

Preaching What You Practice

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Physical inactivity is a key risk factor for the most prevalent chronic diseases of our time - heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and breast and colon cancers. Physicians and other health care providers play an important role in helping patients' become more physically active.

Welcome to CDC Audio Rounds. I'm Dr. Felipe Lobelo, an epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to a paper in the July 2012 issue of The Lancet, more than 1.3 million deaths worldwide could be prevented if more people got the recommended dose of this powerful prescription - 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking for 30 minutes, five days a week.

Data shows that about 40 percent of primary care doctors and medical students don't follow this prescription and are not active themselves. Real-life experience *does* make a difference. Physicians who talk to their patients about their own exercise habits are regarded as more credible and engaging, and greatly improve their ability to help patients become more physically active. However, physical activity counseling by clinicians in the US remains low. Only about one-third of adults received exercise counseling at their last medical visit.

When counseling patients about physical activity, discuss *your* exercise habits, including barriers and what you do to overcome them. You can suggest an activity, such as brisk walking, and explain that people who are physically active live longer, have a better quality of life, and are at lower risk for chronic diseases. You can also record their physical activity levels as a "vital sign" in medical records and provide counseling and referral to appropriate community programs.

CDC supports the American College of Sports Medicine initiative, *Exercise is Medicine*. It provides free, easy-to-use tools and resources that physicians, exercise professionals, and other providers can use to record, counsel, and refer patients. Learn more about this initiative at www.exerciseismedicine.org.

Physical activity and exercise counseling need to become an integral part of "mainstream" medical care and disease prevention in the US and around the world. As physicians and health care providers, we have the opportunity every day to elevate the importance of physical activity, improve the nation's health, and help control the growing financial burden we face due to chronic diseases. We need to become more active ourselves and practice what we preach.

Thanks for listening - I'm off to play soccer – what are you doing today? Remember, your commitment to physical activity not only benefits you, but your patients, as well.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.