

Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Vermont Department of Health: Physical Activity and Nutrition. Don't forget to add natalie.schubel@state.vt.us to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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News from the Physical Activity and Nutrition Program



Greetings!

As I write this, the summer weather is still here, but we all know that fall is on the way. Cooler temperatures and the beautiful foliage are great reasons to get out and walk. For even more encouragement, see the Surgeon General's Call to Action, [Step it Up!](#) This new report asks us to consider how to make our communities more walkable and wheelchair friendly. It even includes a walking playlist! So get out and enjoy the autumn leaves, and invite others to do the same. Our newsletter this month includes ideas to increase walking for schools, worksites and others.

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome two new staff to our Physical Activity and Nutrition program team at the Vermont Department of Health. Jennifer Woolard joined us in August to work with schools and refugee programs. Jennifer comes to us from the Newport District Health Office where she was the Chronic Disease Designee and Prevention Consultant regarding Alcohol and Drug Abuse. She has a background in nutrition and wellness and has worked in schools previous to her work in Newport. Additionally, Ashwinee Kulkarni will be joining us in October as the Worksite Wellness Specialist. Ashwinee has been working with the tobacco program at the Health Department, and has a degree in nutrition, along with her Master's degree in Public Health. We look forward to working with a full team and invite you to be in touch with any of us for resources.

Sue Kamp
Physical Activity and Nutrition Program Administrator

Healthy Communities



"Everyday physical activity" is activity we get from daily living, such as walking to the store to pick up some groceries, walking to work or school, or walking to community services or events. Not only do these "steps" count toward and help improve overall fitness,

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but they can be a fun and easy way to be active without having to go to a gym or find time for a work-out. Unfortunately, this type of activity can be challenging to get, especially in rural communities where sidewalks and other infrastructure are limited and amenities are long distances from homes. The good news is communities throughout Vermont, such as [Enosburg](#), are addressing this through investing in sidewalks in downtowns, making street crossing improvements especially around schools, and working to connect sidewalks and trails to parks and other facilities.

If you want to see these changes occur in your community, here are some ways to begin:

- Contact your [Office of Local Health](#) (OLH). Many OLH staff are involved in town efforts to improve access to places to be physical active.
- Your town planner (if you have one, not all Vermont towns do) can serve as a resource and ally as well as the [Regional Planner](#) who serves your area.
- Check out the [Vermont Healthy Community Design Resource: Active Living & Healthy Eating](#) and the [Surgeon General's Call to Action for Walkable Communities: Role Each Sector Can Play](#) to improve opportunities for each of us to engage in everyday physical activity.

Schools

International Walk and Bike to School Day
[International Walk to School Day](#), held in October each year, joins children and adults from around the world to celebrate walking and bicycling to school. This event will bring together communities from more than 40 countries to walk and bike to school, including communities right here in Vermont!


In 2014, Vermont had the second highest rate of participation nationwide, with 64 schools holding events. That's one out of five schools in Vermont!



By promoting walking and bicycling on a designated day, we draw attention to the need for safe routes to school and encourage children to make walking and bicycling to school a regular activity.

In 2013, almost 30% of our high school students were not at a [healthy weight](#). Walking or bicycling to school is an ideal way to help our children meet the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity and decrease their risk of obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases.

interested
colleagues!

 Send to a Colleague

Upcoming events

[Livable Communities Solutions Forum](#)
November 10, 2015
Burlington

[Worksite Wellness Conference](#) -
March 30, 2016
Burlington, Vermont

Check out our website
[My Moment](#)

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[Research](#) shows that kids who are physically active are actually better equipped for school. They have improved concentration, have higher attendance rates, and perform better academically.

The Surgeon General recently made a call to action to community planners and local leaders to create more areas for walking and wheelchair rolling and to prioritize the development of safe routes for children to get to and from schools. "The key is to get started because even a small first effort can make a big difference in improving the personal health of an individual and the public health of the nation, said [Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, US Surgeon General](#).

Join families, schools and communities as they walk and bike to school!

Every Kid in a Park

Did you know that you own millions of acres of national parks, historic structures, cultural artifacts, ancient forests, snow-capped mountains, and clear blue lakes? Our public lands and waters belong to all Americans and are waiting for you to explore them! Visit [Every Kid in a Park](#) for your pass.

To help engage and create our next generation of park visitors, supporters and advocates, the White House, in partnership with the Federal Land Management agencies, launched the Every Kid in a Park initiative. The immediate goal is to provide an opportunity for each and every 4th grade student across the country to experience their public lands and waters in person throughout the 2015-2016 school year. (National Parks)

Worksites

Walking at Work

With the new Surgeon General's Call to Action, Step It Up! we are encouraging worksites to look for ways for employees to [get out and walk](#). In Vermont, we are noting an increase in worksite walking clubs and the use of walking meetings. Both of these activities can help increase production at work and decrease stress:

- **Walking Clubs:** Walking clubs are simple ways to get people out and active during breaks and to encourage building stronger relationships among employees. Gather a few people interested in forming the core of the walking group, find a time that would work for as many employees as possible, and publicize the time and meeting place. Then lace up your sneakers and enjoy the time with your colleagues! Incentives can be added by counting steps or miles walked, or the number of times a month workers get out to walk.

- Walking meetings: If you are planning a meeting with 1-2 others, ask yourself whether this meeting could be a walking meeting. Here at the Health Department, we are increasingly trying to get small group meetings out on the sidewalk. If notes from the meeting are needed, use the recording function on a participant's phone for audio notes, or bring a clipboard for a quick note.



Send us your ideas! We'll share them in upcoming newsletters.

Worksite Wellness Awards Application now Open

2015 Worksite Wellness Awards application is now available. Visit our [worksite wellness page](#) for more information. Applications are due October 31, 2015 at 5:00 PM.

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