

MaineHealth

Learning Community

Federal Government Releases NEW Exercise Guidelines for Americans

Released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans provides science-based guidance to help Americans aged 6 and older improve their health through appropriate physical activity. **Developed with health professionals and policymakers in mind, the Guidelines can help you:**

- Teach patients about the health benefits of physical activity
- Understand how to encourage patients to engage in physical activity to meet the Guidelines
- Encourage patients to reduce their risks of activity-related injury

These Guidelines are increasingly important to discuss with patients as data shows that **Americans' current inactivity puts them at unnecessary risk for health-related issues.** The latest information shows that inactivity among American children, adolescents, and adults remains relatively high, and little progress has been made in increasing levels of physical activity among those populations. This is unfortunate because research shows that regular physical activity can help lower the risk of many chronic diseases, stroke, metabolic syndrome, high blood pressure, some cancers and much more.

A quick review of the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults aged 18-64:

- Adults should do 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate-intensity, or 1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, preferably spread throughout the week.
- Additional health benefits are provided by increasing to 5 hours (300 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity, or 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both.
- Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups performed on 2 or more days per week.

To review the complete 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines (including those for adults, children and older adults), please visit DHHS' website at:

<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/default.aspx>

Here you will find:

- Comprehensive PDF document explaining the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines
- A cheat sheet for busy providers and health professionals (<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/factsheetprof.aspx>)
- "Be Active Your Way" – a toolkit for patients to use to increase physical activity according to the 2008 Guidelines