



Parents Make A Difference!

Active Teens

May 2008

According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are several benefits to physical activity, no matter how old you may be:

- ✓ Helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles.
- ✓ Helps reduce the risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- ✓ Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety and promotes psychological well-being.

Unfortunately, the CDC reports that participation in physical activity declines as children get older.

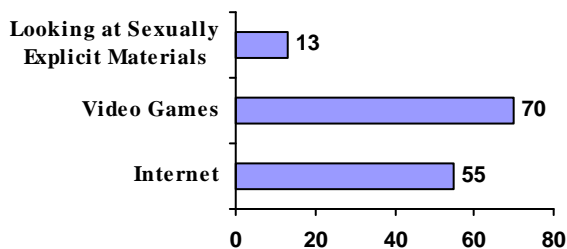
Everyone needs to keep moving to keep looking and feeling good. Children and adolescents should be encouraged to get at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.

What is working against young people being more active?

Youth today are busy!! They have school, jobs, extracurricular and non-school activities which keep them occupied. Unfortunately, many are not physically active for various reasons.

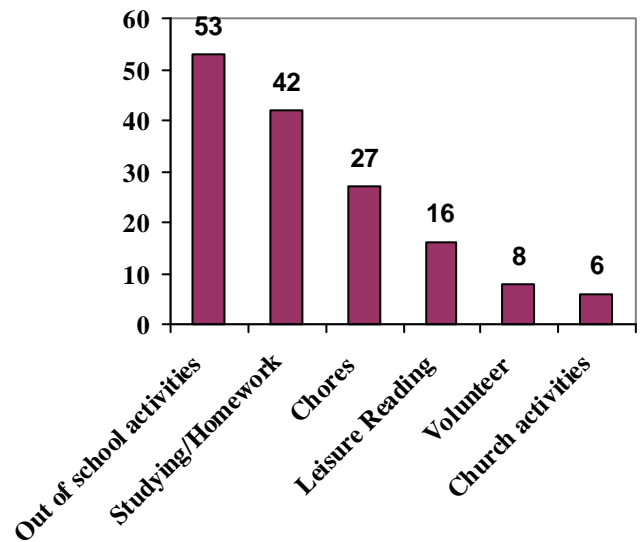
- ✓ Teens today spend time playing video games, surfing the Internet, and looking at sexual materials. The chart below shows data reported on the 2005 Southwest Youth Survey of 3,727 7th through 12th graders in southwest Wisconsin.

Percent of Teens Spending 5 or more hours per week



- ✓ Jobs! According to the 2005 SWYS, 25% of teens spend 11 hours or more per week in a job.
- ✓ Scheduled physical activities, such as formal physical education time in schools, are less available than in the past. According to the CDC, the percentage of high school students who attended physical education classes daily decreased from 42% in 1991 to 25% in 1995, and has remained stable at that level until 2005 (33%). In 2005, 45% of 9th grade students but only 22% of 12th grade students attended physical education class daily.
- ✓ Teens today spend a lot of time in activities outside of school (4-H, community service activities), studying/homework, with chores, reading, volunteering, and in church activities. The chart below shows how many youth reported spending 3 or more hours on those activities in the SWYS survey taken in 2005.

Percent of Teens Spending 3 or More Hours Per Week



Active Teens! Healthy Teens!

It doesn't take a lot of physical activity to make a difference and any activity is better than no activity, according to Jon Morgan, Physical Activity Coordinator at the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services.

Dr. Mike Sharratt, Dean of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Waterloo, suggests that "providing your child with the gift of learning a life-long skill such as skating, skiing, dancing, golf, or another activity is the best present a parent can give a child." He explains that these activities will help children grow into active and healthy adults, with lower risk of obesity, stroke and heart disease, and certain kinds of cancers. Active teens are building and maintaining healthy bones, muscles and joints.

BE ACTIVE!!

- ✓ **At least 30-60 minutes per day**
- ✓ **At least 5 days per week**
- ✓ **Everyday activities count!!**

REMEMBER: PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Being physically active also helps adults and children handle stress. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends regular physical activity to help increase children's and adolescents' self-esteem and capacity for learning.

The benefits of being active as a family extend beyond physical health. Being active as a family promotes time together. It demonstrates that being active can be fun.

WAYS TO ENCOURAGE TEENS TO BE ACTIVE

- Any physical activity is better than none. You don't need to get your daily activity at one time; you can have several short periods of activity that add up to 30 minutes or more per day.
- Model an active, healthy lifestyle.
- Involve others for social interaction and "peer pressure" to stay involved. People, including teens, are more likely to stay with an activity that involves interaction with others.
- One way is to be active together. Go on family walks and play outdoor games together whenever you can. Go sledding, ice skating, or cross-country skiing. Many families enjoy bowling together or swimming at local indoor pools.
- Involve family members in household activities and keep the work enjoyable. For example, shovel snow and make a snowman together or take the dog for a walk together.
- Build physical activities into everyday routines. Park cars further away and walk to school. Use stairs instead of elevators. Play energetic music while doing household chores. Encourage extra body motion to the rhythms.

"Parents Make a Difference" is a product of the Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey (SWYS), a program of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, local school districts and UW-Platteville. This newsletter is adapted from the UW-Extension "Whose Kids?...Our Kids!" Active Teens newsletter, which was originally written by Sarah Weier. This issue of "Parents Make a Difference" was written by Jessie Potterton, UW-Extension Lafayette County and edited by Amy Mitchell, UW-Extension Crawford County, Bev Doll and Tom Schmitz, UW-Extension Grant County and Pam Hobson, UW-Extension Richland County. Thanks are extended to the 3,727 7th to 12th graders from southwest Wisconsin who participated in the 2005 SWYS survey. Contact UW-Extension www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/grant/tap/SWYS2005.html for further information: Grant County (608) 723-2125; Lafayette County (608) 776-4820; and Richland County (608) 647-6148 and Crawford County (608) 326-0224.