

Exercise for Teenagers

Establishing an active lifestyle among teenagers can delay the onset or even prevent the development of many non-communicable diseases when they age, including obesity, type II diabetes, coronary heart disease and stroke. Healthy teens are more likely to become healthy adults. It is suggested that the best way to cultivate active lifestyles among kids and teenagers are by family support – exercise with your kids and encourage them to do more.



In Hong Kong



Research shows that Hong Kong, in comparison with 37 other countries, scored worst on overall physical activity levels and family support. Only 42% of teenagers met the PA level recommendation. In addition, only 36% of 10- to 19-year-olds spent the recommended < 2 hours per day on a smart device activity. Thus, kids in general are becoming less active and developing a more sedentary lifestyle.

Why Can Exercise Help?



Compelling evidence has shown that higher levels of PA are related to favorable health outcomes in children and youth. Perhaps more importantly, promoting PA and exercise participation among teenagers establishes a sustainable active lifestyle, which then lead to a healthy adulthood and lifelong health benefits.

Recommendations

Exercise Recommendations



- 1) Children and youth should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) every day.
- 2) Performing more than 60 minutes of physical activity daily provides additional health benefits.
- 3) Most of the daily physical activity should be aerobic and incorporate vigorous-intensity activities (including muscle strengthening and bone strengthening activities) at least 3 times per week.



Sedentary Recommendations

- 1) 6-12 year olds should limit recreational screen time to no more than 2 hours per day.
- 2) 12-18 year olds should avoid prolonged screen time.

Tips for Getting Started

- Accumulate 60 minutes per day by performing activities in multiple shorter bouts spread throughout the day (e.g. 2 bouts of 30 minutes),
- Parents should encourage exercise and participate exercise together with their kids.
- Children and youth with disabilities should meet these recommendations. Consult a health care provider to understand the types and amounts of physical activity appropriate for them considering their disability.

References

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- 2) Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Healthy Exercise for All Campaign - Physical Fitness Test for the Community. <https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp380.jsp?productCode=FA100265>. Published February 2013. Accessed 12 June 2018.
- 3) Education Bureau, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Survey on 'Physical Fitness Status of Hong Kong School Pupils'. https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/pe/references_resource/fitness-survey/index.html. Published 2015-2016. Accessed 12 June 2018
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