

# Canadian Health Measures Survey: Activity monitor data

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## Most children and youth are not meeting recommended activity levels

It is recommended that children and youth aged 5 to 17 accumulate at least 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA). Results from the 2014 and 2015 Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS) indicate that fewer than 1 in every 10 (8%) Canadian children and youth are getting 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

Children aged 5 to 11 years (12%) were more likely to get 60 minutes of MVPA every day compared with youth aged 12 to 17 years (4%). Also, boys (12%) were more likely to get 60 minutes of MVPA every day than girls (4%).

Children and youth (10%) with a normal body mass index were more likely to meet the recommendation, compared with overweight or obese children and youth (5%).

## Almost one in five adults meets recommended activity levels

In order to achieve health benefits, the recommendation for adults 18 and over is to accumulate at least 150 minutes of MVPA per week made up of sessions of activity each lasting at least 10 minutes. Almost 1 in 5 (18%) Canadian adults met this recommendation.

The proportion of adults accumulating enough physical activity to meet the recommendation was smaller in the oldest age group (60 to 79 years) when compared with the youngest (18 to 39 years). Approximately 21% of adults aged 18 to 39 were active enough to meet the guidelines (150 minutes of MVPA in bouts of 10 minutes), compared with 17% of 40-to 59-year olds and 13% of 60-to 79-year olds.

There was no significant difference between the proportion of males (18%) and females (17%) that met the recommendation.

The proportion of adults meeting the physical activity recommendation was greater among those with a normal body mass index (24%) than among those who were overweight (13%) or obese (14%).

## Proportion of Canadians meeting physical activity guidelines has remained stable over time

The proportion of children, youth and adults meeting physical activity guidelines has remained stable since the 2007-2009 CHMS (the first time these data were collected).



### Note to readers

Moderate-intensity physical activities are those where you are working hard enough to raise your heart rate and you can still talk, but not sing your favourite song, during the activity. Vigorous-intensity physical activities are those that make your heart rate go up quite a bit. During these activities you will not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath.

Accelerometers have several important limitations, notably, potential underestimation of overall activity because they cannot accurately capture activities that are not step-based (for example, swimming, cycling). In addition, accelerometers do not measure the added energy expenditure associated with upper body movement (for example, weight-lifting, shoveling snow), load carrying, or walking up an incline. They also are unable to account for individual differences in physical fitness which can influence the intensity level for a given individual.

Body mass index (BMI) is defined as the ratio of a person's weight in kilograms by their height in meters squared ( $\text{kg}/\text{m}^2$ ). BMI classification can be done using various systems. The adult BMI classifications referred to in this document are based on Health Canada's [Canadian guidelines for weight classification in adults](#). The classification of children and youth was done using the World Health Organization's [BMI-for-age Growth References](#).

The Canadian Health Measures Survey Cycle 4 was conducted from January 2014 to December 2015.

This release consists of the full sample activity monitor data file and the sub sample activity monitor data file, 2014 to 2015.

Canadian Health Measures Survey data on this topic are available in CANSIM tables 117-0019, 117-0020 and 117-0021.

Sampling weight files and instructions are available for combining cycle 4 Canadian Health Measures Survey data with equivalent data from cycle 3 (where possible).

**Available in CANSIM: tables [117-0019](#) to [117-0021](#).**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5071](#).**

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).