physical activity requires a large amount of effort and causes rapid breathing, substantial increase in heart rate, and sweating.

SPORTS-RELATED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Sports participation provides children and adolescents with opportunities to be physically active. Research has shown that:

- After-school sports programs for elementary students can increase moderate, vigorous and total daily physical activity.
- Middle school athletes get more moderate and vigorous physical activity and are more likely to be physically active in high school than nonathletes.
- High school athletes participating in varsity and community sports have much higher levels of physical activity and are four times more likely to do regular vigorous activity.

ENERGY EXPENDITURE

Energy expenditure refers to the amount of energy (calories) that a person uses to breathe, circulate blood, digest food, and be physically active. To prevent weight gain, energy intake must be balanced with energy expenditure. Research has shown that:

- Middle and high school athletes expend more energy and have higher fitness levels than nonathletes.
- Among adolescent athletes, sports participation accounts for about **20%** of total daily energy expenditure and **60%** of moderate and vigorous energy expenditure.



ADULT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BEHAVIOR

Many American adults do not do enough physical activity and about 25% participate in no or very minimal physical activity. Youth sports promote regular physical activity in adulthood. Research has shown that:

- Adult females who participated in youth sports have lower amounts of body fat and higher levels of total physical activity.
- As the number of years of youth sport participation increases, the amount of regular physical activity as an adult also increases.
- Males who participated in sports for at least three continuous years during adolescence are at least 7 times more likely to be physically active adults.
- Females who participated in sports for at least three continuous years during adolescence are at least 4 times more likely to be physically active adults.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENCOURAGE YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT ARE APPROPRIATE FOR THEIR AGE, ENJOYABLE, AND THAT OFFER VARIETY. SPORTS PROVIDE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO HAVE FUN WHILE BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE. PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WITH YOUR KIDS PROVIDES A POSITIVE EXAMPLE AND IS A GREAT WAY TO HAVE FUN WHILE IMPROVING EVERYONE'S HEALTH.

HOW MUCH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DO YOU NEED TO BE HEALTHY?

In 2008, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released updated physical activity guidelines for children and adolescents. The physical activity guidelines recommend:

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS SHOULD DO AT LEAST 60 MINUTES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY EACH DAY

- Most of the 60 minutes should be moderate and vigorous aerobic physical activity.

Examples of moderate aerobic physical activities:

- Hiking
- Skateboarding
- Bicycle riding
- Brisk walking

Examples of vigorous aerobic physical activities:

- Jumping rope
 - Running
 - Sports (e.g. soccer, swimming, basketball)
- Muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening exercise should be done three days per week as part of the 60 minutes of physical activity.

Muscle-strengthening activities make muscles do more work than usual during activities of daily life.

- Rope climbing
- Sit-ups
- Tug-of-war
- Climbing trees
- Lifting weights

Bone-strengthening activities produce a force on the bones that promote bone growth and strength.

- Running
- Jumping rope
- Basketball
- Tennis
- Hopscotch

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/>

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans
<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/>

