



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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MOVE IT!

Physical Activity Is Key to Preventing Chronic Disease

Research shows that at least moderate physical activity is one of the best ways to prevent obesity and disease. Yet, as is happening across the country, a greater number of adults and children in San Diego County are becoming overweight or obese. In fact, from 2003 to 2007, the number of obese adults in San Diego County increased from about 17 to 22 percent.

September 21-27 is “America on the Move” week and San Diego County health officials are encouraging residents to take a first step to a healthier lifestyle.

“The percentage of overweight and obese people in San Diego County continues to increase,” said Chairwoman Dianne Jacob, from the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors. “This is troubling because research has shown that excess weight leads to chronic disease. It’s important for adults and children to be physically active and to obtain and maintain a healthy weight.”

A recent study by the National Center for Educational Statistics indicates that 1 in 5 four-year-olds in America is obese. Also, according to 2007 statistics from the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), an estimated 1.2 million adults (55 percent) in San Diego County are overweight or obese.

“Lack of physical activity is one of the three behaviors that contributes to heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, stroke and many other chronic illnesses,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County of San Diego Public Health Officer. “It’s time for people to put the remote control and computer mouse down. Get up and move.”

Physical activity does not have to be strenuous. A brisk, 30-minute walk—even in divided sessions— each and every day could be all that is needed to achieve a healthy weight. Exercises that build endurance, strength, and flexibility such as swimming, walking and biking are also necessary to protect the body from injury and to keep fit and strong.

During high temperatures, it’s important for people to remember to consume plenty of water and plan outdoor activities in the early morning or evening.

It is also important for people to avoid smoking, eat fruits and vegetables, and limit their fat and alcohol intake.

“Start by making small changes you can manage and make incremental changes that you can stick with for the long-term,” Wooten added. “A healthier future starts with the lifestyle changes you make today.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: Dr. Wilma Wooten is available to speak about community solutions to obesity. Additionally, HHSA has posted healthy recipes and simple exercise tips on its Facebook page at [SDCountyHHSA](#).

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