



For more information contact:
Tonya Yablonsky, Healthy Lifestyles Epidemiologist
Health Statistics Center
Phone: 304-558-0644
Email: tonya.a.yablonsky@wv.gov

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Report Released on Physical Activity among West Virginia's Youth

A report entitled *Physical Activity among West Virginia's Youth: a Review of the Data* recently released by the Bureau for Public Health examines physical activity and sedentary lifestyles among children and adolescents in West Virginia. Physical activity in childhood and adolescence can help prevent the development of chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, osteoporosis, and arthritis later in life. Participation in physical activities at a young age not only provides immediate health benefits, it lays the groundwork for a lifetime of better health.

The report incorporates data from four sources: the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), the FITNESSGRAM® Program, and the first year evaluation findings of the implementation of the West Virginia Healthy Lifestyles Act. Focusing on both physical and sedentary activity, the report yields several major findings. On a positive note, male high school students in West Virginia had significantly higher prevalence for being physically active than their national counterparts (53.1 percent vs. 43.7 percent respectively). However, West Virginia students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades reported a significantly lower prevalence of participating in a daily physical education class than students nationwide.

In an assessment combining four individual categories of fitness (aerobic capacity, body composition, muscular strength and endurance, and flexibility) just over 75 percent of West Virginia's students scored *Overall Health Fitness Zone*. Thirty-two percent of West Virginia high school students reported watching TV for three or more hours per day and 27.7 percent reported using a computer for non-school related purposes three or more hours a day.

To view the full *Physical Activity among West Virginia's Youth: a Review of the Data* report go online to <http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/hsc/statserv/Pub.asp?ID=143>.