



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Exercise: A No Cost Prescription for Health

Prevalence of Regular Physical Activity Among Adults – United States 2001–2005

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

[Matthew Reynolds] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly broadcast of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Matthew Reynolds. Sitting around and surfing channels may be a fun way to pass the time, but if you're consistently choosing television over being active, it's a choice that could cost you.

Dr. Isa Miles, a researcher with CDC, is here to talk about physical activity among adults in the United States. Welcome to the show, Dr. Miles.

[Dr. Miles] Thanks, Matthew. It's a pleasure to be here.

[Matthew Reynolds] Some may be wondering about the term physical activity instead of exercise. Why do you make the distinction?

[Dr. Miles] Well, we make that distinction because we want people to realize it's not only about going to the gym and running on the treadmill. Physical activity can involve simple things like housework, yard work, even walking around your neighborhood. And so we want people to understand that it's about being active, not necessarily about being an Olympic athlete.

[Matthew Reynolds] Your study looked at the number of adults in the United States who are physically active. What did you find?

[Dr. Miles] We found that from 2001-2005, U.S. men and women increased their levels of physical activity. We found that about 50 percent of men and 47 percent of women were physically active in 2005. What that means is that half of the U.S. population is not physically active. So we do want to encourage people to get out and be physically active.

[Matthew Reynolds] Well, let's talk about that 50% who isn't physically active right now. Describe the health risks of not getting out, being active, and doing things that you described.

[Dr. Miles] Well physical inactivity has been associated with an increased risk of heart disease, obesity, premature mortality, certain cancers, so there are substantial health risks from not being physically active.

[Matthew Reynolds] So really, this is not just a choice about doing something versus not doing something. The choice carries consequences with it.

[Dr. Miles] It certainly does.

[Matthew Reynolds] Well, let's say that I'm in that category you've just described and I've seen the light. I want to make some changes. In other words, I want to get moving. What do you recommend?

[Dr. Miles] You know, simple things, such as walking a little more often. If you get home in the evening and it's still light or if you feel comfortable, walk around your neighborhood for a few minutes. Or if you want to park a little further back in the parking lot at the shopping mall. You walk a little bit further or walk an extra lap when you're done shopping; little things like that. Even doing housework. Maybe you need motivation to clean your house more often. Well, vacuuming can serve as physical activity, as well as doing gardening or yard work. So think about some of those things that you enjoy doing that involve physical activity. Even family activities - if you want to go bowling or roller skating instead of just going out to dinner, thinking about little ways that you can become more active.

[Matthew Reynolds] You mentioned some of the things that people can do indoors and the reason I bring it up is that some people may be listening to this who are in colder climates. Bowling, family activities indoors. Any other suggestions for those people?

[Dr. Miles] Well, there are exciting winter sports as well. People can go ice skating if they're interested in getting outside during the winter months. Skiing, you can do any number of things outside. But we do recommend things that involve some of those indoor fun activities like bowling or roller skating. Or you could even work out in your home if you're interested in getting video tapes and doing some fun aerobic exercises at home.

[Matthew Reynolds] So what I hear you saying too, is that, for somebody who may not be use to physical activity, try doing something fun with the exercise or the activity so that you're not burned out by the work.

[Dr. Miles] Yes, I think that's a great idea.

[Matthew Reynolds] Ok. You've talked about different exercises and activities that people can do to get out, get moving. Are there certain groups of people that are less likely to engage in physical activity?

[Dr. Miles] As a matter of fact Matthew, our study found that black non-Hispanics, Hispanics, and people categorized as 'Other Race' are actually less likely to be physically active than white non-Hispanics. We also found that people with less than a high school education were less likely to be physically active than those with a high school or college education. So for those populations, we may need to try more innovative strategies to get them to be physically active, and we want to encourage them to try to find things that can fit into their life style and into their schedule.

[Matthew Reynolds] Where can our listeners get more information about physical activity?

[Dr. Miles] Well they can go to CDC's web site at w-w-w-dot-c-d-c-dot-gov-slash-healthyliving, which is all one word.

[Matthew Reynolds] Dr. Miles, thank you for taking the time to talk with us today.

[Dr. Miles] Thank you so much, Matthew. It's been great.

[Matthew Reynolds] Well, that's it for this week's show. Don't forget to join us next week. Until then, be well. This is Matthew Reynolds for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] To access the most accurate and relevant health information that affects you, your family and your community, please visit www.cdc.gov.