A Report of the Surgeon General

Physical Activity and Health

The Link Between Physical Activity and Morbidity and Mortality

How Physical Activity Impacts Health

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 prematurely 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 control weight.
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints.
- Helps older adults become stronger and better able to move about without falling.
- Promotes psychological well-being.

Health Burdens That Could Be Reduced Through Physical Activity

Millions of Americans suffer from illnesses that can be prevented or improved through regular physical activity.

- 13.5 million people have coronary heart disease.
- 1.5 million people suffer from a heart attack in a given year.
- 8 million people have adult-onset (non-insulin–dependent) diabetes.
- 95,000 people are newly diagnosed with colon cancer each year.
- 250,000 people suffer from a hip fractures each year.
- 50 million people have high blood pressure.
- Over 60 million people (a third of the population) are overweight.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

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