

# DH urges public to stay active to stay healthy

The Department of Health (DH) today (April 5) urged the public to engage in physical activity regularly to have a healthy lifestyle, which can help in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), in support of the annual World Day for Physical Activity on April 6.

"Physical inactivity is one of the leading behavioural risk factors for NCDs. According to the data collected by the Health Assessment Questionnaire of the Student Health Service Centres of the DH in the 2017/18 school year, the proportion of secondary and primary students who were insufficiently physically active reached 94 per cent. On the other hand, according to the Population Health Survey 2014/15, the prevalence of insufficiently physically active persons aged 18 years or above was 13.0 per cent locally," a spokesman for the DH said.

"According to the World Health Organization (WHO), physical inactivity is estimated to be the principal cause for over 20 per cent of breast and colon cancer burden and diabetes, and approximately 30 per cent of ischaemic heart disease burden. NCDs such as cancers, cardiovascular diseases including heart diseases and stroke, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases are prevalent in Hong Kong. Once these diseases develop, patients not only have to arrange medical appointments and take medications in the long run to manage their health, but also face risks of complications or even death. Their ability to work and care for themselves will be reduced, thus affecting the individuals, their families and the entire society as a whole," the spokesman said.

"Maintaining regular physical activity starting from childhood and continuing into adult years will bring tremendous health benefits, including increased physical fitness with improvements to both cardiorespiratory fitness and muscular strength; reduced body fatness; lower risks of developing cancer, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes; enhanced bone health; and building resilience and reducing symptoms of depression and so on," the spokesman added.

Medical research has also revealed that by leading a healthy lifestyle, such as avoiding smoking and alcohol consumption, maintaining regular physical activity and maintaining a healthy diet (e.g. choosing food low in salt, sugar and fat, and consuming at least two servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables a day), 80 per cent of heart disease, stroke and diabetes cases and 40 per cent of cancer cases can be prevented.

WHO recommends children (aged 5 and above) and adolescents (up to 17 years of age) to have at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous-intensity physical activity every day and adults should engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity in every week. Also the "Global

action plan on physical activity 2018-2030" was published by the WHO in 2018 to encourage member states to create active societies, active environments, active people and active systems to achieve more active people for a healthier world. The spokesman explained that most people can do physical activity easily in their daily lives. For instance, they may get off a stop or two earlier and walk the rest of the way to their destination when taking public transport; take the stairs instead of escalators or lifts; or do housework such as mopping the floor, scrubbing the bathtub or car washing, which are also physical activities.

With a view to reducing the burden of NCDs, including disability and premature death, in Hong Kong, the Government announced "Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong" in May last year with a focus on four NCDs (namely cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes) and four shared behavioural risk factors (namely unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use and harmful use of alcohol), the spokesman said.

In addition, the DH in December last year launched a one-year territory-wide "Healthy Hong Kong 2025 | Move for Health" Campaign, which aims to raise the public's awareness on and participation in healthy living, and to encourage the public to "move for health" and increase their physical activity to build an active lifestyle and prevent NCDs. The DH also created a campaign mascot, Lazy Lion, who will pop up in the community from time to time to dance with the public and promote the "move for health" message.

For more information, please visit:

- [Physical activity guidelines](#);
- ["Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong"](#);
- ["Healthy Hong Kong 2025 | Move for Health" Campaign and Lazy Lion page](#); and
- [WHO Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030](#)