



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Young and Active

Disparities in Adolescent Residence in Neighborhoods Supportive of Physical Activity — United States 2011-2012

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[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 is essential at all stages of life, but it's especially important that young people develop good exercise habits early.

Dr. Kathy Watson is a researcher with CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of ensuring that young people get enough exercise. Welcome to the show, Kathy.

[Dr. Watson] Thank you, Bob. I'm happy to be here.

[Dr. Gaynes] Kathy, how much exercise should young people get each day?

[Dr. Watson] Kids, ages six to 17 should get one hour a day every day. And most of the activities should be aerobic activities, like riding a bike or taking a walk. But kids should also do muscle-strengthening activities, such as pushups or playing on playground equipment. And kids should also do bone-strengthening activities, such as gymnastics or running. And kids should do activities that they enjoy and that are appropriate for their age.

[Dr. Gaynes] How many kids in the U.S. are achieving this level of activity?

[Dr. Watson] Unfortunately, only one in four high school kids are getting the recommended levels of aerobic activity.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some reasons kids don't get enough exercise?

[Dr. Watson] Well Bob, we've heard a number of reasons. However, the top three seem to be kids saying they don't have enough time to be active or that they don't like sports or they don't feel that they can do sports and they say that their neighborhoods are not safe. In addition, with all the new technology, kids have a greater opportunity to be inactive. They spend more time watching TV, playing video games, and using the computer.

[Dr. Gaynes] Kathy, what are some of the benefits of getting enough physical activity?

[Dr. Watson] Well, in kids, it helps their hearts and bones and muscles get stronger and it also helps with their academic performance in school and cognitive skills. It also helps them pay

attention. On the other hand, not being physically active leads to things like heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes later in life.

[Dr. Gaynes] What can parents do to help their children be more physically active?

[Dr. Watson] Well Bob, parents can do a number of things. First, parents can be role models. For example, they can take their children out for a walk after dinner. Parents can also encourage their kids to be active. For younger kids, it may be encouraging them to go out and play tag with a friend or ride bikes. For older kids, they can help them participate in team or individual sports. Parents can also work with their neighbors and local officials to let them know what areas are not safe or in need of sidewalks or repairs. And they can work together to get a nearby park cleaned up and they can also work with their schools to see about getting their schools to participate in a shared use program. And that's where the school facilities, like gyms or playgrounds or tracks, are made available to the community when students are not in school.

[Dr. Gaynes] Kathy, where can listeners get more information about children and physical activity?

[Dr. Watson] For more information, listeners can go to cdc.gov/physicalactivity and 'physicalactivity' is all one word.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Kathy. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Kathy Watson about the importance of young people engaging in regular physical activity.

Parents: Work with neighbors and local officials to ensure that young people have adequate places for physical activity. In addition, kids should be encouraged to participate in sports and other extracurricular activities where they can be regularly active.

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.