



Fact Sheet: Children (5-12 years)

Introduction

These guidelines apply to all children aged 5 to 12 years* irrespective of cultural background, gender, socioeconomic status, and ability.

Physical activity should occur in as many ways as possible, such as active transportation, leisure, active play, organised and non-organised sports, games, physical education and other activities at home, school and in the community. This is in addition to the routine activities accumulated during daily living (incidental physical activity).

Compliance with the physical activity guidelines can improve cardiometabolic health, body composition, musculoskeletal health, aspects of mental health and wellbeing, and cardiorespiratory fitness. The potential benefits far exceed the potential risks associated with physical activity.

Greater amounts of physical activity – frequency, duration, and/or intensity are associated with additional health benefits for children. The level of evidence is not considered strong enough for a specific vigorous intensity dose-based recommendation; however, it is acknowledged that additional health benefits may be achieved through participation in this type of activity. There is some evidence that benefits to cardiometabolic and musculoskeletal health are associated with resistance-based and weight-bearing activity on at least three days per week. All physical activity should be safe and appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the child.

For those who are not sufficiently active, it is appropriate to gradually increase activity levels to meet the guidelines.

Sedentary behaviour (sitting or reclining during waking hours) should be limited in as many ways as possible at home, in school, in the community and when travelling – particularly by reducing use of electronic media (screen time) for entertainment.

Compliance with the guidelines to minimise sedentary behaviour can reduce the risk of a negative impact on body composition, cardiorespiratory and musculoskeletal fitness, aspects of mental health and wellbeing, as well as on academic performance and social behaviours. Less sedentary time is better.

Make your move – Sit less – Be active for life!





Australian Government
Department of Health

AUSTRALIA'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES

*Except in cases where physical activity is contraindicated or presents a risk to children with special needs or because of the presence of a chronic or acute condition. Individuals who are unsure should consult their health care provider.

Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- For health benefits, children aged 5-12 years should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity every day.
- Children's physical activity should include a variety of aerobic activities, including some vigorous intensity activity.
- On at least three days per week, children should engage in activities that strengthen muscle and bone.
- To achieve additional health benefits, children should engage in more activity – up to several hours per day.

SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR

To reduce health risks, children aged 5-12 years should minimise the time they spend being sedentary every day. To achieve this:

- Limit use of electronic media for entertainment (e.g. television, seated electronic games and computer use) to no more than two hours a day - lower levels are associated with reduced health risks.
- Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.

For more information visit: www.health.gov.au

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