



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

4-H National
Headquarters

4-H Healthy Living: Physical Activity

Mission of 4-H:

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow and work together as catalysts for positive change.

The Challenge:

Regular physical activity reduces the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, stress and high blood pressure. In addition, physically active people generally live longer and enjoy a better quality of life than inactive people. Children and youth should be involved in [60 minutes](#) of moderate to high intensity physical activity, every day. [Studies](#) show a large decrease in the amount of daily physical activity by youth from elementary school to high school, especially for girls.

The Solution:

Through 4-H Healthy Living efforts, youth will...

- Develop the knowledge and skills required to improve their physical activity practices.
- Gain knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations to promote physical activity practices.
- Understand the importance of being more physically active.
- Find safe places in their community where they can be physically active.
- Adopt new or improved habits and behaviors related to physical activity practices, become involved in regular physical activity, and maintain physical activity at suggested levels.
- Reduce the risk of being overweight and increase their physical stamina.
- Decrease the risk for disease, illness, and physical/emotional distress.

The Partnerships

The following example of how partnerships add to the work of 4-H Healthy Living goals:

- **Child Obesity 180:** [ChildObesity180](#) is a partnership of national leaders that address childhood obesity by combining research, evaluation, and innovative strategies through the wide spread sharing of evidence-based practices.

The Results:

- With support from the Walmart Foundation the [4-H Youth Voice: Youth Choice](#) program reaches at-risk youth and their families with education about physical activity. According to program reports, 89 percent of the elementary school-aged participants believe that being active is fun. About 80 percent of these youth report involving themselves in average activity daily, and 92 percent understand that being active is good for them.
- With support from National 4-H Council, Michigan State University 4-H developed a program to help teens improve their physical activity and overall health. [STEPS to a Healthy Teen](#) provides a variety of learning methods and tools, such as games, case examples, computer programs, cooking demonstrations, and fitness challenges.

The 4-H Youth Development Program is the youth outreach program from the land-grant institutions' Cooperative Extension Services, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). 4-H serves as a model program for the practice of positive youth development. 4-H National Headquarters is housed within the Division of Youth and 4-H at USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Additional support for 4-H programming is provided through National 4-H Council. For more information email 4Hhq@nifa.usda.gov. R2017