

Physical activity, sedentary behaviour, and sleep in Canadian children and youth

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Physical activity is widely reported as being associated with physical, mental and social health benefits. Nevertheless, most Canadian children and youth are still not getting the recommended amount of physical activity and are spending more time in front of screens than is recommended. These are some of the findings of two studies released today in *Health Reports*.

The first study, based on reported and accelerometer-measured data from the Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS) concludes that fewer than 20% of Canadian children and youth meet all three components of the new Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines, which include targets for sleep, sedentary behaviour and physical activity. The majority (75%) are getting enough sleep (9 to 11 hours at ages 5 to 13, and 8 to 10 hours at ages 14 to 17), but only half are meeting the sedentary behaviour recommendation (no more than 2 hours a day of screen time) and only about a third are meeting the physical activity recommendation (60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity – MVPA).

A second study examines trends over time (2007 to 2015). The results show that there has been virtually no change during this time period in average daily minutes of MVPA of Canadian children and youth. This study, which is based on the first four cycles of the CHMS, also found that boys tended to be more active than girls, and that 6- to 11-year-olds accumulated more MVPA than 12- to 17-year-olds.

These two studies are part of a broader body of work that has been published recently using data from the CHMS, including [the impact of outdoor time on physical activity](#) and [the impact of parental role modeling and support on the physical activity and sedentary behaviour habits of their children](#). For a visual summary of this work, see the infographic "[Physical activity of Canadian children and youth](#)," which is part of *Statistics Canada — Infographics (11-627-M)*.

Note to readers

Respondents to the Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS) answer an interviewer-administered questionnaire in their home, and within the next six weeks, visit a mobile examination centre for a series of physical measurements. Upon completion of these measurements, ambulatory respondents are asked to wear an accelerometer during their waking hours for seven consecutive days.

The study "Meeting the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth" is based on combined results of CHMS cycles 2 (2009 to 2011) and 3 (2012 to 2013), for 3,111 children and youth aged 5 to 17. Physical activity information was derived from the accelerometer data. Sleep time was parent-reported (ages 5 to 11) or self-reported (ages 12 to 17). Similarly, screen time (watching TV, videos and DVDs, video games, and computer time) was parent-reported for children and self-reported by youth.

The study "Physical activity of Canadian children and youth, 2007 to 2015" is based on results of the first four CHMS cycles for 5,608 children and youth aged 6 to 17. The prevalence of meeting the Guidelines' moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) recommendation was calculated as accumulating 60 minutes every day, on most days, and on average.

While both studies report that about a third of children and youth are meeting the new 60 minutes per day MVPA recommendation, this is higher than the 7% previously reported (Colley et al., 2011) because the new Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines use an average of 60 minutes MVPA per day instead of 60 minutes on 6 out of 7 days. Regardless of the interpretation, the physical activity of Canadian children has not improved during the time period of the study.

The public is also invited to [chat with an expert](#) about this release, on Monday October 23, 2017, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., Eastern Time.



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

"[Meeting the Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth](#)" and "[Physical activity of Canadian children and youth, 2007 to 2015](#)" are available in the October 2017 online issue of Health Reports, Vol. 28, No. 10 ([82-003-X](#), free) from the Browse by key resource module of our website, under Publications.

To enquire about "Physical activity of Canadian children and youth, 2007 to 2015," contact Didier Garriguet (didier.garriguet@canada.ca), Health Analysis Division.

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of "*Meeting the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth*," contact media relations at the Public Health Agency of Canada (613-957-2983).

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) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).

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