

# Research Link



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## New physical activity guidelines

Fitness levels of Canadian children and youth are alarmingly low. Yet, according to self reported data, most young Canadians report that they are sufficiently active<sup>1</sup>. Between 2007 and 2009 the Canadian Health Measure Survey (CHMS) used accelerometers to collect measured data on physical activity and sedentary behaviour for a nationally representative sample that included children and adolescents aged 6-19 years.

### The results indicated that:

- Boys and girls daily sedentary time averages 8.6 hours or 62% of their waking time.
- Another 4 hours a day are spent in light intensity physical activity.
- About 7% of Canadian children and youth get at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity at least 6 days a week.
- Boys average 61 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity and girls 47 minutes.

## Links to success

The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP), in cooperation with ParticipACTION and other stakeholders, along with support from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), has developed the new Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Children (aged 5-11 years) and Youth (aged 12-17 years).



### The New Guidelines

Children and youth should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity daily<sup>2</sup>. This should include:

- Vigorous-intensity activities at least 3 days per week.
- Activities that strengthen muscle and bone at least 3 days per week.
- More daily physical activity provides greater health benefits.

There have been significant advances in the science of physical activity and measurement since the original Canadian guidelines were published. The new guidelines now focus on an expanded age range, give a specific time needed to achieve health benefits and now include sedentary behaviour recommendations. The recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day should be viewed as a minimal target and it should be promoted in general that “more is better”.

## Links for action - be part of the solution



Saskatchewan *in motion* recommends a shared responsibility to increasing physical activity opportunities. If every child could get 30 minutes of physical activity at school, in the community and at home, they would easily reach 60 minutes of physical activity each day, and more is better! With parents, schools and communities working together kids will get moving more often.

### At home

- Be an active role model – use active forms of transportation and encourage your children to do the same. Walk, run, bike, skate or roll!
- Replace 30 minutes of time spent in front of the television or computer with 30 minutes of activity time.
- Get outside and play with your kids!

### At school

- Consider ordering physical activity themed daily planners for your students through School Speciality.
- Incorporate movement into your lesson plans. Check out our DPA Manual for some great ideas! You can download the manual at <http://www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca/educators/daily-physical-activity-manual>.
- Implement policy for Daily Physical Activity in your school to ensure that all kids move every day.

### In the community

- Request well-connected streets and sidewalk networks that promote a supportive active transportation environment.
- Ask for and help to create more opportunities in your neighbourhood for safe walking and cycling.
- Talk with municipal decision makers and take the first step in knowing what needs to change.

#### References:

<sup>1</sup>Colley, R. C. (2011). Physical Activity of Canadian children and youth: Accelerometer results from the 2007 to 2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey. *Statistic Canada, Catalogue no. 82-003-EXP. Health Reports, Vol. 22, no. 1.*

<sup>2</sup>Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology. (2011). *Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines.* [www.csep.ca/guidelines](http://www.csep.ca/guidelines).

