Physical inactivity is one of the most important risk factors for chronic disease in the United States, with more than 300,000 deaths annually attributed to physical inactivity. Regular physical activity helps reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and certain cancers; helps control weight; strengthens bones, muscles, and joints; prevents falls or helps reduce injuries from falls among older adults; and relieves anxiety and depression. People who live in communities that support active living are more likely to engage in physical activity as part of their daily routine, such as walking or biking for transportation.

**Physical activity in adults**

- The 2018 CDC guidelines for physical activity recommend at least 150-300 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 75-150 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity per week for adults.
- In 2014, 61 percent of Dakota County adults 25 and older said they were moderately physically active at least 150 minutes per week and 48 percent were vigorously physically active at least 75 minutes per week.
- Nineteen percent of Dakota County adults reported no leisure-time physical activity during the previous month in 2014. Nationally, older adults, women, African-American adults and Hispanic adults are at risk for not getting enough physical activity.

**Active Living**

- One percent of Dakota County residents 16 years and older who work walked or biked to work in 2017. Statewide, about four percent walked or biked to work.
- Sixty-six percent of Dakota County adults 25 and older rated their neighborhood as a very pleasant place to walk.
- Fifty-seven percent of Dakota County adults 25 and older said it is very easy to safely cross the streets or roads in their neighborhood.
- Twenty-two percent of Dakota County adults 25 and older said they have no sidewalks in their neighborhood.

**KEY FACTS**

- Nineteen percent of adults do not engage in leisure-time physical activity.
- Only one-fifth of Dakota County students in all grades met the recommended level of physical activity (60 minutes per day) in 2016.
- Few Dakota County residents walk or bike to work or school.
- Twenty-two percent of Dakota County adults report no sidewalks in their neighborhood.
- Most Dakota County adults rate their neighborhood as a very pleasant place to walk.
Physical activity in youth

- The 2018 CDC guidelines for physical activity recommend 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day for children and adolescents (ages 6 to 17).

- About one-fifth of Dakota County students reported engaging in 60 minutes of physical activity every day (2016: 21 percent of 5th and 8th graders, 18 percent of 9th graders and 15 percent of 11th graders).

- In 2016, Dakota County 5th and 9th graders were below the state for engaging in the recommended amount of physical activity; and 8th and 11th graders were similar to the state (statewide percents: 5th grade: 25 percent, 8th grade: 21 percent, 9th grade: 20 percent, and 11th grade: 15 percent).

- More males than females report engaging in the recommended amount of physical activity.

- Fifth and 8th graders were the most likely to engage in the recommended amount of physical activity.

For more information:
- Active Living by Design [www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org)
- MN Dept. of Health (MDH) [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)
- President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports [www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov)
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity)

The Dakota County Public Health Department is accredited by the national Public Health Accreditation Board. For more information about the Dakota County community health assessment, email public.health@co.dakota.mn.us or call 651.554.6100.