

PHYSICAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

INDICATOR #11 Youth Physical Activity Levels

DEFINITION

INDICATOR #11 — Percentage of BC students in grades 7–12 participating in physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day, seven days per week.

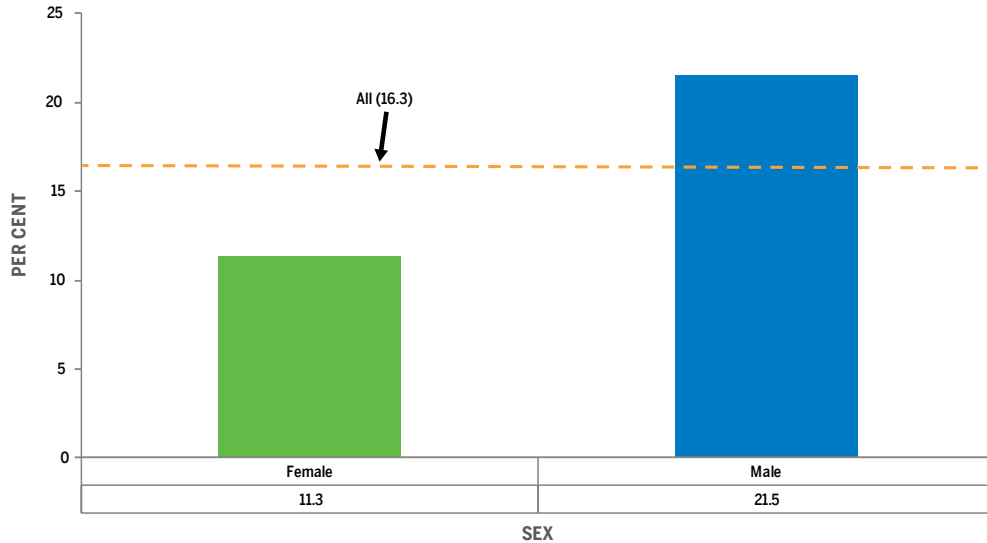
KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ The multiple benefits of physical activity are well documented. Physical activity is good for the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities, as well as for the environment and the economy. It is an important part of overall health, contributing to good mental health, healthy weight, disease prevention, and sound sleep.¹
- ▶ Participation in physical activities including sport, active recreation, exercise, play, and dance can contribute to a child's physical literacy. Physical literacy is “the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities in life.”² It is key to enjoying lifelong participation in physical activity. Ideally, physical literacy development begins in early childhood^{3,4} and can be learned at any age.
- ▶ Physical activity enhances healthy growth and development in children.⁵ Additionally, there is evidence to suggest a positive relationship between physical activity and positive body image, lower levels of depression and anxiety, positive **self-esteem**, and ability to concentrate in class.⁵
- ▶ This indicator was measured based on self-reports of whether students in grades 7–12 participated in an activity that made them sweat, breathe hard, or be “out of breath”. Figure 11.1 shows that there was a substantial difference—a range of 10 percentage points—between the physical activity levels of males and females: 21.5 per cent of males and 11.3 per cent of females reported participating in at least 60 minutes of physical activity seven days per week.
- ▶ Figures 11.2 and 11.3 show that students reported higher rates of physical activity in rural areas. In the Northern Interior Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA), 20.7 per cent of students in grades 7–12 reported getting at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day, compared to 11.0 per cent in the Richmond HSDA.

“There are more outdoor things to do in rural communities, like more opportunities for walking and biking. In bigger cities gyms are busy and memberships are expensive.”

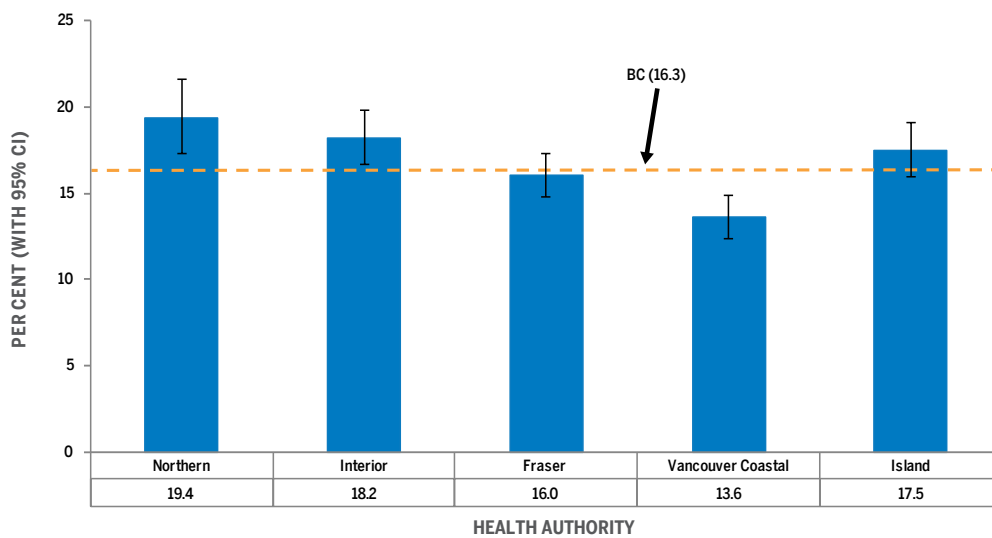
“Social expectations are different for guys and girls. Guys are more encouraged to go into sports. Girls don't get as many chances for sports. Also girls are expected to look their best all the time and not be gross after gym class.”

FIG 11.1 Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported at Least 60 Minutes of Physical Activity on Each of the Past Seven Days, by Sex, BC, 2013



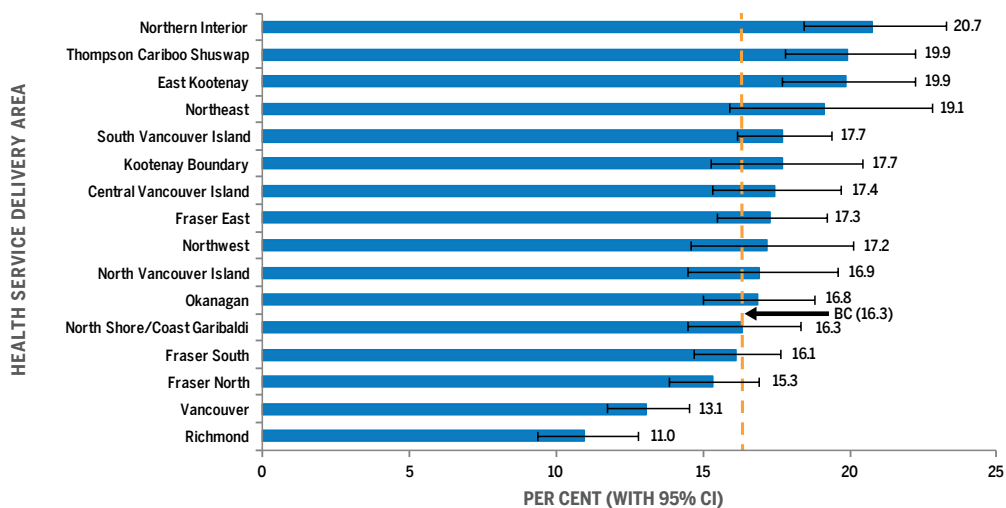
Notes: "Physical activity" means activity that made the student sweat, breathe hard, or be "out of breath". Data are not available for 2003 and 2008. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.
Source: McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

FIG 11.2 Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported at Least 60 Minutes of Physical Activity on Each of the Past Seven Days, by Health Authority, BC, 2013



Notes: "Physical activity" means activity that made the student sweat, breathe hard, or be "out of breath". Health authority is based on the location of the school. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.
Source: McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

FIG 11.3 Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported at Least 60 Minutes of Physical Activity on Each of the Past Seven Days, by Health Service Delivery Area, BC, 2013



Notes: "Physical activity" means activity that made the student sweat, breathe hard, or be "out of breath". Health service delivery area is based on the location of the school. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.

Source: McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

“The measurement using ‘physical activities at least sixty minutes, seven days per week’ is an unreasonable expectation. Five days a week would be more realistic. Seven days is too many and rest days are important for health as well.”

REFERENCES

- ¹Ekeland E, Heian F, Hagen KB. Can exercise improve self esteem in children and young people? A systematic review of randomised controlled trials. *Br J Sports Med.* 2005 Nov; 39(11): 792–8.
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- ⁵H. Krueger & Associates. *Child and youth health and well-being indicators project: appendix F – physical health and well-being evidence review* [prepared for the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the Canadian Institute for Health Information]. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Institute for Health Information; 2011.