Healthy Community Design

The way we design and build our communities can affect our physical and mental health. This fact sheet explains healthy community design and its health benefits.

What Is Healthy Community Design?

Healthy community design is planning and designing communities that make it easier for people to live healthy lives. Healthy community design offers important benefits:

- Decreases dependence on the automobile by building homes, businesses, schools, churches and parks closer to each other so that people can more easily walk or bike between them.
- Provides opportunities for people to be physically active and socially engaged as part of their daily routine, improving the physical and mental health of its citizens.
- Allows persons, if they choose, to age in place and remain all their lives in a community that reflects their changing lifestyles and changing physical capabilities.

What Are the Health Benefits of Healthy Community Design?

Healthy community design can provide many advantages:

- Promote physical activity.
- Improve air quality.
- Lower risk of injuries.
- Increase social connection and sense of community.
- Reduce contributions to climate change.

What Are Some Healthy Community Design Principles?

Healthy community design includes a variety of principles:

- Encourage mixed land use and greater land density to shorten distances between homes, workplaces, schools and recreation so people can walk or bike more easily to them.
- Provide good mass transit to reduce the dependence upon automobiles.
- Build good pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including sidewalks and bike paths that are safely removed from automobile traffic as well as good right of way laws and clear, easy-to-follow signage.
- Ensure affordable housing is available for people of all income levels.
- Create community centers where people can gather and mingle as part of their daily activities.
- Offer access to green space and parks.

Healthy Community Design, Continued

Conclusion
Designing and building healthy communities can improve the quality of life for all people who live, work, worship, learn, and play within their borders—where every person is free to make choices amid a variety of healthy, available, accessible, and affordable options.

Resources
For more information, go to http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces.

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