

Healthy Active Living: Quick Reference Sheet

Physical Activity is Essential for Growing Kids

– Make it a Part of Your Practice Everyday

This quick reference tool is designed to act as a step-by-step guide to assist you with counselling children and youth about healthy active living. It can fit easily on your desk or in your examination room and will help you determine who needs counselling, what to say to the patient and parent, how to prescribe an effective plan, and how to monitor the patient's progress. It also includes mention of all relevant resources and where you can find them.



STEP 1: SCREENING

- Document the child's weight and height, calculate his or her body mass index and plot on the growth charts.
- Assess the child's current level of daily physical activity, intensity, and the duration in each case.
- Investigate the amount of time spent on sedentary activities such as watching TV, surfing the Internet and playing video games.
- Compare the child's physical activity levels with the recommendations from *Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth* (go to www.healthcanada.ca/paguide to order the guides or call **1 888 334-9769**).
- Compare the child's eating habits with the recommendations in *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. There is a guide for preschoolers and one for children from 6-12 years of age (go to www.healthcanada.ca/nutrition to order the guides).



STEP 2: COUNSELLING

Physical Activity

- Hand out Health Canada's Physical Activity Magazines (*Let's Go* and *Gotta Move*) and *Family Guides for Children and Youth* as support tools (go to www.healthcanada.ca/paguide to order the magazines and guides or call **1 888 334-9769**).
- Talk about programs and services available in your community (through local associations, schools, service clubs).
- Offer practical tips to parents such as:
 - kids need 30 minutes of physical activity each day to start and should work their way up to at least 90 minutes a day
 - cut down on sedentary activities like watching TV by at least 30 minutes per day, and set a maximum amount of time each day to spend on these activities
 - choose physical activities with your kids that are fun and safe for them
 - encourage their natural abilities
 - set goals and gradually increase the amount of physical activity (go to the Canadian Paediatric Society at www.cps.ca/english/proadv/HAL/index.htm for additional counselling resources)



Nutrition

- Offer practical tips to parents such as:
 - drink more water and limit the number of drinks with sugar like soda, fruit drinks and some juices (no more than 4 to 8 oz. a day)
 - make sure your kids eat breakfast (such as a high fibre cereal) and do not skip any meals
 - offer healthy snacks such as fresh fruit, vegetables, yogurt, pretzels and non-buttered popcorn
 - do not use food as rewards
 - do not eat in front of the TV

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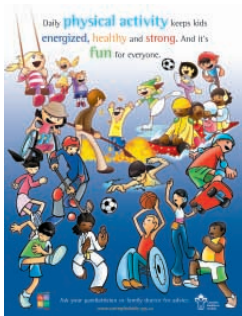
STEP 3: PRESCRIBING

- Build physical activities and healthy eating habits into a daily and weekly schedule. Use the *Physical Activity Prescription Pad* (call the CPS at [613] 526-9397 to order the pad or go online at www.cps.ca/english/publications/Bookstore/HAL.htm).
- Recommend both moderate (brisk walking, skating, biking) and vigorous (running, basketball, soccer) physical activities for 30 minutes a day and encourage the child to work up to at least 90 minutes a day.
- Increase physical activity levels according to *Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth* (go to www.healthcanada.ca/paguide to order the guides).
- Introduce Health Canada's *Physical Activity Chart* with activity stickers both as a reward and a tracking system (call 1 888 334-9769 to order the chart).

STEP 4: EVALUATION

Physical Activity

- Evaluate and discuss with the child and parent how the goals have been met.
- Vary the type and level of activity as well as diet if necessary.
- Establish a long-term goal to help keep the child focused.
- Praise achievement to reinforce commitment.



Research shows that physical activity helps to:

- Build strong bones and strengthen muscles
- Achieve a healthy weight
- Improve fitness
- Improve physical self-esteem
- Enhance healthy growth and development
- Maintain flexibility
- Promote good posture and balance
- Strengthen the heart
- Increase relaxation
- Allow children to meet new friends



Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth Hotline: 1 888 334-9769

Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth website: www.healthcanada.ca/paguide

Canadian Paediatric Society's Healthy Active Living website: www.cps.ca/english/proadv/HAL/index.htm

Canada's Food Guide(s) to Healthy Eating: www.healthcanada.ca/nutrition



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