

# Bathroom Briefs

Your line to good health!

Developed by: Health Promotion & Disease Prevention  
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## People with Disabilities: Living Healthy



Today, about 50 million Americans, or 1 in 5 people, are living with at least one disability, and most Americans will experience a disability some time during the course of their lives. Anyone can have a disability.

People with disabilities face many barriers to good health. Studies show that individuals with disabilities are more likely than people without disabilities to report:

- Having poorer overall health.
- Having less access to adequate health care.
- Having no access to health insurance.
- Skipping medical care because cost.
- Engaging in risky health behaviors, including smoking and physical inactivity.

People with disabilities can lead long healthy lives. Many can and do go to school and attend places of worship. They also vote, marry, have children, work, and play. Having a disability does not mean a person can't be healthy.

People with or without disabilities can stay healthy by having health care access and living healthy lifestyles.

To be healthy, people with disabilities require health care that meets their needs as a whole person, not just as a person with a disability..

### Key Guidelines for Adults With Disabilities

- Adults with disabilities, who are able to, should get at least 150 minutes per week (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) per week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably, it should be spread throughout the week.
- Adults with disabilities, who are able to, should also do muscle-strengthening activities of moderate or high intensity that involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days per week as these activities provide additional health benefits.
- When adults with disabilities are not able to meet the above Guidelines, they should engage in regular physical activity according to their abilities and should avoid inactivity. Adults with disabilities should consult their health-care providers about the amounts and types of physical activity that are appropriate for their abilities.

### Tips for Leading a Long and Healthy Life

Children and adults with disabilities are less likely to be of healthy weight and more likely to be obese than children and adults without disabilities.

Overweight and obesity can have serious health consequences for all people.

- Eat healthy foods in healthy portions.
- Be physically active every day.
- Don't get too much sun.
- Get regular checkups.
- Don't smoke or use illegal drugs.
- Use medicines wisely.
- Take prescription meds as prescribed.
- If you drink alcohol, drink it in moderation.
- Stay in touch with family and friends.
- If you need help, talk with your healthcare professional.

### Make Sure You are Getting the Best Possible Healthcare

There are also many things you can do to make sure you are getting the best possible health care:

- Know your body, how you feel when you're well and when you're not.
- Get regular preventive screenings (e.g., mammograms, prostate, colorectal)
- Talk openly with your health care professional about your concerns.
- Find out who the best health care professionals are in your area to meet your needs.
- Check to be sure you can get into your health care professional's office and that he or she has the staff and equipment you need.
- Think through your concerns before you visit your health care professional.

### Resources and Additional Information

- Contact your local healthcare provider.
- Contact *American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD)* @ <http://www.aahd.us>
- Contact *National Center on Physical Activity and Disability (NCPAD)*. You can reach NCPAD toll-free at 1-800-900-8086 or by sending an email to [ncpad@uic.edu](mailto:ncpad@uic.edu).
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