



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Fit physical activity into your life—your way

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The more you do, the more benefits you gain. That's the message of the first comprehensive science-based guidelines the federal government has issued for Americans to improve their health and reduce their risk of chronic diseases.

Many people know that regular physical activity over months and years can produce long-term health benefits. The guidelines were developed to inform policymakers and health providers about the amounts, types, and intensity of physical activity needed to help Americans aged 6 and older improve their health and reduce their risk of chronic diseases.

"Physical activity needs to be a part of everyone's daily routine for a healthier life," said Laurie Eldridge-Auffant, health behavior specialist with the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, Alabama Department of Public Health.

"Between 2001 and 2007 data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System show little change in the percent of Alabama adult residents who engage in 30 or more minutes of moderate physical activity for five or more times per week," Ms. Eldridge-Auffant said. "We still only have approximately 42 percent who are getting the recommended activity level."

The Alabama adults who were least likely to engage in recommended physical activity levels were females (40 percent), African American (37 percent), adults in the lowest income group (30 percent) and those with less than a high school education (35 percent).

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* set achievable goals for everyone and can be customized according to a person's interests, lifestyle and goals. As HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt said, "These physical activity guidelines for Americans provide achievable steps for youth, adults and seniors, as well as people with special conditions to live healthier and longer lives."

Major research findings described in the report include:

Regular physical activity reduces the risk of many adverse health outcomes.

Some physical activity is better than none.

For most health outcomes, additional benefits occur as the amount of physical activity increases (higher intensity, greater frequency, longer duration).

Most health benefits occur with at least 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate-intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking).

Both aerobic (endurance) and muscle-strengthening (resistance) activities are beneficial.

Health benefits occur for all age groups and in every studied racial and ethnic group. They also occur for people with disabilities.

The benefits of physical activity far outweigh any possible risks.

To access the guidelines and to find links to other resources, visit <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines> and www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity.