

6.5 Inactivity

Physical activity is one of the key components in helping to reduce the risks associated with obesity. It therefore stands to reason that physical inactivity would increase the risk. Physical inactivity is likely to cause a two to four times increased risk of cardiovascular disease (a consequence of obesity).

The 2008 Ministry of Health publication: *A Portrait of Health: Key Results of the 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey* found that 55.1% of men were engaged in physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day for five or more days per week. By comparison, only 47.9% of women were actively involved for the same amount of time.



1. Explain the possible reasons for this.

What about young people?

The 2002 *New Zealand Food New Zealand Children* survey included a section on activity patterns (p.xxii). The data gathered showed that:

- Walking at least 15 minutes per day was the most frequently reported activity by about 60 percent of children in the 5-14 year age group.
- One-half of children in the 5-14 year age group were transported to school.
- Males were more likely to be more physically active than females.
- About one in five children 7-10 years and one in 10 children aged 11-14 years took part in no physical education class at school in the previous week.
- No weekend physical activity was reported by 12.5% of children and was highest amongst females aged 11-14 years.

