



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ■ 201 East Colfax Avenue ■ Denver, CO 80203 ■ 303.866.6903 PH ■ 303.866.6785 FAX

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT ■ 4300 Cherry Creek Drive South ■ Denver, CO 80246 ■ 303.692.2377 PH

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention

Physical Activity Among Colorado's Youth

The Issue

In the United States today, more than 9 million children are overweight. The majority of these kids – as many as 80% – will become obese adults, and will be at higher risk for some of today's deadliest diseases: heart disease, stroke and diabetes.¹ These children won't have to wait until they are adults to experience the burden of overweight. Many will have health problems as children and adolescents that include depression, anxiety and social isolation – problems that may ultimately affect their performance in school.

Facts about Youth Physical Activity in Colorado

Source: 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

- **10%** of high school students are overweight.
- **10%** are at risk for becoming overweight.
- **41%** are trying to lose weight.
- **65%** exercised to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight during the past 30 days.
- **25%** had not participated in at least 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity on three or more of the past seven days and had not participated in at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on five or more of the past seven days.
- **5%** had not participated in any vigorous or moderate physical activity during the past seven days.
- **17%** attended physical education (PE) classes daily in an average week when they were in school.

Physical Activity and Coordinated School Health

- Students with poor nutrition and low levels of physical activity are more likely to be absent and tardy.

- Schools that offer intensive physical activity programs see positive effects on academic achievement even when time for physical education is taken from the academic day, including:
 - Increased concentration
 - Improved mathematics, reading and writing scores
 - Reduced disruptive behaviors
- Physical activity among adolescents is consistently related to higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of anxiety and stress.
- Students who participated in physical education programs did not experience a harmful effect on their standardized test scores, though less time was available for other academic subjects.

For more information on the link between health and learning, see the Summary of Selected Evidence-Based Research from "Healthy Kids Learn Better" and "Making the Connection: Health and Student Achievement" at www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/results.htm.

What You Can Do

Use state, local and national youth risk behavior data to make a case for:

- creating a school health team in every school building
- coordinating messages, activities, programs and funding for healthy students and safe schools.
- providing opportunities for physical activity and healthy food choices throughout the school day

Resources

For complete Colorado YRBS data, visit www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/index.htm. For national YRBS data, visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/SS/SS5505.pdf.

1. www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_consequences.htm