



Fact Sheet

CONTACT

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American College of Sports Medicine

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A UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE CALL TO ACTION Exercise is Medicine™ is an initiative focused on encouraging primary care physicians and other health care providers to include exercise when designing treatment plans for patients. Exercise is Medicine is committed to the belief that exercise and physical activity are integral in the prevention and treatment of diseases and should be regularly assessed as part of all medical care.

EXERCISE IS MEDICINE Physical inactivity is a fast-growing public health problem and contributes to a variety of chronic diseases and health complications, including obesity, heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, depression and anxiety, arthritis, and osteoporosis. In addition to improving a patient's overall health, increasing physical activity has proven effective in the treatment and prevention of chronic diseases.

A VITAL SIGN FOR HEALTH A key component of Exercise is Medicine involves calling on health care providers, regardless of specialty, to review and assess every patient's physical activity level at every visit. Patients should be counseled on exercise regimens, with office visits concluding with exercise clearance and prescription or referral to a certified health and fitness professional. The initiative aims to have physical activity recorded as a vital sign during patient visits and to encourage able patients to meet the U.S. Physical Activity Guidelines by participating in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week through, for example, 30 minutes of physical activity, five days per week.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF EXERCISE IS MEDICINE The guiding principles of Exercise is Medicine, shared by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and other leading health and fitness organizations, are designed to improve the health and well-being of our nation through a regular physical activity prescription from doctors and other health care providers, or from a health and fitness professional working with the health care provider. The guiding principles are as follows:

- Exercise and physical activity are important to health and the prevention and treatment of many chronic diseases.
- More should be done to address physical activity and exercise in health care settings.
- Encouragement of ACSM's effort to bring a greater focus on physical activity and exercise in health care settings.

SUPPORTING EXERCISE IS MEDICINE Exercise is Medicine has received support from numerous national organizations based on a shared vision to help improve the health and well-being of our nation through regular physical activity prescription from doctors and other health care providers. Currently, there are two levels of support: network members and corporate funders. Contact us or visit the Web site for more information.

GET INVOLVED Visit Exercise is Medicine online at www.exerciseismedicine.org to support the initiative and receive program updates. Visit www.exerciseismedicinemonth.org to download an [Action and Promotion Guide](#), which provides tips and tools to plan your own local event or activity during Exercise is Medicine Month in May or throughout the year, including a PowerPoint slide deck and media advocacy tools.

Support for the Exercise is Medicine™ Global Initiative is Provided By:

Founding Partners:



Advocate Partners:





Exercise is Medicine™ Month Fact Sheet

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WHAT *Exercise is Medicine Month*

Exercise is Medicine Month is the special recognition month for Exercise is Medicine and a time for everyone to recognize, emphasize and celebrate the valuable health benefits of exercise on a national scale. Exercise and physical activity are important to health and the prevention and treatment of many chronic diseases.

WHY *Exercise is medicine!*

Physical inactivity is a fast-growing public health problem and contributes to a variety of chronic diseases and health complications, including obesity, heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, depression and anxiety, arthritis, and osteoporosis. In addition to improving a patient's overall health, increasing physical activity has proven effective in the treatment and prevention of chronic diseases.

WHO *You and the members of your community*

Exercise is Medicine invites you and the members of your community to take part of a national event focused on celebrating physical activity. Organizations, state and local government officials and individuals across the country join together in May to promote exercise and the prevention and treatment of diseases.

WHEN *May 2009*

Exercise is Medicine has declared May as Exercise is Medicine Month, in conjunction with the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports' National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. May is a time to get involved in your community, to spread the word about the many benefits of exercise.

WHERE *Online and in your community*

Take advantage of Exercise is Medicine Month by becoming more physically active yourself, and by starting or signing up for events in your area. Download the [Action and Promotion Guide](#) to learn more.

GET INVOLVED

Visit www.exerciseismedicinemonth.org to download an [Action and Promotion Guide](#), which provides tips and tools to plan your own local event or activity during Exercise is Medicine Month in May or throughout the year, including a PowerPoint slide deck and media advocacy tools. In this guide, you'll also find action steps about how to incorporate physical activity into your life. Don't forget to check out www.exerciseismedicine.org all year long for videos, fliers, handouts, guides and more!

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Physical Activity Facts

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Starting an exercise program can sound like a daunting task, but just remember that your main goal is to boost your health by meeting or exceeding the basic physical activity recommendations: 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity* physical activity through, for example, 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, five days per week.

Follow the guidelines below to meet the basic physical activity recommendations after consulting your health care professional.

Age	No Chronic Conditions	Chronic Conditions
Children & Adolescents (6-17)	60 minutes or more of physical activity every day (moderate*- or vigorous**-intensity aerobic physical activity). Vigorous-intensity activity at least 3 days per week. Muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activity at least 3 days per week.	Develop a physical activity plan with your health care professional. Avoid inactivity. Refer to the Your Prescription for Health series .
Adults (18-64)	150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity Muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups performed on 2 or more days per week.	Develop a physical activity plan with your health care professional. Be as physically active as possible. Avoid inactivity Refer to the Your Prescription for Health series .
Older Adults (65+)	Follow the adult guidelines, or be as physically active as possible. Avoid inactivity. Exercises that maintain or improve balance if at risk of falling.	Develop activity plan with your health care professional. Refer to the Your Prescription for Health series .

[From the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#)

For more information on these guidelines, visit www.acsm.org/physicalactivity.

*Moderate-intensity physical activity means working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat, yet still being able to carry on a conversation. Examples: brisk walking, ballroom dancing or general gardening.

**Vigorous-intensity physical activity causes rapid breathing and a substantial increase in heart rate. Example: jogging, aerobic dancing or jumping rope.

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Resources

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ACTION GUIDES

Health Care Providers' Action Guide
www.exerciseismedicine.org/physicians.htm

Health and Fitness Professionals' Action Guide
www.exerciseismedicine.org/fitpros.htm

Public Action Guide
www.exerciseismedicine.org/public.htm

Action and Promotion Guide
www.exerciseismedicine.org/action.htm



YOUR PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTH SERIES

www.exerciseismedicine.org/YourPrescription.htm

Provides information and advice on exercising safely with various health conditions.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

www.exerciseismedicine.org/PSA.htm

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has partnered with the United States' Office of the Surgeon General to create public service announcements (PSAs) promoting Exercise is Medicine. The PSAs feature the acting surgeon general, Rear Admiral Steven K. Galson, M.D., M.P.H., and a message encouraging physical activity.





Resources

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KEYS TO EXERCISE VIDEO SERIES

www.exerciseismedicine.org/keys.htm

Aerobic Types
 Duration and Frequency
 Exercise and Your Health
 Flexibility
 Home Gym
 Intensity
 Strength



NEWSLETTER AND E-NEWSLETTER

www.exerciseismedicine.org/resources.htm

Quarterly newsletter and biweekly e-newsletter providing program updates, distributed to health care providers, fitness professionals, members of the public, network members and more.



EXERCISE IS MEDICINE™ MONTH

www.exerciseismedicinemonth.org

Exercise is Medicine Month celebrates May as the special recognition month for Exercise is Medicine and as a time for physicians, health and fitness professionals, the public, and supporting organizations and constituents to recognize, emphasize and celebrate the valuable health benefits of exercise on a national scale.



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Dear Health Care Provider,

What if there was one prescription that could prevent and treat dozens of diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity? Would you prescribe it to your patients? Certainly.

The Exercise is Medicine™ initiative is a shared vision of the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Medical Association, designed to help improve the health and well-being of our nation through a regular physical activity prescription from doctors and other healthcare providers.

We are calling on health care organizations, health care providers and other professionals, regardless of specialty, to assess, to advocate for, and to review every patient's physical activity program during every comprehensive visit.

Visit the Exercise is Medicine™ Web site (www.exerciseismedicine.org) for additional information. You will find a more detailed description of the initiative, ways you can counsel patients on their exercise regimens and information on how physical activity can be an integral part of any patient's health care program.

We urge you to make exercise consultation a regular, important part of your interaction with every patient at every visit.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

The Exercise is Medicine™ Task Force

Exercise is Medicine™ Resources for Health Care Providers

- **The Exercise is Medicine™ Health Care Providers' Action Guide** provides physicians and other healthcare providers with a simple, fast, and effective tool for using physical activity, in the right "dosage", as a highly effective prescription for the prevention, treatment, and management of more than 40 of the most common chronic health conditions encountered in primary practice.
- The **Exercise Prescription and Referral Process** document is the core of the guide and will explain how to either quickly write a prescription for your patient or else refer them to a certified health and fitness professional.
- Use the **Exercise and Readiness Prescription Pad** to either give your patient a physical activity prescription or to refer them to a health and fitness professional.
- If your patient is healthy, print out and give them a **Starting an Exercise Program Patient Handout**.
- If your patient has a chronic health condition, look at the **Your Prescription for Health** series to see if your patient's condition is included in this series and, if it is, print out and give them the appropriate patient handout on how to safely exercise with their condition. This series has been reviewed by experts from the American College of Sports Medicine.