



Fact sheet: Joint use and health

Overview

The way a community is designed affects how healthy we are. Our surroundings influence the quality of the food we eat, how much exercise we get, and our quality of life.

Joint use – the sharing of space between schools and communities – improves people’s chances of being healthy by making it easier for them to be physically active. Joint use provides kids and adults with safe, conveniently located places to exercise and play.

Physical activity is a strong determinant of health, but most Americans don’t get the exercise they need to be healthy.

- Approximately 60 percent of U.S. adults do not get the recommended amount of physical activity. Twenty-five percent are physically inactive.ⁱ
- In 2007, 63.7 percent of Californians reported having less than moderate physical activity levels.ⁱⁱ
- The 2007 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey revealed that 65 percent of U.S. high school students did not meet recommended levels of physical activity.ⁱⁱⁱ In California, one million (29 percent) of teens do not get recommended levels of physical activity.^{iv}
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that only 2 percent of U.S. high schools require daily physical education for students in all grades for the whole year.ⁱⁱⁱ
- California requires two years of physical education for high school students, but may not be enforcing that requirement. One in seven California teens reported either not being required to attend or not being offered physical education classes.^{iv}

Inactivity-related health problems such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease are on the rise in the U.S., often with fatal consequences.

- Between 1991 and 2000, the prevalence of diabetes increased 49 percent.^v More than 10 percent of all U.S. adults have diabetes.^{vi}

- The estimated lifetime risk of developing diabetes for individuals born in 2000 is 32.8 percent for males and 38.5 percent for females.^{vii}
- In California alone, the number of people with diabetes is expected to double by 2020.^{viii}
- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States, according to the World Health Organization. It accounts for about 40 percent of all deaths annually. More than 58 million people in the U.S. have some form of cardiovascular disease.^v
- In 2004, more than 73,000 Californians died from cardiovascular disease, accounting for one third of the state's total deaths that year.^{ix}
- Approximately 250,000 deaths a year in the United States can be attributed to physical inactivity.^x

Inactivity and related health problems are linked to the way our communities are designed.

- Many Americans don't get the exercise they need to be healthy simply because they don't have places to be active. Research has shown that people who have parks nearby exercise 38 percent more than those who do not have easy access.^{xi}
- Lower-income communities, including predominantly Latino and African American communities, often have fewer resources to support active lifestyles and public places to play.^{xii} These communities typically have less park space and are less likely to have houses with private backyards.^{xiii}
- In California, one in four teens report not having access to a safe park near home.^{xiv} In Southern California, about 86 percent of residents (adults and kids) do not have easy access to open spaces such as parks.^{xiii}
- The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends communities have at least six to 10 acres of open space per 1,000 residents.^{xiii}
- Some communities in Southern California (typically White neighborhoods) have significantly more open park space than the NRPA recommends – up to 126 acres per 1,000 residents. But some communities (often low-income communities of color) have much less – as little as 1.2 acres per 1,000 residents. Without places to be active, people can't get the exercise they need to be healthy.^{xiii}

Joint use can improve health by removing barriers that make it difficult for people to be healthy.

Joint use partnerships between school districts and local governments or organizations can allow community members and groups to use playgrounds, athletic fields, pools, gymnasiums and other recreational facilities after school hours. Joint use partnerships can also be used to open up community facilities to schools at a reduced cost or for free.

This increases the opportunities kids and adults have to be active, which, combined with good nutrition, is an important step toward improving health.

For more information on joint use, visit www.jointuse.org.

For more information on the joint use statewide task force, contact Manal Aboelata, Program Director for Prevention Institute (www.preventioninstitute.org), at 323-296-5750 or manal@preventioninstitute.org.

Thanks to The California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, and the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation for supporting the work that made this fact sheet possible.

References

ⁱ *A Report of the Surgeon General: Physical Activity and Health*. Rep. 1996. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 21 May 2009 <<http://www.cdc.gov/NCCDPHP/sgr/pdf/sgraag.pdf>>.

ⁱⁱ *California Health Interview Survey*. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. 21 May 2009 <<http://askchis.com/main/>>.

ⁱⁱⁱ *The Obesity Epidemic and United States Students*. Issue brief. 2007. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 21 May 2009 <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdf/yrbs07_us_obesity.pdf>.

^{iv} Babey, Susan H., Allison L. Diamant, E. Richard Brown, and Theresa Hastert. *California Adolescents Increasingly Inactive*. Issue brief. Apr. 2005. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. 21 May 2009 <<http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pubID=137>>.

^v *PAHO Health Indicator Database*. World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization. 14 May 2009 <http://www.paho.org/English/DD/AIS/cp_840.htm>.

^{vi} *National Diabetes Factsheet*. Issue brief. 2007. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. 6 May 2009 <<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/estimates07.htm>>.

^{vii} Narayan, K. M., J. P. Boyle, T. J. Thompson, S. W. Sorenson, and D. F. Williamson. "Lifetime Risk for Diabetes Mellitus in the United States." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 290 (2003): 1884-90.

^{viii} Kaiser, L., and R. L. Lee. "Ch. 23: Diabetes." *California Food Guide: Fulfilling the Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 2006. California Department of Health Care Services. 21 May 2009 <http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/dataandstats/reports/Documents/CaliforniaFoodGuide/23Diabetes.pdf>.

^{ix} Reynen, D. J., A. S. Kamigaki, N. Pheatt, and L. A. Chaput. *The Burden of Cardiovascular Disease in California*. Rep. 2007. California Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, California Department of Public Health. 21 May 2009 <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cvd/Pages/BurdenofCardiovascularDiseaseinCalifornia.aspx>.

^x Booth, F. W., S. E. Gordon, C. J. Carlson, and M. T. Hamilton. "Waging war on modern chronic diseases: primary prevention through exercise biology." *Journal of Applied Physiology* 88 (2000): 774-87.

^{xi} *Designing for Active Living Among Adults*. Publication. 2008. Active Living Research, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. 21 May 2009 <http://www.activelivingresearch.org/files/Active_Adults.pdf>.

^{xii} Powell, L. M., S. Slater, and F. J. Chaloupka. "The relationship between community physical activity settings and race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status." *Evidenced Based Preventive Medicine* 1 (2004): 135-44. 21 May 2009 <http://impactteen.econ.uic.edu/journal_pub/pub_PDFs/EBPM-1-2-Powell%20et%20al1.pdf>.

^{xiii} Sister, C., J. Wilson, and J. Wolch. *The Green Visions Plan for 21st Century Southern California: Ch. 15 Park Congestion and Strategies to Increase Park Equity*. Publication. Dec. 2007. University of Southern California GIS Research Laboratory and Center for Sustainable Cities. 21 May 2009 http://www.greenvisionsplan.net/html/documents/15_green_visions_park_congestion_and_strategies_to_increase_park_equity.pdf.

^{xiv} Babey, S.H., A.L. Diamant, E. R. Brown, and T. Hastert. *Teens Living in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Lack Access to Parks and Get Less Physical Activity*. Mar. 27 Issue brief. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. 1 June 2009. <<http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pubID=221#>>.