

# The Wellness Family

Dr. Roller Keeps You Informed

## Get Moving!

Children today face a struggle that our generation never considered – the battle to stay active. Our afternoons and weekends spent growing up were filled with things like meeting new kids in our neighborhood, building forts or some other outdoor activity. That's a very different story from the average youth today who rarely steps outside on a beautiful spring day, and Dr. Roller wants to address why?

### Common Distractions

There is no bigger distraction for today's youth than the screen – whether it be a video, television or computer screen it's a challenge much larger than you or I faced in our youth. We remember TV's and VCR's, but our children are being sidetracked from spending time in healthy activities by much larger distractions. Where we were only turning our backs from watching the latest video release, our children are struggling to walk away from their favorite TV shows, the latest high score challenge on their favorite video game, and time to chat online with their best friend. No matter how you look at it – it's challenging.

Consider, for a moment, the distractions that our children face. When invited to go outside and play, the average child will choose to "kick it" on the couch or in their room. Why? The answer is simple; their bodies are conditioned to do nothing while some form of video media entertains their minds.

The average American teen's day is spent as follows:

- 7-8 hours sleeping
- 6-7 hours in school
- 2-5 hours watching TV
- 2-6 hours of other sedentary activity
- 1-2 hours on the computer
- 1.5 hours doing homework
- 0-1 hour playing video games [1]

No matter how you look at it, this is not an active lifestyle. In fact, except to walk from one class to another and then from their mode of transportation to their front door, it's almost impossible to see where the average teen today spends anytime outside at all.

### Obesity & Diabetes on the Rise

It's no wonder that an extraordinary number of American children are struggling with obesity or that the rate of childhood diabetes has been on the rise since the late 80's.[2] An inactive, sedentary lifestyle is going to lead to weight problems and health issues; add to that the growing decline of the American diet, and our children are really facing a battle that we never saw in our youth.



*"An inactive, sedentary lifestyle is going to lead to weight problems and health issues."*

Have you considered what your child eats in a day?

- Most items thrown in a sack lunch are "wrapped" items and are probably full of sugars, carbs and "bad fats",
- Most school cafeterias (especially High Schools) have vending machines or a junk food counter, and
- Consider the *time, brand name and fad* factor (i.e. Lunchables)

And there you have it. Despite our plan to try to offer our children healthy foods to develop better eating habits, today's youth are being bombarded with time saving, nutritionally lacking meals and it's only adding to the problem.

### So, what can we do?

First of all, catch them while they're young. It is increasingly difficult to change a habit once it's

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ingrained; and the average teen is a lot less open to spending time with their parents at the park or outside working in the garden than the average 6 or 7 year old.

Second, make a priority spending time with your children outside on a spring afternoon. Adults are busy people; with work, raising children and other activities it's difficult to find time to spend with your kids outdoors. It's important, though, to make the time; spending an hour or two a day outside with your children could become habit-forming.

There's so much to do, so just make the time.

- Plant a garden in the backyard. Nothing big, maybe just a few rows of vegetables and plants can be bought as seedlings so your success rate is almost guaranteed.
- Go unplugged! Determine one day a week when there will be no electronic entertainment for the day: no video games, no TV, no computer, no stereo, nothing. Instead spend time playing a board game with the kids, discussing current events, playing 20 questions, anything to develop conversation.
- Get involved in your community. Sign up for a Walk-a-Thon, neighborhood-clean up, etc. and help children recognize the needs of others.
- Consider an art project. Take your child to a museum to explore the different types of art available, most museums have art classes or events for kids, and then encourage them to take on a project of their own.
- Or just spend an afternoon at the park. There is always a public park that has swings, slides and a little area for running and (especially if you live in the city) you'll find that every child loves to play tag with their mom or dad. Kids are absolutely sure they can run faster than you can.

## In Summary

The average child is not spending time outdoors running, playing, climbing and generally exercising their bodies. They also aren't spending time with their families doing things that will increase the family bond. Unfortunately, the average parent isn't even aware of what interests their child has and vice versa. It's time to bring "family time" back into the home and Dr. Roller wants to challenge you to designate just five hours a week/one hour a day to your family.

## Dr. Roller's Top Five

5. Eat at least one meal a day together during the week and two on the weekends.
4. Go walking in the evenings.
3. Go unplugged! No electronic entertainment one day a week!
2. Spend a few hours on a Saturday afternoon playing miniature golf or hiking.
1. Find an activity that the whole family enjoys and dedicate at least one day a month to that activity. Whether it's fishing, bicycling or rollerblading, a common thread may be all that's needed to pull your family closer together.

### For more information:

[www.icpa4kids.org](http://www.icpa4kids.org)  
[www.kidchiropractic.com](http://www.kidchiropractic.com)  
[www.chiroweb.com](http://www.chiroweb.com)

1. Family Circle: 10/01/04: 54
2. JAMA 2001 (Dec 12): 386 (22): 2845-2848

*Dear Parent,*

*Dr. Roller is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. Along with that dedication comes an understanding that an informed parent makes wise decisions for their child. Don't forget to take a moment to ask Dr. Roller any questions that you may have regarding your family's overall wellness.*

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