



34% of Marin County Children 2 to 17 are “overweight at risk” or are obese. Boys 12 to 17 have a bigger problem than girls. Hispanic and low-income families are particularly at risk.¹⁸



HEALTH FACTS

EXERCISE AND YOUTH

- “Today’s kids may be the first generation in history whose life expectancy is projected to be less than that of their parents.”¹
- New Federal guidelines now recommend that adults should exercise at least 30 minutes daily to cut the risk of chronic disease and children should exercise 60 minutes a day. To prevent weight gain it should be 60 minutes and to maintain weight loss, it should be 60 to 90 minutes.
- Fewer than one in four children report getting 20 minutes of vigorous activity every day of the week, and less than 25 percent get any type of physical exercise daily. At all grade levels, girls get fewer hours of exercise per week than boys, and as children advance through high school, their level of participation drops off.²
- In most gym classes, kids are aerobically active for just 3 minutes.³
- In the years that P.E. has declined, the nation has seen big increases in attention deficit disorder and childhood depression.⁴
- For many young people the opportunities to be physically active as part of daily life are becoming increasingly restricted due to parental concerns over safety.⁵
- Cycling is a simple, convenient, yet effective way of incorporating exercise into everyday life. It is likely to be much more sustainable than targeted exercise initiatives in encouraging individual behavioral change in the long-term.⁶
- Cycling has a functional role which means that it does not rely wholly on self-motivation. It also allows independent travel for children, which is critical for their development.⁷
- Over half of the daily trips that are made by people are short in distance and therefore provide an opportunity to undertake physical activity that is both accessible and free.⁸
- A study recently released by the California Department of Education (CDE) shows a distinct relationship between academic achievement and the physical fitness of California’s public school students.⁹



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Health Facts

DISEASE PREVENTION

- ✦ Poor diet and physical inactivity could soon overtake tobacco as the leading cause of preventable death in the United States ¹⁰
- ✦ Exercising and maintaining a healthful weight when young can delay the onset of breast cancer in women at very high risk of the disease. Women who exercised actively when they were young – even just walking a lot, and maintained a healthful weight through the age of 21 —were somewhat protected from breast cancer .¹¹
- ✦ Breathing in particle pollution can increase the risk of early death, heart attacks, strokes and emergency room visits for people with asthma, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. ¹²
- ✦ Long-term exposure to the air pollution in some of America’s biggest metropolitan areas significantly raises the risk of dying from lung cancer and is about as dangerous as living with a smoker. ¹³

PHYSICAL FITNESS

- ✦ Americans run only 25% of all errands by foot, a drop of 42% in the past 20 years. 75% of all trips are less than a mile from home.
- ✦ Physical activity is often limited to specific sports or games. In order for children to learn to love physical activity, it is necessary to provide a variety of options so that children can choose the activity they most want to learn and enjoy.
- ✦ 70% of children watch at least one hour of TV each day. 35% watch five hours or more.
- ✦ 23% of Marin children ages 5 to 17 spend 3 or more hours on a typical weekday watching television or videos, or playing video games on TV. It rises to 47% for weekend days where the average is 2.6 hours. ¹⁴
- ✦ Cycling is a non-weight-bearing form of aerobic exercise and does not tend to strain muscles, joints, limbs or ligaments while still providing the benefits of improved fitness and stamina ¹⁵
- ✦ Dr Mayer Hillman calculated that life years gained by cycling outweigh life years lost in accidents by 20 to 1. The health benefits of cycling outweigh the possible extra accident risk. ¹⁶
- ✦ A 2000 survey of 35,000 Americans found that medical costs of inactive people averaged \$2,277 compared to \$1,242 (45% less) for active people. ¹⁷

FOOTNOTES

1. Dr David Katz, Yale public-health expert
2. *Shape the Nation, National Association for Sport and Physical Education NASPE 2001*
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4. *Time Magazine June 7, 2004*
5. European Heart Network, 2001
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7. Hillman, M. (1992) *Cycling and the Promotion of Health*; Proceedings of Seminar B held at the PTRC European Transport, Highways and Planning 20th Summer Annual Meeting (September 14-18 1992). Umist. Vol. p.354. PTRC Education and Research Services Ltd.
8. Dora, 1999. A different route to health: Implications of transport polices British Medical Journal 318
9. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/index.asp>
10. U.S. Journal of American Medical Assoc. March 2004
11. *Science Magazine study by the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center*
12. AIA American Lung Association. "Air Quality Facts 2011", <http://www.stateoftheair.org/2011/facts/>
13. Journal of American Medical Association
14. *Marin County Health Survey*
15. Hillman, 1992
16. Baden, U., Poulsen, E., Godefrooij, T., Resinger, H. and Daniel Eritija. (1998) *Improving Bicycle Safety* European Cyclists' Federation, Brussels.
17. Sprawl Kills – Joel S. Hirschhorn, Ph.D 2005
18. *Marin County Health Survey 2010*
19. *Journal of American Medical Assoc.*
20. *Survey done in Atlanta, by Lawrence Frank, professor at University of British Columbia.*
21. *U.S. Surgeon General 2009*
22. *Asphalt Nation Jane Holtz Kay 1997*
23. *Divorce your Car Katie Alvord*
24. Sprawl Kills – Joel S. Hirschhorn, Ph.D.2005

Health Facts

OBESITY

- 34% of Marin County Children 2 to 17 are “overweight at risk” or are obese. Boys 12 to 17 have a bigger problem than girls. Hispanic and low-income families are particularly at risk.¹⁸
- Being overweight and obese can lead to Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and cancer of the colon, breast, uterus, and other cancers. There is an alarming increase in Type 2 diabetes in children.
- Watching less than 10 hours of TV weekly and engaging in brisk walking at least half an hour daily reduced the obesity and diabetes risks by 30 percent and 43 percent respectively.¹⁹
- For every hour people spend in their cars, they are 6% more likely to be obese. For every ½ mile they walk in a day they are 5% less likely to be obese. If they live in a mixed-use environment (with shops and services near their homes), they are 7% less likely to be obese.²⁰
- \$117 billion a year is the total medical tab for illnesses related to obesity.²¹

FOOD AND TRANSPORTATION

- The typical bite of food in America must travel 1300 miles to the dinner plate.²²
- Farmers purchased tractors, then needed to purchase fertilizers because the manure from the horses was no longer available. This created more cost of production for farmers. Hence they had to produce more crops to cover their costs.²³
- More than 40% of adults eat out in a restaurant on a typical day. Nearly one third of children aged 4 to 19 eat fast food every day. One in three meals that kids eat is fast food.²⁴