

# Children & Adolescents

(7 to 18 years)

# 24-Hour

## *Singapore-Integrated Activity Guidelines*

A SUMMARY OF CONSENSUS STATEMENTS

### CONSENSUS STATEMENTS

- 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.

