

# PRESCRIPTION

for health



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

### TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Obesity continues to threaten the health and well-being of children across the globe. There is a need for parents, caregivers, physicians, and schools to identify children who are “at risk” and initiate lifestyle changes to prevent further escalation of health problems. Lifestyle modifications, as suggested here, can be part of prevention and treatment for being overweight and obese. This is a trend that can be reversed.

### 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.

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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### WHY IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IMPORTANT FOR OVERWEIGHT AND OBESE CHILDREN?

Being overweight and obese is caused by an energy imbalance where calories consumed exceed calories expended throughout the day. This leads to an increased fat storage in the body. Sedentary lifestyles have contributed to this problem particularly with increased “technology” time (television, computers, and video games) and decreased time spent in activities and physical play. Children who do not get enough physical activity are more at risk for chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Being active, may also reduce anxiety and depression and promote positive mental health.

Additionally, children currently consume foods that are high in calories, but low in nutrient quality. Many of these foods contain fewer vitamins, minerals, fiber, and protein than are recommended and have a higher fat content. Families also tend to eat more packaged, processed, and pre-prepared foods, which gives them less control over the ingredients, rather than making meals from wholesome ingredients.

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.



### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity has a positive effect on health and is an essential component in prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity. Physical activity can help to lower blood pressure and cholesterol, decrease total body fat, and help to maintain body weight. Physical activity is important for growth and development of the cardiovascular system, increasing bone density, and improving muscle health. Like adults, children should be physically active most days of the week. 60 minutes of moderate physical activity daily for children is recommended by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Institute of Health.

### INSIDE

- Nutrition
- What Can Families Do?
- Physical Activity Examples





**TYPES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

There are many ways to get children and families moving: walking, biking, dancing, jumping rope, basketball, Frisbee, and skating all count! Families can spend active time together visiting playgrounds, parks, museums, and zoos. Consider taking active vacations together that include hiking, biking, walking, boating, and swimming. Involve children in household activities like walking the dog, washing a car, raking leaves, lawn-mowing, and shoveling snow. Physical activity is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle for the entire family.

**NUTRITION**

Children who are overweight and obese need to reduce their daily caloric intake while maintaining a diet that is balanced in nutrients to encourage proper growth and development. Choose foods that are wholesome: fruits, vegetables, low-fat or fat-free dairy, high-fiber grains, and lean proteins. You may consult the U.S. Dietary Guidelines at [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) or for more information on where you can get help, call 810-953-CHAP(2427).

**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. See examples on back page.



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

Youth 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.

**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 two years or older should spend no more than two 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.



**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.
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