

Importance of Physical Activity

Physical activity provides long-term health benefits for everyone! By being active, you will burn calories that you store from eating throughout the day and—it can be as easy as walking the dog or as rigorous as running a marathon. Providing opportunities for children to be active early on puts them on a path to better physical and mental health. It's never too late to jumpstart a healthy lifestyle.

Physical Activity & Obesity

Physical activity, along with proper nutrition, is beneficial to people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. And it is important that everyone gets active: over the last 20 years, there's been a significant increase in obesity in the United States. About one-third of U.S. adults (33.8%) are obese and approximately 17% (or 12.5 million) of children and adolescents (aged 2–19 years) are obese.¹

The health implications of obesity in America are startling:

If things remain as they are today, one-third of all children born in the year 2000 or later may suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives, while many others are likely to face chronic health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, and asthma.²

Studies indicate that overweight youth may never achieve a healthy weight, and up to 70% of obese teens may become obese adults.³

Even more worrisome, the cumulative effect could be that children born in the year 2000 or later may not outlive their parents. ⁴

The impact of obesity doesn't end there. Obesity has personal financial and national economic implications as well. Those who are obese have medical costs that are \$1,429 more than those of normal weight on average (roughly 42% higher).⁵ And annual direct costs of childhood obesity are \$14.3 billion.⁶

By incorporating physical activity into your daily life—30 minutes for adults and 60 minutes for children—as well as healthy eating, you will experience positive health benefits and be on the path for a better future.

The Impact of Physical Activity on Your Health

Regular physical activity can produce long-term health benefits. It can help:

1. Prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and stroke (the three leading health-related causes of death)
2. Control weight
3. Make your muscles stronger
4. Reduce fat
5. Promote strong bone, muscle, and joint development
6. Condition heart and lungs
7. Build overall strength and endurance
8. Improve sleep
9. Decrease potential of becoming depressed
10. Increase your energy and self-esteem
11. Relieve stress
12. Increase your chances of living longer

When you are not physically active, you are more at risk for:

1. High blood pressure
2. High blood cholesterol
3. Stroke
4. Type 2 diabetes
5. Heart disease