Information for stakeholders: Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children and Youth

February 9th and 10th Guidelines’ Information Webinars!

Watch your inbox for an invitation to attend a 60-minute interactive webinar to familiarize you with the first-ever Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children and Youth. Two webinars are planned in English and one in French. An expert will be on hand to answer your questions about the new guidelines.

February 9th:
* 2:00pm - 3:00pm EST (English)

February 10th:
* 10:00am - 11:00am EST (French)
* 2:00pm - 3:00pm EST (English)

Please confirm which session above you will be attending by emailing: sstanley@participACTION.com. Dial-in information for the conference call/webinar will be sent upon confirmation.

Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children (aged 5-11 years) and Youth (aged 12-17 years):

- Represent the first systematic evidence-based Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines in the world.
- Are based on a systematic review of the best available evidence.
- Their development follows a rigorous and transparent scientific process similar to what was used to develop the new Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines.
- These guidelines are intended to address the 23 hours of the day that children and youth may not be engaged in physical activity.
- The Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines will be integrated with the new Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Children and Youth and are designed to help children and youth live healthy, active lives.
- They are meant to help encourage Canadians to limit the time they spend watching TV, playing passive video and computer games, and to reduce other sedentary behaviours.

Official Launch Date: Tuesday, February 15, 2011
Q’s & A’s

What is ‘sedentary behaviour’?
Sedentary behaviour is a distinct class of behaviours characterized by little physical movement and low energy expenditure. Some examples include:

- watching TV
- playing passive video games
- using the computer
- prolonged sitting (e.g. at a desk)
- motorized transportation

What are Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines?
Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines provide recommendations for the amount of time that Canadian children and youth should spend in sedentary pursuits in order to minimize health risks.

Why do we need sedentary behaviour guidelines?
Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines have been developed to encourage children and youth to accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate-to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily. However, even if children and youth meet these guidelines, there are still 23 hours remaining in the day for school, sleep, work and discretionary or ‘free’ time. Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines target this free time in particular, and are meant to encourage incidental movement and active play and discourage prolonged periods of sitting at a computer or resting on the sofa watching TV.

Why did the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) do this research?
Over the past several decades, the physical activity and fitness level of Canadians has decreased. Participating in regular physical activity can provide a variety of health benefits across all age, gender, ethnic and socioeconomic subgroups. However, only 7% of children and youth are active enough to meet current Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines. Research shows that Canadian children and youth are spending an average of 8.6 hours per day, or 62% of their waking hours, being sedentary. Similar trends are being reported in the U.S. where children and youth spend an average of 6-8 hours per day being sedentary. New research has shown that this sedentary behaviour is associated with increased health risk, even if physical activity guidelines are met.

Why are there only sedentary guidelines for children and youth?
The development of these guidelines has followed a rigorous scientific process. Due to the immense amount of work required to inform the guidelines, it may take some time to develop guidelines for all age groups.

Who is releasing the Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines?
The CSEP and the Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group of the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute (HALO-CHEO) developed the evidence-based Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines. ParticipACTION is partnering with CSEP and HALO-CHEO and other partners to disseminate this information to all Canadians.

Does the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) endorse the Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines?
PHAC remains supportive of all ongoing science- and evidence-based knowledge development that organizations like CSEP continue to pursue, and CSEP is recognized for helping advance the shared agenda.
What does reducing Sedentary Behaviour look like on a daily basis?

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<tr>
<th>An average day:</th>
<th>An ideal day:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sedentary</td>
<td>Light</td>
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<td>Sedentary</td>
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Up until now, research and guidelines have focused on physical activity and recommended that children and youth participate in at least 60 minutes moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily. But don’t the other 23 hours (or 1380 minutes) of the day matter?

Very few children and youth are meeting the current Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines. And of those who are meeting the Guidelines, it is clear that they are spending the majority of their remaining leisure time being sedentary. Currently, children and youth are spending about 62% of their waking hours engaging in sedentary behaviours and only 2 minutes engaging in vigorous activities. Light intensity activities account for about a third of waking hours.

To maximize health, it is important to take a ‘whole day’ approach to healthy, active living. An ideal, active day would have children and youth replace the majority of their sedentary time with light-intensity activity. This can include play-time, helping with chores, or walking around the house. The diagram illustrates this substitution of light-intensity activity for sedentary time.

An ideal day would also include engaging in both moderate- and vigorous-intensity activities to meet or exceed current recommendations from the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines. The majority of the day would be spent engaging in light intensity activities and involve active play and lots of moving around. Time spent at sedentary activities like watching television or playing video games would be limited. This includes limiting sedentary time while at school, work, and at home, wherever possible.