



Heart Healthy Talking Points

General Health

- ♥ “Today’s kids may be the first generation in history whose life expectancy is projected to be less than that of their parents.” *Dr David Katz, Yale public-health expert*
- ♥ New Federal guidelines now recommend that people 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.

Exercise and Youth

- ♥ In most gym classes, kids are aerobically active for just 3 minutes. *Time Magazine, June 7, 2004*
- ♥ In the years that P.E. has declined, the nation has seen big increases in attention deficit disorder and childhood depression. *Time*
- ♥ **Walk and Talk** Instead of sitting at the table to do homework, take a walk with your child while practicing spelling words, multiplication tables or geography facts. *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- ♥ 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 daily physical activity. 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. *Shape the Nation, National Association for Sport and Physical Education NASPE, 2001*

Disease Prevention

- ♥ Poor diet and physical inactivity could soon overtake tobacco as the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. *Journal of American Medical Association, March 2004*
- ♥ 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. *Science Magazine study by the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center*



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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.
- ♥ 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.

"This statewide study provides compelling evidence that the physical well-being of students has a direct impact on their ability to achieve academically," said Diane Eastin, State Superintendent of Schools. "We now have the proof we've been looking for: students achieve best when they are physically fit."
- ♥ 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. In Marin, 23% of Marin children ages 5-17 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. *Marin County Health Survey*

Obesity

- ♥ 34% of Marin County Children 2-17 are overweight at risk/or are obese. Boys 12-17 have a bigger problem than girls. Hispanic and low income families are particularly at risk. *Marin County Health Survey*
- ♥ 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. *Journal of American Medical Association*
- ♥ 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 (one in which there are shops and services near their homes), they are 7% less likely to be obese. *Survey done in Atlanta, by Lawrence Frank, professor at University of British Columbia*
- ♥ \$117 billion a year – total national medical tab for illnesses related to obesity – *U.S. Surgeon General*



Compiled by Safe Routes to Schools, a project of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition, P.O. Box 35, San Anselmo, CA 94979, 415-456-3469 www.safeoutestoschools.org