

Because sport matters... Parce que le sport est important...

BECAUSE SPORT MATTERS TO OUR HEALTH FACT SHEET

Sport is an important component of good health. The main avenues to health include a combination of physical activity (both sport and non-sport activity), a sensible diet and avoidance of harmful behaviours, such as smoking. Research shows that participation in sport activities has many positive health impacts ranging from the reduction of risk from chronic diseases, to generally improving the quality and longevity of one's life.

- The World Health Organization has concluded that increasing physical activity is the most cost-effective and sustainable way to reduce a population's burden of lifestyle-related diseases and in so doing reduce human suffering, limit the cost of treatment, and increase economic productivity (World Health Organization, 2001).
- About 80% of adults who actively participate in sports—more than 6.2 million Canadians—rate sport as very important in improving their physical fitness and health (Conference Board, 2005).
- More than 70% of active participants in sport describe their overall state of health as either excellent or very good, compared with less than 50% of non-participants (Conference Board, 2005).
- Being physically active can have a profound effect on personal health. Expending 1,000 kilocalories of energy per week (4,200 kJ/wk) is associated with as much as a 30% reduction in mortality rates from all causes (Kesaniemi, 2001).
- Regular physical activity that is performed most days of the week reduces the risk of developing or dying from some the leading causes of illness, including heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, colon cancer, and depression (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1996).
- Sport participants are more likely to eat healthfully and less likely to smoke, drink alcohol, use illicit drugs, engage in sexual activity or violent activities than non-sports participants (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002).
- Modest physical activity and improved diet can prevent 60% of Type II (late-onset) diabetes cases (World Health Organization, 2003).
- 14 to 17 million adult Canadians could prevent early death if they did at least small amounts of physical activity every day (Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 1995).
- If physical inactivity among Canadians were eliminated, 21,340 premature deaths could theoretically be prevented each year or 10.3% of all deaths (GPI Atlantic, 2004).

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201—359 rue Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 1X9
Tel/Tél: 613-526-2912 Toll Free/Sans frais: 1-800-670-5785 Fax/Télé: 613-569-6601
Email/Courriel: info@sportmatters.ca Web: www.sportmatters.ca/ www.sportestimportant.ca

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