



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Take a Walk

Walking Among Adults — United States, 2005 and 2010

Recorded: August 7, 2012; posted: August 9, 2012

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

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Regular physical activity has many health benefits, including weight control and prevention of chronic diseases. Most adults don't get enough physical activity.

Dr. Dianna Carroll is a researcher with CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. She's joining us today to discuss the benefits of walking. Welcome to the show, Dianna.

[Dr. Carroll] Thank you, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Dianna, what are the health benefits of regular physical activity?

[Dr. Carroll] In addition to better fitness, physical activity helps prevent premature death. It also lowers the risk of many chronic diseases, like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and certain cancers, such as breast and colon cancer. As you mentioned, it helps prevent weight gain, and in older adults, it also helps prevent falls.

[Dr. Gaynes] How much physical activity does a person need?

[Dr. Carroll] Well, adults should get at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity, that's 2 ½ hours, each week. And aerobic physical activities are those that increase your breathing and your heart rate and they include activities like brisk walking, water aerobics, bicycling, dancing, and general gardening. And you can get your 2 ½ hours a week in blocks of at least 10 minutes at a time.

[Dr. Gaynes] So, how are we doing here in the US?

[Dr. Carroll] We need to be more physically active. In our study, we found less than half of adults get the 150 minutes of aerobic activity each week. And this can be improved by doing activity as simple as brisk walking.

[Dr. Gaynes] Is walking just as beneficial as other types of physical activity?

[Dr. Carroll] There may be a misconception that walking isn't a good physical activity, however, brisk walking is an excellent way to get your heart rate up and your breathing up. It can be done in blocks of at least 10 minutes at a time and walking doesn't require

special skill or expensive equipment and it can really be done anywhere – indoors or outdoors, alone or with other people – which makes it a very popular physical activity.

[Dr. Gaynes] Should a person consult with a health care provider before beginning an aerobic physical activity program?

[Dr. Carroll] People with symptoms, such as chest pain, dizziness, or joint pain, or who have known chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, or osteoarthritis, should consult with their health care providers to develop a physical activity plan that's appropriate for them. People who don't have chronic conditions and who don't have symptoms don't need to consult with a health care provider about physical activity.

[Dr. Gaynes] Dianna, where can listeners get more information about the benefits of regular physical activity?

[Dr. Carroll] Listeners can go to www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity, and that's all one word.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Dianna. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Dianna Carroll about the health benefits of walking.

Each week, adults need at least 2 ½ hours of aerobic physical activity, which increases breathing and the heart rate. Activities should be done for at least 10 minutes at a time. If you're not getting enough physical activity, consider brisk walking.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

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