



ELGAN STUDY NEWSLETTER

ELGAN Study: Learning, Growing, Achieving, and Nurturing

1. The Future of ELGAN

ELGAN investigators continues to work on plans to bring back ELGAN families for study visits in the later teen years. This third follow-up assessment will help us learn about health and development during the years between childhood and adulthood, a time of many changes! We will also try to understand better whether being born very early contributes to later blood pressure elevation and excessive weight gain. With that in mind, we devote this ELGAN Study newsletter to thoughts about how to enhance a healthy lifestyle.

2. Spotlight: Physical Activity and Health

Did you know that regular physical activity is associated with a healthier, longer life and a lower risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and some cancers? It's true! But despite all of the benefits of physical activity, most school aged children in this country do not get enough exercise. Lack of physical activity has contributed to the sharp rise in the last 20 years of children becoming overweight.

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is best accomplished by healthy eating behaviors and regular physical activity. The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion recommends that children and adolescents ages 6 to 17 do 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity each day. That includes: **Aerobic Activity:** Most of the 60 or more minutes a day should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity (such as running,

dancing, or biking), and include vigorous-intensity physical activity at least 3 days a week. **Muscle-Strengthening:** As part of the 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, include muscle-strengthening physical activity (such as climbing trees, using playground equipment, or lifting weights) on at least 3 days of the week. **Bone-Strengthening:** As part of the 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, include bone-strengthening physical activity (such as running or jumping rope) on at least 3 days of the week. By encouraging young people to try a variety of physical activities, we can help them find activities that they enjoy and that are age-appropriate (source: health.gov/paguidelines/children).

Have you heard of the **5-2-1-0 Program**? It is an easy way to remember the recommendations for children and adolescents.

5 Aim for 5 fruits and vegetables every day

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables provides vitamins and minerals, important for supporting growth and development, and for optimal immune function in children. In adults, a high daily intake of fruits and vegetables is associated with lower rates of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes and possibly some types of cancer.

2 Keep recreational screen time to 2 hours or less every day

Watching television occupies many children for several hours each day and is associated with physical inactivity, increased energy intake (many people snack more than they should while sitting in front of the TV), exposure to marketing, and increased prevalence of overweight and obesity.



Include at least 1 hour or more of active play every day

Regular physical activity is essential for fitness and prevention of overweight and chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, and osteoporosis. While most school-age children are quite active, they tend to become less active during adolescence. Children who grow up in families with active lifestyles are much more likely to stay active as adults than children raised in families with sedentary lifestyles.



Skip sugar sweetened beverages, drink more water every day

Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption has increased dramatically over the past 20 years; high intake among children is associated with overweight, obesity, dental cavities, and reduced milk consumption. Whole milk is the single largest source of saturated fat in children's diets. Switching to low or non-fat milk products significantly reduces dietary saturated and total fat, as well as total calories.

Source: <http://www.pamf.org/ynp/5210/>

3. Tips for Increasing Daily Physical Activity

Try doing something active together as a family, such as going for a walk after dinner, planting and caring for a garden, playing with the kids (splash in the puddles, jump in the leaves, build a snowman or dance to your favorite music), go for a bike ride, or play wheel chair or hand-cycle sports.

You, the parent, can set a good example for your child! Increase the amount of physical activity you get by making very small changes in your daily life like parking in the furthest parking spot from your destination and walking (or getting off the subway/bus one stop early), taking the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator, or doing jumping jacks, push-ups or sit-ups during the commercials of your favorite TV show.

4. Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Resources

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion:

<http://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/children.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/children/what_counts.htm

Sutter Health Palo Alto Medical Foundation:

<http://www.pamf.org/ynp/5210/>

Palaestra (Adapted Sport, Physical Education and Recreational Therapy

<http://www.palaestra.com>

4. Publications

We have published more than 100 peer-reviewed professional articles based on information from ELGAN children during 2002-2007 (birth and 2-year assessments). So far, we have published 5 articles based on the assessments at age 10 years. As our articles get published they will be added to the list found on our Family Website. Check them out!

5. ELGAN Website and Facebook Page

Please visit our website, www.elganstudy.org.

The ELGAN Family Website may be a useful resource for you, includes current publications, and may serve as a way for you to stay connected with people at your ELGAN Study location. Check it out! You can also find and "like" us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/elganstudy. This page has study updates, contact information and other ELGAN news, which may be helpful for you.

6. Let's Stay in Touch!

Please let us know the best way to stay in touch. If you use e-mail, text (please let us know your cell phone number), Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn, let us know which you prefer! We want to be able to share more newsletters and other information with you over the next few years as we plan for ELGAN3. So please stay in touch. If you have questions, comments, news, or pictures to share, please contact Julie Rollins at julie.rollins@unc.edu.