

Health Reports, January 2025

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Being active as a family linked to better mental health among adolescents

Anxiety and depression are on the rise among Canadian teens. Teens who are physically active have more positive mental health. A new article released today in *Health Reports*, found that teens who do physical activity with their families are more active and report better mental health, lower anxiety and depressive symptoms, higher life satisfaction, and lower life stress.

From 2011 to 2018, the prevalence of diagnosed anxiety disorders among Canadian adolescents increased from 6.0% to 12.9%. Excessive video game and computer use has been linked to depression and anxiety, conditions that can negatively influence academic performance and may lead to social isolation, loneliness, and suicide. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, such as engaging in regular physical activity, is associated with better mental health. However, according to the article, 35.6% of Canadian teens meet the current physical activity recommendation and 30.6% meet the screen time recommendation.

Families play a key role in influencing their children's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours regarding physical activity and sedentary behaviour. The new study, "[Are adolescents who do physical activity with their parents more active and mentally healthier?](#)," shows that participating in family physical activity is associated with a higher likelihood of adolescents meeting the recommended levels of physical activity and screen time. Further, a higher frequency of family physical activity was associated with better mental health outcomes for adolescents when compared to never participating in physical activity as a family.

These findings are based on data from the 2019 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth. Previous research has found that parents serve as role models and facilitators for healthy lifestyle behaviours. This new study adds to the existing body of research by highlighting the importance of co-participation in physical activity to help adolescents engage in healthy behaviours.

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The article "[Are adolescents who do physical activity with their parents more active and mentally healthier?](#)" is now available in the January 2025 online issue of *Health Reports*, Vol. 36, No. 01 ([82-003-X](#)).

This issue of *Health Reports* also contains the article "[Mapping the Washington Group on Disability Statistics disability measure to the Health Utilities Index Mark 3: Development and validation of a predictive multivariable model in a general population sample.](#)"

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).



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