

# Physical Activity

## and Heart Disease and Stroke

A lack of physical activity is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Being active can improve your health and help reduce your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.

### Physical activity in Missouri

Many Missourians do not get enough physical activity. More than one-fourth (25.5 percent) of adults in the state do not participate in any type of physical activity during their leisure time.<sup>1</sup>

That number is even higher for African-Americans, with more than one-third (34.3 percent) not participating in leisure-time physical activity.<sup>1</sup>

### The importance of being active

Being physically active can help prevent obesity, which increases a person's risk for heart attack and stroke. In Missouri, 63.3 percent of adults are overweight or obese.<sup>1</sup>

Physical activity can also help lower your blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Maintaining your blood pressure and cholesterol at healthy levels can decrease your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.

Adults should get at least 30 minutes or more of physical activity most days of the week – 60 minutes if you are trying to achieve a significant weight loss. If it is difficult to find time for physical activity, you don't have to do it all at once. Being active for 10 minutes at a time, several times a day, can improve your health.

### Tips for increasing physical activity

Increasing your physical activity doesn't have to be complicated or costly. You don't need to go to a gym or purchase special equipment. There are a number of simple things you can do to be more active:



- Sit less and move more.
- Limit the amount of time you spend in front of the television or computer.
- Go for a walk during your lunch time or walk in the morning before you leave for work or in the evening after dinner.
- Add more steps to your day. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park farther away from your office or the store.
- Participate in recreational activities such as bicycling, swimming, hiking or dancing.
- Play outside with your kids or grandkids.

More information can be found at:

- [www.dhss.mo.gov/PhysicalActivity/](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/PhysicalActivity/)
- [www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartDisease/](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartDisease/)
- [www.dhss.mo.gov/Stroke/](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Stroke/)

Data Source: 1. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2007.



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services  
Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program  
[www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartDisease](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartDisease) and [www.dhss.mo.gov/Stroke](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Stroke)

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