

Active Transportation and HEALTH



Move more... Move often

Move more: Canadian adults should participate in at least 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity each week, accumulated in bouts of 10 minutes or more

Move often: After 60 minutes of sitting or standing, move for one to three minutes

Active transportation refers to all types of human-powered transportation – such as walking, cycling, in-line skating, skateboarding, and using a wheelchair. There are many ways to engage in active transportation:

- Walk to the bus stop
- Walk or cycle to school or work
- Walk or cycle to other locations



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CAN DECREASE HEALTH CARE COSTS

- Heart disease related to physical inactivity cost \$767 million in Canada in 2009
- High blood pressure related to physical inactivity cost \$588 million in Canada in 2009
- Type 2 diabetes related to physical inactivity cost \$470 million in Canada in 2009
- On average, an inactive person requires 38 per cent more days in hospital, has 5.5 per cent more visits to their family doctor and 13 per cent more visits to specialists than an active person


HEALTH CARE COSTS RELATED TO PHYSICAL INACTIVITY ACCOUNTED FOR 3.7 PER CENT OF ALL HEALTH CARE COSTS IN CANADA IN 2009

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CAN HELP MEET PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adults can get eight to 33 minutes more physical activity each day by walking to and from public transit
- Women using any type of active transportation can add approximately 8.5 additional minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity to their day
- In Australia, it has been estimated that if 20 per cent of inactive people living in New South Wales walked an additional 16 minutes per day, the number of people considered “sufficiently active” would increase by almost seven per cent
- People who use active transportation are also more likely to be more physically active in their leisure time


EACH HOUR OF DRIVING PER WEEK HAS BEEN SHOWN TO REDUCE THE ODDS OF GETTING ENOUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BY 1.6 PER CENT

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CAN **HELP REDUCE RISK FOR CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS**

- Biking and higher intensity walking for transportation significantly helps reduce the risk of premature death
- The more active transportation is used, the lower the odds of being overweight or obese
- Risk for diabetes is significantly lower in people who use active transportation
- People who walk or cycle for transportation are less likely to have high blood pressure. Higher intensities and longer distances can lower the risk even more



USING ACTIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION CAN REDUCE THE RISK FOR HEART DISEASE BY 11 PER CENT, INDEPENDENT OF OTHER TYPES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CAN **IMPROVE MENTAL WELLNESS**

- For those already active, reducing the amount of active transportation can increase the risk of developing depression
- Cyclists are more likely to enjoy commuting to work than those who drive
- Those who drive to work are more likely to complain of poor sleep, higher stress, and rate their overall health as low compared to those who actively commute to work for less than 30 minutes
- Large amounts of driving has been linked to negative social impacts, including social isolation



WALKING AND OTHER TYPES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CAN PREVENT DEPRESSION

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION MAY **HELP LOWER RISKS FOR INJURY TO PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS**

- Increasing the number of people walking and cycling may provide "safety in numbers" as motorists may be less likely to collide with a pedestrian or cyclist when there are more of them visible



THE BENEFITS OF CYCLING TO WORK OUTWEIGH THE RISKS BY ABOUT NINE TIMES



MAKING COMMUNITIES BETTER FOR WALKING AND CYCLING CAN **IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY**

- People living in more walkable neighbourhoods are more likely to have better mental health, trust their neighbours, have better social connections, experience less traffic fatalities as pedestrians and not suffer from high blood pressure or other chronic health conditions
- Walkable neighbourhoods mean more walking overall, more active transportation, lower levels of obesity, less air pollution and less total vehicle miles travelled
- People use active transportation more often when transit stops and stations are closer to where they live and work



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH AND
EMERGENCY SERVICES

More information:

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines:
www.csep.ca/guidelines

Region of Waterloo Public Health:
www.regionofwaterloo.ca/physicalactivity
519-575-4400 (TTY 519-575-4608)

References for all information are available upon request.
Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.