

Physical activity and Victorians with an intellectual disability

Fact sheet issued October 2011

How much physical activity is enough?

The recommended level of physical activity to obtain a health benefit from physical activity is 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity activity most days of the week.

People with an intellectual disability are less active than the general Victorian population

According to the *Victorian Population Health Survey of People with an Intellectual Disability 2009* (VPHS-ID 2009), people with an intellectual disability are much less likely to meet the guidelines for physical activity (21.7 per cent), compared with the general Victorian population (60.3 per cent).

Walking is popular for people with an intellectual disability

The VPHS-ID 2009, asked people if they were involved in either 'no physical activity, walking only, vigorous activity only or vigorous activity plus walking'. A higher proportion of people with an intellectual disability took part in walking only (34.0 per cent) compared to the general Victorian population (26.4 per cent).

Vigorous activity is not common for people with an intellectual disability

According to the VPHS-ID 2009, less than three in ten (28.0 per cent) people with an intellectual disability were reported to be engaged in 'walking and vigorous activity', lower than the general Victorian population (59.6 per cent).

Why does physical activity matter?

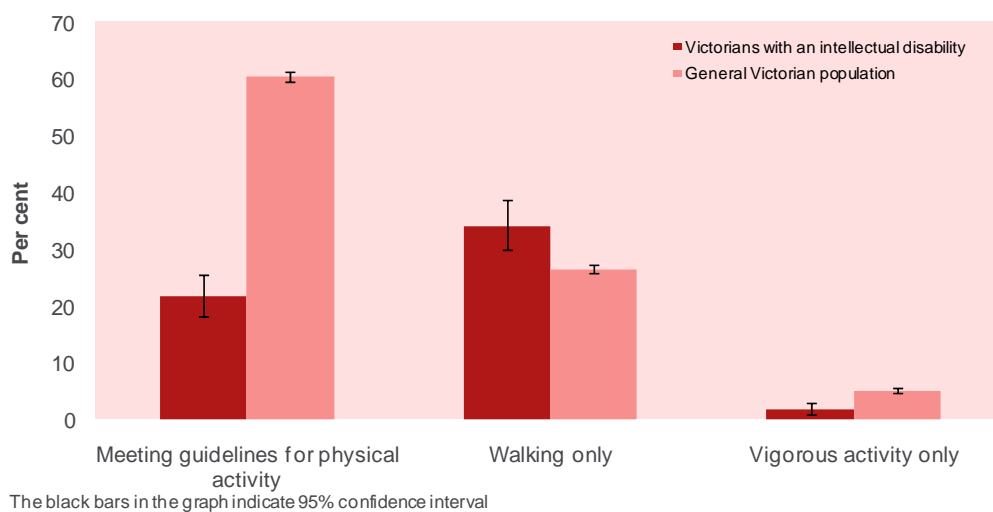
Physical inactivity is a major modifiable risk factor for a range of conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, some cancers, obesity and an increased risks of falls in the elderly. The evidence suggests health benefits occur with increasing levels of physical activity and this protective effect occurs even if physical activity is adopted in middle and later life.

Ideas for becoming more active

The Better health channel provides health information that is reliable, up to date and easy to understand. For information about how to stay happy, healthy and active go to http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/hl_physicalactivity?open

TravelSmart Victoria uses the process of travel planning to reduce people's dependency on cars and encourage them to choose sustainable and more active forms of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport. Travel planning has been implemented in a range of settings in Victoria, including group homes for people with a disability, schools, workplaces, tertiary institutions and communities. Find out more at: http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/47735/DOC-11-303353-DASDOT-Travelsmart-getting-started-guide-with-DAS-photos-consented-for-DOT-internet.pdf

Figure: Physical activity



For further information

The VPHS-ID 2009 is a statewide survey the Department of Health undertook to collect information on the health and wellbeing of people with an intellectual disability in Victoria. This is the first time the survey has been carried out in Victoria.

The full report of the VPHS-ID 2009 is available at:
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthstatus/>

Useful websites

- Access for All Abilities develop and support a diverse range of sport and recreation environments that are inclusive of and accessible to people with disabilities. For more details go to:
<http://www.sport.vic.gov.au/web9/dvcsrv.nsf/headingpagesdisplay/active+communitiesaccess+for+all>.
- Activity finder is an activity resource available in directories on the Better Health Channel at:
<http://www.sport.vic.gov.au/web9/dvcsrv.nsf/headingpagesdisplay/active+communitiesaccess+for+all>.
- Companion Card allows free admission to transport and events for attendant carers of eligible people with disabilities. For more details go to: <http://www.vic.companioncard.org.au/cc/index.htm>
- The Better Health Channel is a Victorian Government website promoting healthy eating and physical exercise. For more details go to: <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>
- The Municipal Association of Victoria contains links to local councils at:
<http://www.mav.asn.au/CA256C2B000B597A/HomePage?ReadForm&1=Home-&2=-&3=->.
- Travelsmart planning in group homes
http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/47735/DOC-11-303353-DASDOT-Travelsmart-getting-started-guide-with-DAS-photos-consented-for-DOT-internet.pdf

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