MT3: Physical Activity and Reduced Sedentary Behavior*

Framework Component

Changes – Physical Activity and Reduced Sedentary Behavioral Changes

Indicator Description

Two-part indicator measuring behavioral changes to increase physical activity and/or reduce sedentary behavior. Physical activity is defined as any body movement that works muscles and requires more energy than resting. Sedentary behavior is defined as too much sitting or lying down at work, at home, in social settings, and during leisure time. Both increasing physical activity and decreasing sedentary behaviors is important for overall health. *SNAP-Ed Priority Outcome Indicator

Background and Context

Physical activity education and training is an important component of SNAP-Ed. Since the passage of both the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 and the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the Farm Bill), SNAP-Ed programs are consistently emphasizing physical activity that is appropriate for age and ability levels. Studies indicate that moving more during the day, in addition to getting the daily 30 minutes of moderate activity on a daily basis, is necessary. Both increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary behavior should be considered in obesity prevention programming and evaluation. A lack of physical activity (too little exercise) and too much sedentary behavior change the body in different ways and should be measured separately. For example, programs designed to reduce obesity by increasing physical activity may not be effective if sedentary behavior remains high.

Outcome Measures

This indicator focuses on progress toward meeting the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans (see Appendix B), which is the physical activity counterpart to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The following is a list of sample areas for measuring outcomes by age group related to behavior change. Increased Physical Activity, Fitness, and Leisure Sport. Increases in duration, intensity, and frequency of exercise, physical
activity, or leisure sport appropriate for the population of interest, and types of activities.

   MT3a. Physical activity and leisure sport (general physical activity or leisure sport) MT3b. Physical activity when you breathed harder than normal (moderate-vigorous physical activity) MT3c. Physical activity to make your muscles stronger muscular strength MT3d. Physical education or gym class activities (school PE) MT3e. Recess, lunchtime, classroom, before/after school physical activities (school activities—non-PE) MT3f. Walking steps during period assessed (e.g., increasing daily goal by ?2,000 steps)

Reduced Sedentary Behavior. Decreases in time spent in sedentary behavior (computers, desk sitting, television watching) during the period assessed.

   MT3g. Television viewing MT3h. Computer and video games MT3i. Sitting on weekdays while at work, at home, while doing course work, and during leisure time

Increased Physical Fitness. Increases in health-related physical fitness levels (aerobic or cardio fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility).

   MT3j. Aerobic or cardio fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance and/or flexibility

What to Measure

Evaluators may choose among data collection methods, including self-reported questionnaires and direct measurement using parent observation, pedometers, or fitness tests. There are tradeoffs for each data collection tool in terms of cost, time, and participant burden. While evaluators are encouraged to triangulate outcomes using multiple data sources, at a minimum, this indicator can be satisfied through self-administered participant questionnaires. Measure SNAP-Ed participants who increase physical activity, fitness, and leisure sport and/or reduce sedentary behavior during the period assessed.

- Physical activity or leisure sport assessments should measure the dimensions of the activity performed including intensity (how hard), frequency (how often), and duration (how long) using self-report in minutes, days, etc., using a Likert scale or an observation tool.
- Sedentary behavior is assessed using a self-report survey or observational tool to measure the amount of time spent sitting over a set period. This should not be confused with screen time which, although is generally sedentary in nature, measures exposure to electronic screens such as phones, televisions, or computers. Sedentary behavior may involve screen time, but should include lying down, sitting, reading books, drawing, writing, and other non-screen-related inactivity (<1.5 METS, or the Metabolic Equivalent of Task).
- Physical fitness assessments should measure the dimensions of the fitness of the individual, which may reflect their physical activity levels including muscular strength, muscular endurance, aerobic or cardio fitness, and flexibility.

Possible behavior change measurements for physical activity and reduced sedentary behavior include:
- Increases in frequency (number of days)
- Increases in time (number of minutes)
- Increases in physical fitness (cardiovascular, flexibility, muscular strength)
- Increases in intensity (moderate or vigorous)
- Increases in number of steps
• Decreases in screen time (computer, video games, TV)

The survey and data collection tools used to assess physical activity and sedentary behaviors should be used in LT3 when assessing long-term change (6 months or longer).

Population

Older adults, adults, adolescents, children, preschoolers and toddlers (via parents, teachers, or child care providers)

Surveys and Data Collection Tools

ADULTS [collapse title="International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ)"]
https://sites.google.com/view/ipaq Young and middle-aged adults (15-64 years)

• During the last 7 days, on how many days did you do vigorous physical activities like heavy lifting, digging, aerobics, or fast bicycling? [MT3b]
• During the last 7 days, on how many days did you walk for at least 10 minutes at a time? [MT3a]

[/collapse] [collapse title="On the Go (20 items)""] https://townsendlab.ucdavis.edu/evaluation-research-tools/physical-activity/

• Think about the last 7 days at work, at home, and in your spare time. How many hours did you spend sitting on a weekday? [MT3i] Responses: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6+ hours
• Think about the last 7 days. On how many days did you breathe a little harder than normal on one of those days? [MT3b] Responses: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 days

[/collapse] [collapse title="Michigan Fitness Foundation Physical Activity Screener for Adults (4 items)""]

• During the last 7 days, how much time in total did you usually spend sitting on a week day? [MT3i] Responses: # hours, # minutes
• During the last 7 days, on how many days did you walk for at least 10 minutes at a time? This includes walking at work and at home, walking to travel from place to place, and any other walking that you did solely for recreation, sport, exercise or leisure. [MT3a] Responses: # days per week; hours and minutes
• During the last 7 days, on how many days did you do vigorous physical activities like jogging or running, fast bicycling, heavy shoveling or digging, or heavy lifting? Think about only those physical activities that you did for at least 10 minutes at a time. [MT3b] Responses: # days per week; hours and minutes
• Again, think only about those physical activities that you did for at least 10 minutes at a time. During the last 7 days, on how many days did you do moderate physical activities like bicycling, active play with children, and light yard work or housework (for example, gardening, raking, washing windows, vacuuming, or carrying light loads)? Do not include walking. [MT3b] Responses: # days per week; hours and minutes

[/collapse] [collapse title="Physical Activity Questions Recommended by Multistate Cooperative Extension Workgroup"]

• In the past week, how many days did you exercise when you breathed harder than normal for at least 30 minutes? [MT3b]
• In the past week, how many days did you exercise to make your muscles stronger, such as lifting weights, working with elastic bands, doing push-ups, sit ups, etc.? [MT3c] Responses: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 days
OLDER ADULTS (Age 60+)

I do activities to increase muscle strength, such as lifting weights or calisthenics, once a week or more.

Responses: yes, no

Direct measurements

Following are options for direct measurement of MT3 outcome measures.

Pedometers (Guide to Help Step it Up, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension) Adults or children

Pedometers are a cost-effective approach for measuring steps taken by SNAP-Ed participants. Lindsay et al. (2014) recommend a time frame of 1–7 days of pedometer use to establish a baseline average of daily total steps. After being trained on proper pedometer placement, participants are encouraged to wear a pedometer for weeks to calculate new daily averages and measure increases in daily number of steps.

President's Challenge Adult Fitness Test

NOTE: This assessment should only be given to people 18 years of age and older who are in good health. In addition, a pre-participation screening questionnaire should be administered prior to the administration of the fitness assessment.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

EFNEP Nutrition Education Survey (1 item) Grades 3–5

I do physical activities…

Responses: never or almost never, most days, some days

Michigan Fitness Foundation Physical Activity Screener for Youth (10 items) Grades 4–12

In the last 7 days, during your physical education (PE) or gym classes, how often were you active (playing hard, running, jumping, throwing)?

Responses: hardly ever, sometimes, quite often, always, I don't do PE or gym

In the last 7 days, what did you normally do at lunch (besides eating lunch)?

Responses: sat down (talking, reading, doing schoolwork), stood around or walked around, ran or played a little bit, ran around and played quite a bit, ran and played hard most of the time, this does not apply to me; I am only able to eat during lunch

On an average school day, how many hours do you watch TV?

Responses: I do not watch TV on an average school day, less than 1 hour per day, 1 hour per day, 2 hours per day, 3 hours per day, 4 hours per day, 5 or more hours per day

California Youth Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey Grades 4–8

Condensed version of the School and Physical Activity Nutrition project (SPAN) - Chapter 1: Required Surveys for Impact Outcome Evaluation

During the week days, about how much time do you spend on a typical or usual school day sitting and watching TV, playing video games, or on a computer? Examples are: playing on a PSP or other handheld game, using an iPad or tablet, using the Internet (not for school), or watching movies or TV shows on a TV, computer, or phone.

Responses: Less than 1 hour per day, 1 hour per day, 2 hours per day, 3 hours per day, 4 hours per day, 5 or more hours per day. I do not watch TV, play video games, or use a computer for something that is not for school work on school days

Below, check all the days you exercised or took part in physical activity that made your heart beat fast and made you breathe hard for at least 60 minutes? Examples are: basketball, soccer, running or jogging, fast dancing, swimming, bicycling, jumping rope, trampoline, hockey, fast skating, or rollerblading.

Responses: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, I didn’t do any
During the past 7 days, how many days were you physically active for at least 1 hour? [MT3a] Responses: 0 days, 1 day, 2 days, 3 days, 4 days, 5 days, 6 days, 7 days

During the past 7 days, how often were you so active that your heart beat fast and you breathed hard most of the time? [MT3b] Responses: 2 times last week, 3 times last week, 4 times last week, 5 or more times last week

How many hours a day do you spend watching TV or movies, playing electronic games, or using a computer for something that is not school work? [MT3g,h,i] Responses: never, 1 hour or less, 2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours, 5 or more hours

For each time period write in the number(s) of the main activities you actually did in the boxes on the time scale. [MT3a]
Then rate how physically hard these activities were. Place an “X” on the rating scale to indicate if the activities for each time period were: [MT3b] Responses: Very Light = Slow breathing, little or no movement, Light = Normal breathing, regular movement, Medium = Increased breathing, moving quickly for short periods of time, Hard = Hard breathing, moving quickly for 20 minutes or more

On an average school day, how many hours do you watch TV? [MT3g]
A. I do not watch TV on an average school day
B. Less than 1 hour per day
C. 1 hour per day
D. 2 hours per day
E. 3 hours per day
F. 4 hours per day
G. 5 or more hours per day

On an average school day, how many hours do you play video or computer games or use a computer for something that is not school work? (Count time spent on things such as Xbox, PlayStation, an iPod, an iPad or other tablet, a smartphone, YouTube, Facebook or other social networking tools, and the Internet.) [MT3h]
A. I do not play video or computer games or use a computer for something that is not school work
B. Less than 1 hour per day
C. 1 hour per day
D. 2 hours per day
E. 3 hours per day
F. 4 hours per day
G. 5 or more hours per day

Following are three options for direct measurement of MT3 outcome measures.

• How much time did your child spend playing in the yard or street around your house? [MT3a]
• How much time did your child spend playing at a park, playground, or outdoor recreation area? [MT3a]

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Fitnessgram https://www.cooperinstitute.org/vault/2440/web/files/662.pdf This is the national health related fitness assessment for school-age children grades 4–12. [MT3j] Additional evaluation tools to measure MT3 can be found in the SNAP-Ed Library.

Glossary

Aerobic activity Duration Flexibility Frequency Intensity Muscular endurance Muscular strength Physical activity Sedentary behavior Structured physical activity Unstructured physical activity

Additional Resources or Supporting Citations