

Patient Factsheet

Get Healthy & Fit with Active Transportation

Don't Have Time for Exercise?

In our modern society, it can be difficult to be physically active on a regular basis. Many have jobs that involve sitting for most of the day. Many are too busy to find time to get to a gym or participate in sports. By using active modes of transportation, such as walking and cycling, you can build physical activity into your daily life.

What Is Active Transportation?

Active transportation is any form of human-powered travel that is used to get to a destination such as work or school. Active modes of transportation typically involve walking or cycling but can include wheeling, skating, skateboarding, and even kayaking.

Active Transportation Improves Health

By allowing you to be more physically active, active transportation can reduce your risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. Studies have found that each hour of moderate or vigorous activity per week can reduce the risk of premature death by 4% to 9%.

Active transportation can also improve mental health because physical activity improves self-esteem, reduces stress, and enhances feelings of happiness and satisfaction.

Active Transportation Controls Weight

Active transportation can help you maintain your weight. One study found that the risk of becoming obese was reduced by 4.8% for every additional kilometre people walked each day, while the risk of becoming obese increased by 6% for every hour people spent in a car each day.



Active Transportation Saves Money

Driving a motor vehicle can be expensive when one considers the cost to own, insure, and maintain a vehicle. Estimates suggest that it can cost about \$10,000 a year to own a car. Active transportation can be a low-cost alternative way to travel.

Active Transportation Is Good for the Planet

Cars are one of the most important sources of air pollution and greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Active modes of transportation, such as walking and cycling, produce no air pollution and no greenhouse gases.



Active Transportation Increases Access

Not everyone can drive. Not everyone has access to a car. In fact, estimates suggest that in a typical community, 20-40% of people do not drive due to age, ability, or expense. Active modes of transportation can provide you with greater access to jobs, schools, services, and recreational opportunities even if no car is available to you.

Active Transportation Increases Sense of Community

When you walk and cycle, you have more opportunities to interact with other people. This can give you a greater sense of community and can make your community feel safer and more friendly.

Getting Started

Getting started is easy. Think of the places you regularly visit. You can easily walk to destinations that are within 1 kilometre of your home. It only takes about 12 minutes to walk 1 kilometre. Distances that are between 1 and 5 kilometres are easy to cycle. As you get more comfortable you can try walking or cycling longer distances. Consider contacting your local city or town office to find out about city programs that address bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and safe street crossings in your community.

