

PRESCRIPTION

for health



LIMIT "SCREEN TIME" (TIME WATCHING TV, PLAYING VIDEO GAMES, OR USING THE COMPUTER):

- Know how much screen time you and your children are getting and then set limits for the entire family.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that children 2 years or older should spend no more than 2 hours a day watching TV, playing video games, and using the computer.
- Do not use screen time as a reward or punishment for your child.
- Turn commercial breaks into activity breaks when watching TV. Do jumping jacks, pushups, or crunches or run in place during commercial breaks.
- Turn off the television during mealtime and homework time.
- Put the TV and computer in common areas like the living room instead of your child's bedroom.



WHY IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IMPORTANT?

Physical activity builds strong bones and muscles. It also decreases the likelihood of developing obesity and risk factors for diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Being active, may also reduce anxiety and depression and promote positive mental health.

WHAT IS THE DAILY RECOMMENDATION FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS?

Based on the physical activity needs, benefits, and characteristics of children and adolescents, the following guidelines should be used to maximize health and well-being among children and adolescents. **Children and adolescents should accumulate a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity daily as part of transportation, physical education, sport, free play, and planned exercise.** These activities should be a combination of moderate and vigorous intensity. Moderate intensity is defined as activity that increases breathing, sweating, and heart rate and vigorous intensity substantially increases breathing, sweating, and heart rate.



TYPES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Activities for children and adolescents should be varied, developmentally/age appropriate, and enjoyable. Examples of aerobic activities include cycling or bike riding, walking, running, field-court-rink games (soccer, lacrosse, basketball, volleyball, hockey, and field hockey), roller blading, dancing, and swimming. Note that there is little need for healthy children and adolescents to monitor their heart rate during the activity period. Children and adolescents should also participate in activities that promote muscle strength on 2 or 3 days per week.

Examples of activities for *young* children include climbing, jumping, tumbling and gymnastics, and a variety of games. *Older* children and adolescents can participate in supervised strength-training programs provided the focus is on developing proper exercise technique. Good form and mechanics should be stressed.

Sedentary activity is a strong contributor to overweight and low physical fitness. Sedentary activities such as television viewing, computer and telephone use, and inactive video games should be limited to less than 2 hours per day.

YOUR CHILDREN LEARN FROM YOU; LEAD AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE YOURSELF.

- Make family time physical activity time, go for a walk together or play catch outside.
- Build physical activity into your family's daily routine. Take a walk after dinner together or do housework or yard work together.
- Use local, low-cost, or free places like public parks, baseball fields, and basketball courts to be active.
- Attend family nights or other physical activity events at your child's school or local community centers.
- Be active whenever possible. Walk or ride bikes to school or the bus stop instead of riding in a car. Parents of young children can enjoy the walk or bike ride, too.



ABOUT US

The *Commit to Fit!* Prescription for Health Program is an evidence-based, best practice program that is designed to increase the practice of disease-specific physical activity and support linkages to community-based fitness and nutrition.

Commit to Fit! is a community-wide health behavior improvement initiative designed to promote the practice of healthy lifestyles in Genesee County by utilizing a common message and strategy that engages all residents. To facilitate improved health behaviors throughout the year, *Commit to Fit!* offers community-based classes as well as annual community-wide challenges centered around physical activity, nutrition, and overall wellness. *Commit to Fit!* is free to all those who live, learn, work, and play in Flint & Genesee County.



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Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2008

American College of Sports Medicine. *Physical Activity in Children and Adolescents*; 2015

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Physical Activity Examples

Special Considerations

What Can Families Do?



TYPE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES
Moderate Intensity Aerobic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active recreation, such as hiking, skateboarding, rollerblading Bicycle riding Brisk walking
Vigorous Intensity Aerobic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active games involving running and chasing, such as tag Jumping rope Martial arts, such as karate Running Sports such as soccer, ice or field hockey, basketball, swimming, tennis Cross-country skiing
Muscle Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Games such as tug-of-war Modified push-ups (with knees on the floor) Resistance exercises using body weight or resistance bands Rope or tree climbing Sit-ups (curl-ups or crunches) Swinging on playground equipment/bars 
Bone Strengthening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Games such as hopscotch Hopping, skipping, jumping Jumping rope Running Sports such as gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, tennis



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

- Provide positive feedback and encourage an active lifestyle.
- Children and youth should be exposed to a variety of physical activities and sports. This is important to prevent overuse injury and to develop a full variety of movement skills.
- Kids who cannot participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day should gradually increase their frequency and duration of activity until they can reach the activity goal.
- Kids with special conditions (e.g., diabetes, movement disorders) or disabilities should have their activity monitored by a professional.

OVERVIEW:

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS SHOULD HAVE 60 MINUTES (1 HOUR) OR MORE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DAILY.



AEROBIC: Most of the 60 or more minutes a day should be either moderate or vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity and should include vigorous intensity physical activity at least 3 days a week.

MUSCLE STRENGTHENING: As part of their 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include muscle strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week.

BONE STRENGTHENING: As part of their 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include bone-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week.

It is important to encourage young people to participate in physical activities that are appropriate for their age, that are enjoyable, and that offer variety.



WHAT CAN FAMILIES DO TO GET AND KEEP THEIR CHILDREN ACTIVE?

Kids learn a lot about physical activity from their families. Family members who enjoy physical activity can help children enjoy physical activity. Caregivers play a very important role in determining youth participation in physical activities – how much, how often, and what type of physical activity. Caregivers can also help youth balance non-active time periods (watching TV, using the computer, or talking on the phone) and physical activity.