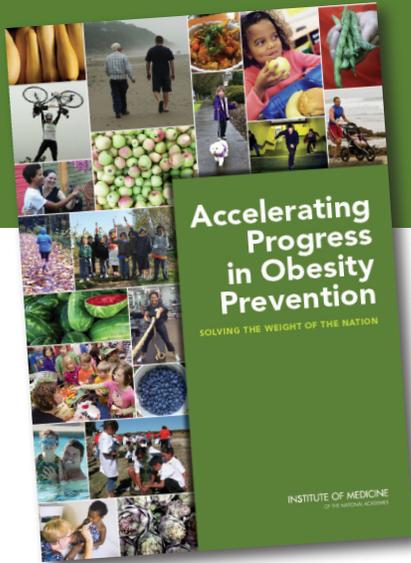


Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention

SOLVING THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION

AN EXPERT REPORT FROM THE INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE



The Challenges We Face: More than one-third of adults and close to one-fifth of children and adolescents in the United States are obese. Obesity’s effects on health and health care costs could become catastrophic. While many communities are taking important steps to reduce the epidemic, accelerating progress is critical. Success requires action from all of us in the places where we live, work, learn, and play. Progress in one area will reinforce progress in others.

Integrating Physical Activity Every Day in Every Way

Physical activity is key to maintaining a healthy weight. The way that environments where we live, work, learn, and play are designed and built—for example, whether there are sidewalks or bike lanes—influences how physically active we are.

Why should we strive to bring this vision to life?

Regular physical activity is key to maintaining a healthy weight and has many other health benefits.

TODAY’S REALITY	TOMORROW’S VISION
Only about one-fifth of adults get the amount of physical activity they need.	All children and adults achieve recommended amounts of physical activity.
Many people face obstacles to being active, such as lack of sidewalks, bike lanes, or a park or playground near their home; heavy traffic; or unsafe neighborhoods.	States and communities have policies and support efforts that make physical activity environments available and friendly.
Some child care centers and settings do not provide opportunities for young children to be active.	Young children are active for at least one-quarter of the time they are in child care settings.

See the other solutions in this series:

- Schools
- Food and Drink
- Marketing
- Workplaces
- Health Care

How could this vision come to life in your community?

PLANNERS, ARCHITECTS, AND DEVELOPERS

- Design communities that encourage and support physical activity.

EMPLOYERS

- Support community programs that provide physical activity opportunities for employees and their families.

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

- Provide leadership in advocating for increased physical activity opportunities in the community.

COMMUNITIES

- Enhance access to places and programs where people can be active in a safe, enjoyable way.
- Develop agreements with local schools that allow community residents to use school recreation areas outside of school hours.
- Run physical activity promotion campaigns.
- Help physical activity fit into people's daily routines, such as building sidewalks or bike paths between residential areas, shops, and offices.

FEDERAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Require physical activity opportunities for an average of 15 minutes for every hour in early child care.
- Routinely update national physical activity guidelines.
- Translate these guidelines into strategies that make physical activity a health priority.
- Create tax incentives for building sidewalks and trails and enact zoning policies that provide easy pedestrian access to stores and offices.

Why should we strive to bring this vision to life?

Evidence shows that...

- Getting the recommended amount of activity reduces adults' risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancers, high blood pressure, and depression.
- Physical activity positively affects children's fitness, body fatness, heart and bone health, and depression and anxiety.
- Physical activity in infancy may help control excessive weight gain.
- Creating or enhancing access to places like parks, playgrounds, sidewalks, and trails increases physical activity.

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