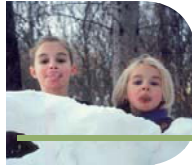




Physical Activity Backgrounder for Decision-Makers

“Physical inactivity is estimated to cause annually 2 million deaths worldwide.”

WHO,
2007, *Why Move for Health*



Increasing Physical Activity: What Can You Do?

Statistics Canada reports that 50.5% of adult Albertans are overweight or obese, making them at risk for health problems (Statistics Canada, 2005, *Canadian Community Health Survey*). Similarly, many of our children are inactive and overweight and, unless something changes, will become overweight adults. If you are a decision-maker, you can play a role in increasing physical activity in your organization.

Decision-makers create government and organizational policy and strategies that affect the environments where Albertans live, learn, work and play. With your help, we will see positive results such as:

- reduced public health-care costs
- less employee absenteeism and lower health insurance costs
- communities designed to be walkable
- improved school learning environments
- fewer falls and increased independent living by seniors

Why supportive environments are important

Inactive people are more likely to become active if they are in an environment that supports physical activity. People need to decide to be physically active, but they also need the opportunity to be physically active. Those who may have difficulty being physically active include people who:

- have low family incomes
- live in remote areas with few facilities and programs
- have physical disabilities and are limited by accessibility issues
- are elderly people with health and mobility challenges
- have mental health issues such as depression or anxiety

Join us in creating a more active Alberta

The Alberta Centre for Active Living and its partner active living agencies support you in increasing physical activity. We can provide you with evidence for your initiatives and can connect you with physical activity professionals to ensure you get the best results.





The Costs of Physical Inactivity

“Physical activity has economic benefits, especially in terms of reduced health-care costs, increased productivity and healthier physical and social environments.” (WHO, 2007, *Benefits of Physical Activity*)



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Physical activity and chronic diseases

Seven chronic diseases are associated with physical inactivity: coronary artery disease, stroke, hypertension, colon cancer, breast cancer, Type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis (Katzmarzyk & Janssen, 2004, *Canadian Journal of Applied Physiology*).

The three most expensive diseases associated with physical inactivity are:

- coronary artery disease (CDN\$1.7 billion)
- osteoporosis (CDN\$1.5 billion)
- stroke (CDN\$765 million)

(Katzmarzyk & Janssen, 2004, *Canadian Journal of Applied Physiology*)

If Canadians were to become more active, there would be:

- 26% fewer deaths from Type 2 diabetes
- 20% fewer deaths from colon cancer
- 22% fewer deaths from cardiovascular disease

(Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2005, *Cost of Physical Inactivity*)

Alberta rates of physical inactivity

According to the *Canadian Community Health Survey* (Statistics Canada, 2005):

- 44.6% of Albertans are physically inactive (45.4% of males and 43.8% of females).
- 46.6% of Edmontonians are physically inactive.

- 41.6% of Calgarians are physically inactive.

Physical activity:

- decreases with age
- is higher among people with more education
- is higher among employed people
- is higher among people with a higher income

(Alberta Centre for Active Living, 2007 *Alberta Survey on Physical Activity*)

Canadian rates of physical inactivity

Adults

- 46.7% of Canadians 12 years and older are physically inactive (44.1% of males and 49.3% of females).
- 53.3% of Canadians over the age of 65 are physically inactive (45.8% of males and 59.3% of females).

(Statistics Canada, 2005, *Canadian Community Health Survey*)

Children

Ninety-one per cent of children and youth (5 to 19 years old) are not active enough to meet Health Canada's physical activity guidelines (Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2007, *Physical Activity Levels Among Youth (CAN PLAY) Survey*).

