

Get active each day

Did you know?

- ★ In NSW, less than half of primary and just over half of secondary school students do at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day.
- ★ Primary and secondary school boys are more active than primary and secondary school girls.

Why get active?

Regular physical activity is an important part of getting healthy and staying healthy.

Encouraging kids and teens to be active from a young age sets good habits early on and helps them develop the skills they need to stay active throughout their lives.

Regular physical activity helps kids and teens to:

- grow and develop healthily
- build strong bones and muscles
- improve balance and develop skills
- maintain and develop flexibility
- achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- improve cardiovascular fitness
- reduce stress and feel more relaxed
- improve posture
- boost confidence and self-esteem
- have fun with their friends and make new ones.



Kids and teens who don't get enough physical activity are at a greater risk of becoming overweight or obese. This makes it harder for them to be active and keep up in sport or play.

Being overweight can also make kids more prone to conditions such as asthma, flat feet and joint sprains. In the long term, it can contribute to conditions such as high blood pressure and cholesterol, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and liver disease.

Research tells us that the warning signs for these conditions can be present in overweight teenagers as young as 15 years of age.

“Physical activity doesn't all have to happen at the one time. It can be accumulated throughout the day”

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How much activity?

Kids and teens should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. Physical activity should include a variety of activities, including activities which makes them 'huff and puff'. Kids and teens can get even more health benefits from doing physical activity up to three hours every day.

Kids and teens should do strengthening physical activities at least three days of the week. Strengthening activities, such as climbing, jumping, running or playing tug-o-war, help to build muscle and strong bones.*

To help kids and teens be active every day, they need opportunities for sport, play and exercise at school, after school and on weekends.

Physical activity doesn't all have to happen at the one time. It can be accumulated throughout the day by walking or riding to and from school, being involved in activities at school, active play at home or taking part in organised sport after school and on weekends.

How to help kids and teens be more active

- Be a good role model and have a positive attitude to being active. If your children see you enjoying physical activity and having fun, it can motivate them to participate.
- Encourage them to play in the backyard, dance to music, ride a bike or get involved in vigorous activities like running, swimming or playing sports like soccer, netball or basketball.
- Make time to be active as a family – walk to the local park, go bike riding or take the dog for a stroll.
- Encourage 'active play' by buying gifts that get kids and teens up and moving, such as balls, bats, skipping ropes and other equipment. It also helps them develop and practice new skills.

- Park some distance away from your destination – school, sport or the shops – and walk the rest of the way.
- Make sure kids and teens have an opportunity to be active after school, either through active play or organised sport.
- Encourage kids and teens to try different sports or activities so they can find one or more that they really enjoy.
- Start slowly and build up the amount of physical activity that your children do, particularly if they haven't previously been very active.
- Minimise the amount of time that kids and teens spend being sedentary (still) every day. Kids and teens should spend no more than 2 hours a day using 'small screen' entertainment – such as watching TV, going online or playing computer games. Break up long periods of time sitting with physical activity such as playing in the backyard or dancing to music as much as possible.
- Kids and teens should wear hats, appropriate footwear and 30+ sunscreen when they're being active outdoors.
- Make sure they drink plenty of water when they are physically active or playing sports.
- An active lifestyle is fuelled by healthy foods – make sure your children make healthy food and drink choices and limit foods that are high in added sugar, salt and saturated fat.

For more information and ideas on healthy eating and physical activity, go to www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

*The recommendations are based on Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for children (5-12 years) and young people (13-17 years).