

# Always Changing & Growing Up

## Background Information

The following review of the literature on physical activity and adolescent females will provide you with some important information.

### The Need

- The percentage of overweight girls increased from 15% in 1981 to 29.2% in 1996. Source: Tremblay, Mark S. and J. Douglas Willms, 2000, Secular Trends in the Body Mass Index of Canadian Children. Canadian Medical Association Journal. Vol. 163, No. 11, 1429-1433
- A recent study by the Canadian Medical Association Journal showed that the average Canadian child is inactive for three to five hours a day in front of the TV alone. This does not include the five to seven hours most children spend sitting in school five days a week. Source: Canadian Medical Association, 2000
- 22% of youth who did not exercise or play sports outside of school watched four or more hours of television per day as opposed to 13% of youth who exercised or played sports seven or more hours per week. Source: Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute, Canada's Children and Youth: A Physical Activity Profile, 1999
- Regular physical activity can reduce girls' risk of many of the chronic diseases of adulthood and regular physical activity can enhance girls' mental health, reducing symptoms of stress and depression and improving self-esteem. Additionally, female athletes do better academically and have lower school drop-out rates than their non-athletic counterparts. Source: President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS), 1997. Physical activity and sport in the lives of girls. Pg. 5

### The Benefits

- Physical activity reduces stress, strengthens the heart and lungs, increases energy levels, helps you maintain and achieve a healthy body weight, and it improves your outlook on life. Source: Health Canada, 2002
- The likelihood that children will never smoke is directly related to their participation in physical activity; more than 80% of Canadians between the ages of 10 and 24 who are active have never smoked. Also, girls who are physically active in sports are 92% less likely to use drugs and 80% less likely to have unwanted pregnancy. Source: The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 1999
- Being physically active on a regular basis can reduce the relative risk of contracting non-insulin dependent diabetes (type 2 diabetes) by 50%. Source: Journal of American Medical Association, 1992
- Inactivity leads to doubling the risk of developing heart disease as compared to those who exercise regularly. Approximately 36% of heart disease cases are a result of inactivity. If everyone became active, the incidence of heart disease would be cut by more than a third. Source: Peter Katzmarkzyk, York University School of Kinesiology and Health Science, 2000
- Children and teenagers who are physically active have lower levels of smoking and alcohol consumption than those who are inactive. Source: Campbell. Campbell's survey on well-being. In Fitness Directorate (Ed.) Active living and health benefits and opportunities, 1988

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