



Fact Sheet

How Active Do We Need To Be?

- The Surgeon General recommends that all persons accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week (Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the US Surgeon General, 1996).
- The National Association for Sports and Physical Education encourages elementary school children to receive at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily (NASPE, 2001).
- The American Cancer Society recommends that children and teens be active for at least an hour each day (American Cancer Society Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines for Cancer Prevention, 2002).
- In the United States, women, people with less education and people in low-income groups are less physically active than men, more highly educated people and people in higher income groups (Barnes, PM; Schoenborn, CA. Physical activity among adults: United States, 2000. Advanced data from vital and health statistics; No. 333, Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics, 2003).

Are Maine Folks Active Enough?

- Twenty-six percent of Maine adults have a completely sedentary lifestyle, defined as leisure-time physical activity of less than 20 minutes per day, less than three days per week (Maine Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2002).
- Thirty-nine percent of Maine youth do not participate in vigorous physical activity on three days or more per week (Maine Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2003).
- Ninety-two percent of Maine high school students do not attend daily physical education classes (Maine Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2003).

How about the rest of the country?

- Nationally, one in four adults engage in little or no regular physical activity (Barnes, PM; Schoenborn, CA. Physical activity among adults: United States, 2000. Advanced data from vital and health statistics; No. 333, Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics, 2003.)
- Sixty-two percent of youth age 9-13 do not participate in organized physical activity led by a coach, instructor or other leader (MMWR, 2003 52(33); 785-788).



Fact Sheet (continued)

How Can Places for Physical Activity Help?

- People who have greater access to community facilities, such as parks, indoor gyms and walking/biking trails or tracks are more likely to have higher levels of physical activity. (Brownson, R.C.; Baker, E.; Housemann, R. et al. Environmental and policy determinants of physical activity in the US. American Journal of Public Health 2001;91:1995-2003).
- People who report not having access to public outdoor facilities such as walking/running tracks, or basketball and tennis courts, within the community are more likely to be overweight. (Catlin, T.K.; Simoes, E.J.; Brownson, R.C. Environmental and Policy Factors Associated With Overweight Among Adults in Missouri, American Journal of Health Promotion March/April 2003, Vol 17, No. 4 249-258).
- When neighborhoods are perceived to be safe, physical activity rates increase greatly among older adults (National Blueprint: Increasing Physical Activity Among Adults Age 50 and Older. Sponsored by AARP, American College of Sports Medicine, American Geriatrics Society, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The National Institute on Aging and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 4/2001).

How Can Places for Physical Activity Help Our Community-at-Large?

- People who use a facility, park, open area, school or other place for physical activity are more likely to visit nearby area businesses, boosting local economy.
- Designating places for physical activity creates settings where community members not only remain active, but also socialize and connect, strengthening community ties.
- Factors such as weather, lighting and air pollution affect physical activity levels regardless of individual motivation and desire to be physically active. Enhancing access to safe, comfortable and affordable physical activity options will address this barrier. (Kahn, E.B et al. and Task Force on Community Preventive Service: The Effectiveness of Interventions to Increase Physical Activity, a Systematic Review, American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2002;22(4s), p. 73-102, Elsevier Science Inc.)
- The benefits of environmental changes reach beyond health. Community-based efforts, such as enhancing access to places for physical activity, can also increase community morale and involvement such as participation in local government. (Task Force on Community Preventive Service. Recommendations to Increase Physical Activity in Communities, American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2002;22(4s), p. 67-72, Elsevier Science Inc.)