

# Healthy Lifestyle: What Is a Pedometer?

Regular activity in children and teens can help to prevent diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

Children and teens need to be active at least 60 minutes each day.

Many children and families in the United States do not get enough physical activity and it has become a serious problem. The pattern of inactivity begins early in life, which means that promoting physical activity for your family is important.

One way to promote being active is by using a pedometer to measure how many steps you or your child take during the day.

## What is a pedometer?

It is a small device that you wear on your belt or waistband. It counts the steps you take when your hips move up and down and provides instant feedback about the distance walked for that day. There are many types of pedometers – some count the number of steps, some count the distance in miles, and some do both.

## Why use a pedometer?

They are a great way to find out how many steps you take in a day. Once you know that, you and your child can set your own goals to increase how much you walk each day. Simply knowing how many steps you've taken toward your daily goal can help you feel good and want to do more!

## How do I start?

Start by wearing the pedometer and walk the distance that you normally do in a day. Before you go to bed at night, check your pedometer



and write down the number of steps you took or the distance you walked. Use this as a guideline to slowly increase the number of steps to meet your goal.

## Looking for ways to increase your and your child's number of steps?

- Take the stairs instead of elevators.
- Walk your dog or a neighbor's dog.
- Get off the bus one stop early and walk home.
- Walk to do short errands instead of driving (drugstore, library).
- Go exploring! Take a walk with your child instead of watching TV with them. Talk about the kinds or types of trees and plants that you see along the way.
- Park farther away from the store and walk.
- Walk your child to and from school. Start walking one day each week and slowly increase the number of days each week.

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- Find ways to help your child walk to school – take turns walking with other parents, ask an older kid on the block to be a walking partner or ask a neighbor to walk with you and your child.
- Turn on some fun music and dance!
- Start a family tradition – take a walk after holiday meals.

## Where can I buy a pedometer?

Many sporting goods stores and variety stores carry pedometers, such as:

- Sports Authority
- Target
- Fred Meyer

They can also be ordered from these websites:

- [www.digiwalker.com](http://www.digiwalker.com)
- [www.accusplit.com](http://www.accusplit.com)
- [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)

Basic pedometers range in price from \$10 to \$30. The cost varies with the kinds and numbers of features they have.

If you or your child has a chronic health condition, talk with your or your child's healthcare provider before using a pedometer.

### To Learn More

- [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)
- **Seattle Children's Obesity Program**  
**206-987-2626**
- **Your child's healthcare provider**

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Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call Marketing Communications at 206-987-5205 or 206-987-2280 (TTY).

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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