## Vitalsigns<sup>TM</sup> May 2014

## **Adults with Disabilities**

Physical activity is for everybody



Adults with disabilities are 3 times more likely to have heart disease, stroke, diabetes, or cancer than adults without disabilities.

1 in 2 17

Nearly half of all adults with disabilities get no aerobic physical activity, an important health behavior to help avoid these chronic diseases.

**1**682%

Adults with disabilities were 82% more likely to be physically active if their doctor recommended it.

More than 21 million US adults 18–64 years of age have a disability. These are adults with serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs; hearing; seeing; or concentrating, remembering, or making decisions. Most adults with disabilities are able to participate in physical activity, yet nearly half of them get no aerobic physical activity. Physical activity benefits all adults, whether or not they have a disability, by reducing their risk of serious chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers. Only 44% of adults with disabilities who visited a doctor in the past year were told by a doctor to get physical activity. Yet adults with disabilities were 82% more likely to be physically active if their doctor recommended it.

## Doctors and other health professionals can:

- ♦ Ask adults with disabilities how much physical activity they get each week.
- ♦ Remind adults with disabilities to get regular physical activity consistent with their abilities. They should try to get at least 2 1/2 hours a week of moderate-intensity physical activity. If this is not possible, some activity is better than none.
- ♦ Recommend physical activity options that match the specific abilities of each person and connect them to resources that can help each person be physically active.

→ See page 4
Want to learn more? Visit

www

www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/disabilities/



## **Increasing physical** activity among adults with disabilities

Doctors and other health professionals can use these steps to recommend aerobic physical activity options that match each person's specific abilities and connect him or her to resources that can help each person be physically active.



The Physical **Activity Guidelines** are for everybody. www.health.gov/ paguidelines/guidelines/

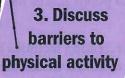
Review the patient's charts before each visit.

Explain that adults of all shapes, sizes and abilities can benefit from being physically active.



HOURS

Encourage at least 2½ hours a week of moderate-intensity physical activity.



Remember to look beyond the disability and put the person first. Use terms such as "person with a disability" instead of "disabled" or "handicapped person".

How can you What types add more physical of physical activity do activity in your life? you enjoy?

2. Ask about physical activity

How much physical activity are you currently doing each week?



4. Recommend physical activity options



**Emotional Barriers** 



**Brisk walking** 



Wheeling oneself in wheelchair



Swimming laps



Water aerobics



5. Refer patient to resources and programs

Check-in with patient about his or her activity level at every visit.

Describe physical activity options based on patient's abilities.

> Refer patient to resources and programs to help them begin or maintain their physical activity.

Remember to use the "teach-back" method to make sure patient understands the recommendations.



Hand-crank bicycle

Wheelchair basketball, tennis, football, or softball



For resources: www.cdc.gov/disabilities/PA