

Canadian Health Measures Survey: Directly measured physical activity of Canadians, 2007 to 2011

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The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (2011) recommend that to achieve health benefits adults 18 and over should get at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) per week, made up of time periods lasting at least 10 minutes. Children and youth aged 6 to 17 should get at least 60 minutes of MVPA per day.

The Canadian Health Measures Survey, which collects both self-reported and direct measures of Canadians' health, measured the physical activity of Canadians through the use of an activity monitor worn by respondents for the week following their visit to a mobile examination centre. Data collected from 2007 to 2011 show that about 15% of Canadian adults and 6% of children and youth met the current physical activity guidelines recommended for their age group. In adults, more men (17%) than women (13%) met the guidelines. In children and youth, more boys (8%) met the guidelines than girls (4%).

Physical activity levels were significantly lower at older ages. Nearly twice as many young adults aged 18 to 39 (19%) met the guidelines compared with older adults aged 60 to 79 (11%). The trend was similar among children and youth with nearly twice as many children aged 6 to 11 (8%) meeting the guidelines compared with youth aged 12 to 17 (5%).

In adults, physical activity levels were related to obesity for both men and women. Normal-weight men got an average of 34 minutes of MVPA per day, which was nearly twice as many minutes as obese men (19 minutes). Normal-weight women got an average of 23 minutes of MVPA per day, compared with 13 minutes for obese women.

In children, a similar trend was seen among boys, with normal-weight boys aged 6 to 17 getting an average of 63 minutes of MVPA per day, compared with 48 minutes for same aged obese boys. There was no strong relationship between physical activity and obesity with girls. Normal-weight 6 to 17 year old girls (47 minutes) got slightly more MVPA compared with obese girls (42 minutes).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5071.

Additional results on directly measured physical activity are available in the following *Health Fact Sheets* (82-625-X): "Directly measured physical activity of Canadian adults, 2007 to 2011" and "Directly measured physical activity of Canadian children and youth, 2007 to 2011." These fact sheets are now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, under *Publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).

