



FACT SHEET

TOOL KIT FOR TEEN CARE, SECOND EDITION

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

How much should you exercise?

- Experts recommend 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week.
- Exercises may include the following types:
 - Aerobic exercise is continuous activity in which breathing becomes faster and the heart rate increases. This type of physical activity makes your heart and lungs get a workout too, which keeps your whole body healthy and fit.
 - Life exercises can be any physical activities that increase fitness. These can be done every day and become part of your daily routine. It may be as easy as walking fast to the mailbox.

What are the benefits of exercise?

- Adolescents who frequently exercise handle stress better than those who do not exercise.
- Regular exercise decreases anxiety and depression and increases self-esteem.
- Regular aerobic exercise helps decrease the risk of chronic diseases, such as diabetes mellitus and hypertension.
- Regular exercise helps the body fight infection and chronic illness.

Why don't teenagers exercise?

- Many teens watch television, play video games, and surf the Internet during their free time.
- Many believe that aerobic activity is not fun.
- Lack of time is a common problem for many teens.
- Some teens do not live in environments where it is safe to exercise or where it is common to exercise.

How can you stay fit?

- Choose one or more physical activities that you like then do that activity for at least 60 minutes most days of the week. Before you know it, exercise will become a regular part of your life. If you are active by age 16 years, you are less likely to be inactive in adulthood.
- You can participate in a team or individual sport in school or after school.
- If you are not used to exercising, try to slowly increase the amount of physical activity that you do each day.
 - Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
 - Offer to help your parent or guardian carry in the groceries, do yard work, wash the car, or vacuum.
 - Go for a walk with friends or family and try to gradually increase the distance.
 - Make sure gym class is not your only activity.

What are some exercises that you can do?

- Some good life exercises are listed as follows:
 - Using stairs
 - Walking
 - Bicycling
- Some good aerobic exercises are listed as follows:
 - Basketball
 - Soccer
 - Aerobics class
 - Skating
 - Jogging
 - Swimming

How can you be protected against injury?

- Heavy weight lifting is not recommended for developing teens. You should avoid it until you are fully physically developed (age 15–18 years), and you should be supervised to learn how to use free weights or machines correctly.
- You should play active team sports with teens of similar age and physical ability.





- Avoid the pressure to “win at all costs,” which is taught by many coaches.
- Good nutrition is important, especially to keep bones strong and to make it less likely you will break a bone. Also, you will do better at your sport with proper nutrition. A nutritionist can help design a balanced diet for you and may recommend taking a multivitamin or calcium supplement.
- You should use the correct gear for protection and comfort according to the sport:
 - Wear a helmet when bicycling. You should wear cycling shorts with thick padding to help avoid vulvar pain and irritation.
 - Wear pads and a helmet when in-line skating, snowboarding, skiing, and using scooters.
 - Wear a mouth guard for contact sports.
 - Wear shoes with ankle support if you are in sports that involve a lot of running.
 - Wear bras with good breast support. The bra should keep the breasts from actively moving while running.
 - Female soccer players are four times more likely than male soccer players to get a knee injury. Knee protection to prevent ligament injuries might include maintaining a healthy weight, strengthening muscles, and practicing proper jumping and playing techniques. Shin guards should be used for added protection.

What are the signs that you are exercising too much or “overdoing” it?

- Swelling of joints
- Weight loss
- Being really tired
- Getting injured a lot
- Obsession with exercise
- Problems with your periods
- Being really upset when unable to exercise
- Each of these problems could have medical consequences and should be discussed with a health care practitioner.

For More Information

We have provided information on the following organizations and web sites because they have information that may be of interest to our readers. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) does not necessarily endorse the views expressed or the facts presented by these organizations or on these web sites. Further, ACOG does not endorse any commercial products that may be advertised or available from these organizations or on these web sites.

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance

Telephone: (703) 476-3400 or (800) 213-7193

Web: www.aahperd.org/index.cfm

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Telephone: (202) 638-5577 or (800) 673-8444

Web: www.acog.org

American College of Sports Medicine

Telephone: (317) 637-9200

Web: www.acsm.org

BAM! Body and Mind

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Telephone: (404) 639-3534 or (800) 311-3435

Web: Physical Activity: www.bam.gov/sub_physicalactivity/index.html

Your safety: www.bam.gov/sub_yoursafety/index.html

National Association for Health & Fitness

Telephone: (716) 583-0521

Web: www.physicalfitness.org

National Youth Sports Safety Foundation

Telephone: (617) 367-6677

Web: www.nyssf.org