

Children & Adolescents

(7 to 18 years)

24-Hour

Singapore-Integrated Activity Guidelines

A SUMMARY OF CONSENSUS STATEMENTS

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- 1. For physical, mental and social health, children and adolescents should acquire a lifestyle that integrates regular physical activity, limited sedentary behaviour, adequate sleep and good eating habits within each 24-hour period.**
 - Regular physical activity improves aerobic fitness, cardiometabolic risks, mental health and academic results.
 - Prolonged sedentary behaviour and shorter sleep duration are associated with negative health effects including obesity.
 - It is equally important to understand the importance of each type of behaviour and to organise them within each 24-hour period.
- 2. Accumulate at least an average of 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity in a week, where more is better.**
 - Participating in a range of physical activities for at least an average of 60 minutes or more per day in a week to promote habitual physical activity and development of health- and skill-related fitness.
 - The intensity of physical activity can be characterised by monitoring the breathing and heart rate or by the ability to speak in full or incomplete sentences (i.e., the talk test).
 - Moderate intensity is characterised by a noticeable increase in breathing and heart rate or the ability to talk in short sentences.
 - Vigorous intensity is characterised by a large increase in breathing and heart rate or the inability to talk in complete sentences.

3. Engage in muscle and bone strengthening exercises at least three times a week. This could be part of the daily minimum accumulation of 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity.

- These activities promote optimal physical growth and development, improve muscle strength and endurance, strengthens bone and help with injury prevention.
- Exercises range from weight-bearing activities (e.g. climbing stairs) to resistance exercises using body weight (e.g. push-up) or light resistance (e.g. dumbbell).

4. Engage regularly in a variety of light physical activities throughout the day.

- Light physical activities have health benefits and these activities range from not sitting and standing still to walking leisurely.
- Choose the more active option as much as possible, such as climbing stairs instead of using elevators.
- Encourage active outdoor play whenever possible.
- Aim to achieve 12,000 steps or more daily, including planned and unplanned exercises.

5. Limit recreational screen time as much as possible.

- Recreational inactive screen time activities include television viewing, electronic device (e.g. phone, tablet and computer) use and physically inactive video games.
- Daily recreational screen time of 2 hours or more is associated with the most negative health effects such as weight gain, poor motor and mental development, and poor psychosocial health.

6. Build in regular breaks to move around during times of prolonged sitting or inactivity.

- Prolonged physical inactivity is damaging to health.
- Take 3-5 minutes breaks for every 30-60 minutes of sedentary physical inactivity.
- These breaks with movement and/or play can reduce the negative impact of prolonged physical inactivity.

7. Have regular sleep of at least 9 hours (for 7-13 years old), at least 8 hours (for 14-17 years old) and at least 7 hours (for 18 years old).

- Achieving the recommended hours of sleep regularly is associated with better attention, learning, behaviour, emotional regulation, mental and physical health.

- Insufficient sleep increases the risk of obesity, hypertension, diabetes and depression in the long term.

8. Take the necessary precautions before, during and after exercise and see a doctor if you feel unwell during the exercise.

- Use appropriate equipment and footwear.
- Always warm-up before and cool-down after exercise.
- Hydrate well before, during and after the exercise and water is always the better option.
- Apply protection against sun and insects when exercising outdoors.
- Do not exercise when unwell and seek medical attention if you experience persistent chest pain, breathlessness, dizziness, bone or joint pain during or after exercise.

9. Have regular meals consisting of nutritionally-balanced foods and drinks to support daily activities, to optimise growth, maturation and development.

- Have good eating habits such as eating together as a family and having regular meal times.
- Nutritionally-balanced foods and drinks include all vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean meats and poultry, seafood, legumes, unsalted nuts, foods prepared with limited solid fats (e.g. butter), sugars and refined starches.
- Limiting consumption of added sugars, food products with natural sugars (e.g. honey, fruit juices) and sugar-sweetened beverages can reduce the risk of obesity and dental caries in children.

10. Aim to achieve most or all recommendations on physical activity, sedentary behaviour, sleep and diet for the best results.

- These recommendations may seem daunting. However once one can make this a way of life over each 24-hour day, it will become easier, more natural, and you will reap bountiful benefits, both physically and psycho-emotionally.
- Start with one or any combination of the recommended behaviours as you can achieve similar health benefits through the same number of recommendations in various combinations.
- Do this together with your friends and family and encourage each other to achieve all the recommendations for the best health benefits.

