

# ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



**OCTOBER 2018**

Download this and past issues of the Adult, Youth, Parent and Family Caregiver Health Bulletins:  
<http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/health-bulletins>

## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: BE ACTIVE WITH YOUR COMMUTE



**A**n active commute can make a big contribution to your health, save on fuel costs and reduce environmental pollutants. The average American driver may spend over 450 hours each year behind the wheel. That comes out to nearly 11 workweeks behind the wheel, according to the Center for Transportation Excellence. In addition to the physical benefits from an active commute, people enjoy mental health benefits, including reduced stress and increased social interactions.

Creating a habit of active commuting boosts not only your fitness level, but can also protect you from heart disease, obesity and excessive stress. Walking or bicycling for all or part of your commute has substantial mental benefits. Recent studies show that those who walked,

Continued on the back 



# Research shows that every hour you spend walking reduces the risk of obesity by 4.8 percent.

## ➔ Continued from page 1

biked or took transit to work had a greater sense of well-being than those who drove. It is not surprising to hear that bicycling and walking are better exercise than sitting in a car in traffic. However, research shows that every additional hour per day you spend driving puts you at a 6 percent greater risk of obesity, while every hour you spend walking reduces that risk by 4.8 percent.

### Getting started

Many employers support active commuting by offering bicycle parking and storage, onsite showers and subsidized public transportation passes. Taking public transit may not sound like an active way to commute, but public transit users walk more to get to the bus stop, bus platform and their final destination. Whether or not you have workplace support for an active commute, you can take steps toward making your commute a healthier one. Ask around. Chances are, someone in your workplace already bikes, walks, runs or rides the bus to work.

### Share-the-road tips for motorists

- Bicyclists have a legal right to use the road.
- Be patient — wait until it is safe to pass and give at least 3 feet of space.
- Cyclists may use the full lane to be more visible or when hazards, road width or traffic speeds dictate.
- Make eye contact so bicyclists and pedestrians know they are seen.
- Stay behind cyclists when turning right.
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.

### Share-the-road tips for bicyclists and pedestrians

- Obey traffic rules for safety and to gain respect from motorists.
- Never ride against traffic. It is illegal and unsafe.
- Be predictable and make eye contact with drivers to be sure you are seen.



**Pedestrians must use crosswalks if available.**

- Use front and rear lights, wear bright clothing and always wear a helmet.
- Pedestrians must use crosswalks if available.
- Know the dangers of sidewalk riding. Bicycling on downtown sidewalks is illegal.
- When passing other bikers or people on the street, always pass to their left side, and call out “On your left!” so they know that you are coming.
- When turning or changing lanes, always use the correct hand signals. Left turn: Hold your left arm straight out to your left side. Right turn: Hold your right arm straight out from your right side.

#### RESOURCES:

- [www.sharetheroad.ky.gov](http://www.sharetheroad.ky.gov)
- <https://www.bikeleague.org/content/bicycle-commuter-benefit>
- Bassett Jr., David R; Pucher, John; Buehler, Ralph; Thompson, Dixie; “Walking, Cycling, and Obesity Rates in Europe, North America, and Australia” *Journal of Physical Activity & Health*, 2008, Volume 5, Issue 6.
- Frank, Andresen, & Schmid. (2004). Obesity relationships with community design, physical activity, and time spent in cars. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 27(2), 87-96.
- <https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/blog/6740/energize-your-work-day-with-an-active-commute>
- <https://www.washington.edu/wholeu/2015/07/30/benefits-of-an-active-commute>

ADULT  
**HEALTH BULLETIN**

Written by: Natalie Jones  
Edited by: Connee Wheeler  
Designed by: Rusty Manseau  
Stock images: 123RF.com

