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Kids Living Near School Rarely Walk There: Study



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WEDNESDAY, July 11 (HealthDay News) -- Even though one out of three American children live within a mile of their school, barely half of those students regularly bike or walk to class, researchers report.

Children who live in the South, in rural areas or who have college-educated parents are among those least likely to bike or walk to school, notes the report, which is published in the July issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine.

Sarah Martin and colleagues at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) studied data from more than 7,000 children between 9 and 15 years of age.

They found that almost 35 percent of the children lived within one mile of their schools. Children between 11 and 13 years old were more likely to walk or bike than 9-year-olds. Children whose parents had a high school education were more likely to bike or walk than children with college-educated parents.

"The majority of young people are missing an opportunity to increase daily physical activity by being active travelers," Martin said in a prepared statement.

According to the CDC, nearly one in five (18.8 percent) young people between 6 and 11 years old are overweight. Increased daily physical activity is one of the methods the CDC recommends to help manage weight in young people.

Martin and colleagues said that the reasons why children in urban areas might be more likely to bike or walk are complex. They cited the fact that schools may be in mixed-use neighborhoods where it is more possible to bike or walk, in contrast to suburbs where there may be fewer safe sidewalks.

More information

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