

Bridge

This Newsletter aims to promote communication between students
and the Student Health Service of the Department of Health

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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH

Editor's Note

Childhood and adolescence are critical periods for developing life-long habits. Behaviour and lifestyles established in early years will continue into adulthood. There is scientific evidence suggesting that physically active lifestyles lead to a happier and healthier life. Please find out more in this issue of BRIDGE. We do hope that you have already engaged or will engage in regular exercise as one of your healthy lifestyles.

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Exercise and physical Health

Generally speaking, children of 5 or 6 years old are naturally active physically. They can perform motor skills like walking, going up and down stairs, running, jumping and hopping on playgrounds. As they grow older, taking part in organized sports or recreational programmes can further enhance their bone and joint growth, muscle strength, endurance and agility. The benefits of regular physical activity include:

- ✦ **Improve heart and lung functions and boost up immunity**
- ✦ **Enhance the development of muscle and bone growth**
- ✦ **Keep muscles elastic and joints flexible**
- ✦ **Increase co-ordination, balance, agility and endurance and thus decrease the risk of injury during activities**



Physical activity and chronic illnesses

World Health Organization recommends children and adolescents aged 5-17 years should do at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily to help prevent chronic illnesses in future. Physical activity can decrease the risk of such chronic illnesses as:

⑥ **Heart diseases**

⑥ **Diabetes mellitus**

⑥ **Breast cancer and colon cancer**

⑥ **Hypertension**

⑥ **Stroke**





Physical activity and mental well-being

The health benefits of physical activity extend beyond physical health. It has positive effects on psychological development, cognitive development, social relationships and emotional well-being.

Take riding a bicycle for example, one has to maintain body balance while pedaling in coordination to keep the bike moving and reach for a destination. At the same time, one has to pay attention to the surrounding environment, assess and react to changes in terms of speed, balance and direction. When arriving safely, one will feel good about himself/herself and has self-confidence. It will help problem solving and instill courage for more challenging adventures in future.

Besides, taking part in sports can develop the growth of students in many ways to become a better person. Through team sports, students have to make arrangements to meet the team requirements including practice times and thus learn to acquire the following qualities:

- ✓ **Self-discipline**
- ✓ **Good time management**
- ✓ **Attention, patience and persistence**
- ✓ **Problem solving and resilience**



Team sports cultivate team spirits and enhance social skills through cooperation and communication on constant adjustments in strategies. Having friends with the same interests and a common goal through mutual support and encouragement will help develop a better psychosocial and mental well-being.





Tips for starting the habit of regular physical activity

For those who do not have the habit of regular physical activity, it is never too late to start. So it is better to start making plans now. There are some tips for reaching your target:

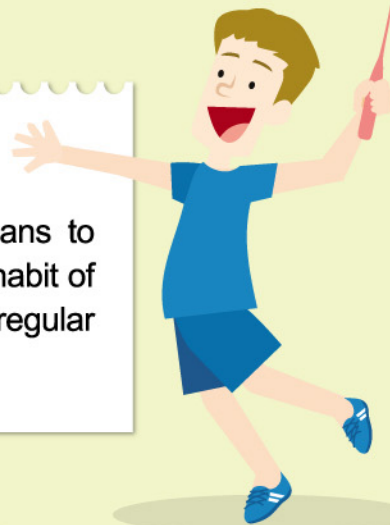
- Start from small duration of exercise and increase the duration of exercise according to your progress.
- Step up the simple exercise first and increase the frequency and intensity of exercise gradually.
- Choose different kinds of physical activity based on your own abilities. For physical activity of moderate intensity, one can still talk during the activities like brisk walking, biking on ground level or slightly uphill road and playing table tennis. For physical activity of vigorous intensity, one has to stop the activity to say a complete sentence. This happens in activities like running, rope jumping or playing football.

For more health information about exercise, please visit the web site of Student Health Service http://www.studenthealth.gov.hk/english/health/health_pe/health_pe.html.



Conclusion:

The vision of education is the pursuit of comprehensive development in students on moral virtue, cognition, physique, social cohesiveness and aesthetic sense. Playing sports is a good means to nurture the above qualities. We do hope that students can form the habit of regular exercise during childhood or adolescence. Have fun with regular physical activities and enjoy better physical and psychosocial health.



Bridge Blog



Exercise is beneficial to physical well-being, I shall:

- jog one hour everyday
- do aerobic exercise such as cycling and swimming
- engage in my favorite sports like badminton

Exercise is beneficial to mental well-being, I shall:

- take part in gymnastic training and learn to have a tough mind
- participate in swimming competitions regularly and learn to have perseverance
- receive basketball training and cultivate team spirits

