



Physical Activity in children



Besides eating healthy, physical activity among children is important for promoting lifelong health and well-being as well as preventing various health conditions. Because children spend most of their time in the classroom, school and at home are ideal settings to teach and model



healthy behavior. In fact, physical activity is one of the most important parts of your family's

health.

The 2008 *US Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* recommend that children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 years should have **60 minutes** (1 hour) or more of physical activity each day. Unfortunately, many children and adolescents do not meet the recommendations set forth in the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans due to increase use of television and electronics.

According to research, too much sedentary time can lead to obesity and other health conditions. Only 21.6% of 6 to 19-year-old children and adolescents in the United States attained 60 or more minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity on at least



5 days per week (CDC, 2017).

Why is physical activity important among children?

Like adults, increased physical activity has been associated with an increased life expectancy and decreased risk of cardiovascular disease.

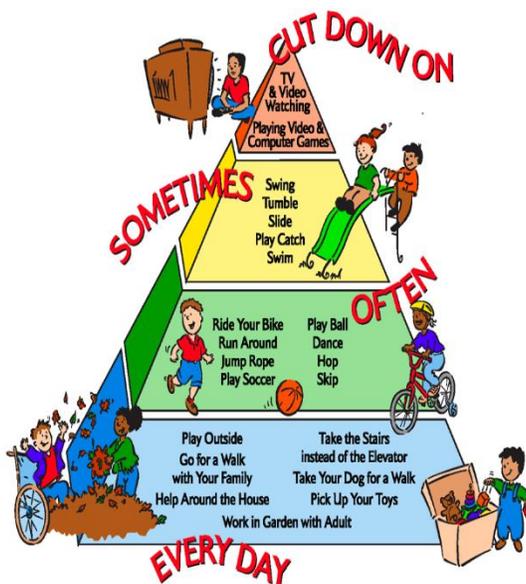


According to the American Heart Association, physical activity helps with:

- controlling weight
- reducing blood pressure
- raising HDL ("good") cholesterol
- reducing the risk of diabetes and some kinds of cancer
- improved psychological well-being, including gaining more self-confidence and higher self-esteem

How do I promote physical activity in my child?

- Physical activity should be increased by reducing sedentary time (e.g., watching television, playing computer video games or talking on the phone).
- Physical activity should be fun for children and adolescents.
- Parents should try to be role models for active lifestyles and provide children with opportunities for increased physical activity. **Be active and your kids will, too!**
- Encourage teachers and administrators to reward kids with extra recess, fun pencils and erasers, or time for a special game—rather than with sweet treats.
- Encourage kids to sign up for after-school sports, running clubs, and other physical activity opportunities offered by the school—or volunteer to lead such activities.



Activities kids can do at home:



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| Mowing | Cooking |
| Bagging leaves | Cleaning |
| Walking the dog | Skating |
| Watering plants | Sweeping |
| Washing dishes | Riding a bike |
| Dancing | Painting |
| Picking up toys | Making Bed |
| Dusting | Vacuuming |

For more information or to schedule a nutrition program for your group, contact Aneisha Andrus, Area Nutrition Agent, LSU AgCenter, 337-239-3231 or email aandrus@agcenter.lsu.edu.

Sources

Center for Disease Control & Prevention (2017). Physical Activity Facts.

American Heart Association (2013). *AHA's Recommendations for Physical Activity in Children*.

The Pennington BioMedical Research Center/LSU AgCenter (2005). *Physical Activity Guidelines for Children*