



Adventures in learning,
created by Canadian dietitians

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Grades 6-8 TEACHER NOTES Physical Activity

Fitness for the Fun of It

First on the long list of benefits to physical activity is fun! Physical activities offer children an opportunity to interact and socialize while playing. Although young children tend to participate in activities for the fun of it, research conducted with 7th and 8th grade students suggests that during the transition from childhood to adolescence many students shift to pursuing activities for weight loss and body shape. Girls are more prone than boys to experience this shift, which coincides with an increase in viewing of TV programming targeted at adults.

Enjoy a Variety of Activities

Different activities provide different benefits. Activities can be categorized into three different types according to their key benefit - Aerobic, Flexibility and Strength. A combination of different activities helps promote optimum health.

Aerobic Activities help your heart, lungs and circulatory system stay healthy and give you more energy. Aerobic activities range from running to recreational sports such as bike riding, swimming, skating and dancing.

Flexibility Activities help you move easily, keeping your muscles relaxed and your joints mobile. These include stretching exercises, jazz dance, ballet, bowling and gymnastics.

Strength Activities help your muscles and bones stay strong and improve your posture. These include wearing a backpack, exercises like push-ups and sit-ups, climbing stairs, rock climbing and rowing.

Barriers to Physical Activity

Most children and teens are not nearly active enough for good health, even though they find physical activity fun. Many things can get in the way of children's physical activity - homework, television, computers, economic factors, lack of transportation, lack of enjoyable options and fear of failure to name a few. Helping students identify practical solutions to their personal fitness challenges may lead to improved activity.

Too Much of a Good Thing

While regular physical activity helps to promote good health, it is important not to encourage excessive exercising, which could be unhealthy.

