

BE ACTIVE . . .



“Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Through Physical Activity”



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The Benefits of Regular Physical Activity

Regular physical activity that is performed on most days of the week reduces the risk of developing or dying from some of the leading causes of illness and death in the United States. Regular physical activity improves health in the following ways.

- Reduces the risk of dying prematurely.
- Reduces the risk of dying from heart disease.
- Reduces the risk of developing diabetes.
- Reduces the risk of developing high blood pressure.
- Helps reduce blood pressure in people who already have high blood pressure.
- Reduces the risk of developing colon cancer.
- Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety.
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscle, and joints.
- Helps older adults become stronger and better able to move about without falling.
- Promotes psychological well-being.

Given the numerous health benefits of physical activity, the hazards of being inactive are clear. Physical inactivity is a serious, nationwide problem. Its scope poses a public health challenge for reducing the national burden of unnecessary illness and premature death.

Status of the Nation - A need for change

Adults

- More than 60% of adults do not achieve the recommended amount of regular physical activity. In fact, 25% of all adults are not active at all.
- Inactivity increases with age and is more common among women than men and among those with lower income and less education than among those with higher income or education.

Adolescents and Young Adults

- Nearly half of young people aged 12-21 are not vigorously active on a regular basis.
- Physical activity declines dramatically with age during adolescence.
- Female adolescents are much less physically active than male adolescents.

High School Students

- In high school, enrollment in daily physical education classes dropped from 43% in 1991 to 25% in 1995.
- Only 19% of all high school students are physically active for 20 minutes or more in physical education classes every day during the school week.

For further information contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - www.cdc.gov

Legislative Fitness Day to Take Place

The Maine Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, along with the Maine HMO Council and the Maine Public Health Association, will be sponsoring a Legislative Fitness Day on February 22, 2001, at the State House Hall of Flags from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Our goal is to inform the legislators and the general public of the importance of physical activity in everyone's lives. Offered will be blood pressure measurement, cholesterol measurement, and fitness testing.

A wide range of materials on physical activity as well as other heart healthy programs will be available. The Maine HMO Council will display information on what they offer in the areas of Prevention, Quality of Care, and Community Involvement to keep Maine people healthy, and several other programs focusing on physical activity will be hosting exhibits.



Walking - it's easy to do

by Elanna Clark Farnham, Community Wellness Service, Eastern Maine Medical Center

Walking propels you from place to place and may be your favorite form of exercise. It's easy to do, needs little equipment, and has big payoffs.

A 30-minute walk just three to five times a week may reduce your risk of heart attack and, if you're a woman, your risk of osteoporosis by half. It may cut your chances of dying prematurely by two-thirds and help you drop as many as 18 pounds in a year.

But are you doing it right? If your posture is poor, you don't stretch before your stroll, you're exaggerating your movements to get a "better workout," or your footwear pooped out on you 100 miles ago, you may be trading the health benefits of your favorite exercise for a sports injury. Here's how to put your best foot forward:

Feet First

You put about 800 tons of stress on your feet every day. Give them a break and some protection.

- Wear cotton or cotton-blend athletic socks. They're better at absorbing sweat.
- For extra absorption, dust your feet with cornstarch.
- Choose a pair of walking shoes that give your feet support and traction. Trade them in for a new pair every

500 miles or six months, whichever comes first, to avoid potential problems.

Eyes Forward, Chest Out

If your posture is sloppy or you're exaggerating your movements (such as flapping your elbows out like wings when you're racewalking), your exhilarating walk could become uncomfortable or painful. Here's how you should look:

- *Your head is up.* You're looking forward, not at the ground. Your neck, shoulders, and back are relaxed, not stiffly upright in a military pose.
- *You're swinging your arms freely with just a slight bend to your elbow.* A little pumping is OK.
- *You're not carrying weights.* Weights can stress your wrists, elbows, and shoulders. If you want a more intense workout, walk faster or longer.
- *You're walking smoothly, rolling your foot from heel to toe.* Avoid crashing your heels to the ground.
- *You're stomach muscles are slightly contracted and your back is straight.* Do not arch forward or backward.

From the Mayo Clinic Women's Healthsource, March 1998.

Why Water Aerobics?

Prevention Magazine offers 10 reasons to try water aerobics:

1. burn 400-500 calories/hour (based on a 150-pound person)
2. won't make you sweaty
3. easy on your joints
4. improve balance and coordination
5. tone every part of your body
6. you control the level of difficulty
7. maintain your heart rate at a safe level
8. get a cardiovascular workout equal to land aerobics
9. less intimidating than land aerobics (no one knows if you miss a step)
10. it's fun

ACES

(All Children Exercising Simultaneously)

Each May, on a designated date and time, millions of school children all over the globe will exercise simultaneously in a symbolic gesture of fitness and unity to show the world the importance of developing an active lifestyle starting at an early age and its impact on health throughout the lifespan. This non-competitive program has proven to be educational, motivational, and fun.



The 13th annual global event will occur at 10:00 a.m. local time, Wednesday, May 2, 2001. It will be celebrated during May which is National Physical Fitness & Sports month.

Project ACES aims to educate children about the importance of lifelong fitness. Exercise can lower the chances of coronary heart disease, which includes high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, and physical inactivity.

On May 2nd at 10:00 a.m. all the children will either exercise, walk, jog, bike, dance, do aerobics, or a combination of all the above. Each school organizes *its own* participation assembly for the 15-45 minutes the program runs. There is no specific routine to follow, just have the children do some form of exercise.

Please join the Council in promoting this event in your community. Even though ACES was designed for school children, feel free to promote this event in local day care centers and health clubs. Check with your local schools to see what they are planning to do and suggest letting parents and grandparents come to the school to participate in the program along with their children. What better example can you give your children.

For further information on ACES, check out their web site at <http://members.aol.com/acesday/aces.html>. If you plan to participate in ACES day and do not receive a participation form from the Council, please call 622-7566, ext. 230 or e-mail dianec@mcd.org and one will be mailed to you. Certificates of participation are awarded to all participating schools (and other facilities) who return their form.



National Association for Health and Fitness 24th Annual Conference

Partnerships in Physical Activity - Empowering Your Population is the theme for the 24th Annual Conference of the National Association for Health and Fitness taking place on May 2-5, 2001, in Tempe, Arizona. The conference has been designed as an opportunity for all health professionals to come together to celebrate May as National Health and Fitness Month. The objectives are to develop community partnerships; provide learning tools for self-improvement; increase personal skill development; enhance personal knowledge base; and identify strategies that resonate with special populations. For further information and a registration form, check out their web site at www.physicalfitness.org/meeting.html.

Contest for Communities

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports is sponsoring its third annual "Contest for Communities" to recognize Maine people who promote physical activity. "Contest for Communities" offers the opportunity for organizations, businesses, schools, civic groups, and individuals to feature their accomplishments in physical activity. Nominations will be accepted in the following categories: youth, adult, special populations, seniors, outstanding individual, community organizations, and businesses. Deadline for submission is April 1, 2001. The winners will be honored at a ceremony on May 23rd at the State House Hall of Flags in Augusta. If you know of someone who has been an inspiration in promoting or being part of physical activity and you would like to nominate them for this award, please call 622-7566, ext. 230 or e-mail dianec@mcd.org for a nomination form.

Web Sites

The Maine Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports will soon be launching its own web site - www.mainephysicalactivity.org. This site will feature the activities of the Council, newsletters, and other physical fitness related topics. We are hoping to launch the site by mid-February. Check it out!

Fitness Jumpsite: The Fitness Jumpsite is a non-commercial endeavor that offers fitness, health, and nutrition related information and education. Operated by two American Council on Exercise certified personal trainers, the site aims to provide resources and support to "cultivate happy, healthy, and fit lifestyles." See how you like it at www.primusweb.com/fitnesspartner.



For more information about the Maine Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, please contact Saskia Janes Bopp at Medical Care Development, 11 Parkwood Drive, Augusta, ME 04330; Tel: 622-7566, ext. 220; e-mail: saskiaj@mcd.org.

Promoting Better Health for Young People

(A report to the President from the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education, November 2000.)

Physical inactivity has contributed to an unprecedented epidemic of childhood obesity that is currently plaguing the United States. The percentage of young people who are overweight has doubled since 1980.

Physical activity has been identified as one of our nation's leading health indicators in *Healthy People 2010*, the national health objectives for the decade. Enhancing efforts to promote participation in physical activity and sports among young people is a critical national priority.

To increase their levels of physical activity and fitness, young people can benefit from:

- Families who model and support participation in enjoyable physical activity.
- School programs -including quality, daily physical education; health

education; recess; and extracurricular activities--that help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors, and confidence to adopt and maintain physically active lifestyles, while providing opportunities for enjoyable physical activity.

- After-school care programs that provide regular opportunities for active, physical play.
- Youth sports and recreation programs that offer a range of developmentally appropriate activities that are accessible and attractive to all young people.
- A community structural environment that makes it easy and safe for young people to walk, ride bicycles, and use close-to-home physical activity facilities.
- Media campaigns that help motivate young people to be physically active.

For more information on this report check out <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/presphysactrpt/summary.htm>

March Into May Greater Portland

Greater Portland Employers who are looking for a way to improve the health of employees and boost office morale are invited to take advantage of this exciting opportunity.

This award-winning program is a motivational, 10-week campaign designed to get people moving in local companies and organizations. Program training, a user-friendly coordinator manual, activity logs, sign up information, and other resources are available to companies at no cost. Participants will also qualify for fun and healthy prizes.

Employees at any level of fitness can participate in *March Into May* and be successful. Participants set a personal goal based on their activity level and track their progress throughout the program. Participants each year report increased energy, improved nutrition, weight loss, and reduced stress as a result of increased physical activity. Companies also report improved office morale.

A training was held January 20th where coordinators from 36 businesses were trained to implement the program. A kick-off is planned for March 19th.



The Move & Improve Program of Eastern Maine Medical Center was established in October of 1996 to motivate individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices that maintain/enhance a state of well-being. Move & Improve is a free, 12-week program with the primary goal of reducing the risk of disease associated with inactivity. Participants in Move & Improve are empowered with knowledge that motivates them to take responsibility for their physical activity. The target populations range from preschoolers to seniors who live, work, or attend school in northern and eastern regions of Maine. Upon completion of the program, every participant is eligible for incentive prizes designed to encourage physical activity as a continuing lifestyle practice.

Move & Improve has increased its participants from 1307 in Year One to 4,765 in Year 4 and now includes 177 towns.

Year 2001 of Move & Improve aims to further establish and expand its support network of an organized, community-based program as well as a continued focus on youth grades K-12. Healthy eating and prevention of tobacco use education will be added to the program curriculum.

This year's kick-off will be held March 11th at the Bangor Civic Center. Activities will include a wellness fair from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. and the opportunity to register for this year's program. Interested participants can also register online at www.moveandimprove.org.

Companies that have participated in the program for the last four years will have the opportunity to participate in a research project which will include free before and after screenings for cholesterol, blood pressure, body fat analysis, strength, and endurance.

Lower Direct Medical Costs Associated with Physical Activity

The benefits of moderate physical activity are well known: lowered risk for heart attack and stroke, reducing weight, and improving mood. Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently documented another major advantage - improving the health of the Nation's health care expenditures. A study in the October issue of *The Physician and Sportsmedicine* found that physically active individuals had lower annual direct medical costs than did inactive people. The cost difference was \$330 per person, based on 1987 dollars.

The potential savings if all inactive American adults became physically active could be \$29.2 billion in 1987 dollars, or \$76.6 billion in 2000 dollars.

The study found that physically active people had fewer hospital stays and physician visits and used less medication than physically inactive people.

The level of physical activity measured in this study was even more modest than current Federal guidelines of 30 minutes or more of moderate physical activity five or more days a week, suggesting that following current recommendations could yield even greater cost savings.

For more information about nutrition and physical activity,

- Call toll-free- 1-888-CDC-4NRG
- Visit the CDC's nutrition and physical activity Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/>

On December 15, 2000, the U.S. Congress approved a mammoth omnibus spending bill which includes a \$5 million appropriation for PEP (Physical Education for Progress). The purpose of PEP is to award grants and contracts to local educational agencies to enable them to initiate, expand, and improve physical education programs for all kindergarten through 12th grade students.

PEP grant guidelines are expected to be announced sometime in March and school districts will have six weeks to submit proposals. The winning grants will be announced the first week of June 2001 and recipients will have 12 months to complete their projects.

Funds can be used to purchase equipment, develop curriculum, hire and/or train physical education staff, and support other initiatives designed to enable students to participate in physical education activities.

Efforts to get the full \$400 million appropriate over the next five years will be enhanced by the success of these first grants. It is critical that programs show significant improvement in student learning and increased physical activity as a result of these grants.

Scooter -Related Injuries

Injuries associated with unpowered scooters have increased dramatically since May 2000. Most scooters are made of lightweight aluminum with small, low-friction wheels similar to those on in-line skates. They weigh <10 pounds and fold for easy portability and storage. Up to 5 million scooters were expected to be sold in 2000, an increase from virtually zero in 1999. A report published in the December 15, 2000, *MMWR Weekly* summarized the results of scooter-related injuries during the past 34 months.

The findings in this report demonstrate the rapid increase in injuries associated with riding these new unpowered scooters, which are a fast-growing activity in the United States. Because these scooters are a recent phenomenon, scientific data about the efficacy of safety equipment to protect against scooter-related injuries are not available. However, lessons learned from similar recreational activities can guide users in adopting reasonable safety precautions, such as wearing protective gear.

On the basis of data from in-line skating and bicycling, many of these injuries might have been prevented or reduced in severity had protective equipment been worn. Helmets can prevent 85% of head injuries, elbow pads can prevent 82% of elbow

injuries, and knee pads can prevent 32% of knee injuries.

The public health community can be proactive and support efforts to decrease scooter-related injury in children by increasing awareness among parents and health-care providers of the injury potential and the need for safety measures when using scooters. Many children may not be prepared developmentally to handle the multitask challenges they may experience while riding a scooter.

On the basis of evidence of injury prevention effectiveness for other related activities, the following recommendations may help prevent scooter-related injuries:

- Wear a helmet;
- Use knee and elbow pads;
- Ride scooters on smooth, paved surfaces without traffic, and avoid streets and surfaces with water, sand, gravel or dirt;
- Do not ride scooters at night;
- Young children should not use scooters without close supervision.

From *MMWR Weekly* December 15, 2000 / 49(49); 1108-1110. For a copy of the report go to www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4949a2.htm

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