

HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Children love to play and be active. Children aged 5 and over should be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day. It doesn't have to be a structured sport; anything that gets them up and moving will do.

WHY IS BEING ACTIVE SO IMPORTANT?

Exercise can be anything that makes a child breathe faster and their heart beat quicker. Sitting less and exercising for an hour each day has many health benefits for children.

- They will develop healthy bones, muscles and joints
- They will develop a healthy heart and lungs
- Their coordination, strength and muscle control will improve
- They will maintain a healthy body weight
- Their body will become more flexible
- Their balance and posture will improve
- Their brain will develop vital connections, leading to improved concentration and thinking skills
- They are less likely to develop chronic diseases such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes

HOW MUCH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DO CHILDREN NEED?

1 TO 5 YEARS:

At least 3 hours, spread over the day, of being physically active

5 TO 12 YEARS:

At least 60 minutes of physical activity, of moderate to vigorous intensity, every day

This activity should include a variety of aerobic activities as well as activities that strengthen muscle and bone.

Children should also limit the amount of time they spend sitting. Under-5's should spend no more than 2 hours a day in front of a screen.

A small number of children overexercise to lose weight they do not need to lose, especially during adolescence. Speak to your doctor if you are concerned this is the case for your child.

TIPS

- Choose games that encourage movement and help develop their coordination
- Involve the whole family when possible
- Try to take children outdoors as much as possible
- Get your child involved in different sports
- Walk or ride a bike rather than taking the car
- Build physical activity into your child's daily life