



Gettysburg Inner Loop

Health Benefits of Bicycling and Walking

From the Wellspan 2015 Adams County Community Health Needs Assessment:

- Chronic Disease rates are plaguing our community, much like other communities nation-wide
- 68% of Adams County residents are overweight or obese, a cause of diabetes and heart problems
- 42% reported having high cholesterol
- 38% reported having high blood pressure.
- 12% of respondents advised that they were diabetic
- 11% reported they had heart disease, a heart attack or stroke
- These chronic disease rates are likely attributable to root causes related to lifestyle and health behaviors
- Only 18% reported exercising 30 minutes or more on five days in the past week

“Unless effective population-level interventions to reduce obesity are developed, the steady rise in life expectancy observed in the modern era may soon come to an end and the youth of today may, on average, live less healthy and possibly even shorter lives than their parents.” (Olshansky et al., *New England Journal of Medicine*, March 17, 2005.)

Young teens who live in neighborhoods where they can safely bike and walk to school and other destinations are significantly less likely to be obese. (*Priedt, R., 2010*)

Commuting physical activity, independent of leisure time physical activity, is associated with a healthier level of most of the cardiovascular risk factors (e.g., HDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol and triglycerides). (*von Huth Smith, L., et al., 2007*)

Overweight adolescents who participate in bicycling 3 to 4 days per week are 85% more likely to become normal-weight adults. (*Menschik, D., et al., 2008*)

A study of nearly 2,400 adults found that those who biked to work were fitter, leaner, less likely to be obese, and had better triglyceride levels, blood pressure, and insulin levels than those who didn't active commute to work. (*Gordon-Larsen, P., et al., 2009*)

Cyclists on average live two years longer than non-cyclists and take 15% fewer days off work through illness. (*CTC*)

As a nation, we are facing tremendous adverse health conditions associated with decreased physical activity. The USA has nearly 4 times the obesity rate as The Netherlands. (World Health Organization 2005: Netherlands obesity rate 10.4% men and 11.5% women versus USA: obesity rate 36.5% men and 41.8% women) It is no deep mystery as to what their primary success secret is: they bicycle...and we ride in cars. Years ago they developed a safe bicycle system. -Dr. Kevin Mosser, President and CEO of Wellspan, 2009

-\$190 billion..... Annual American health bill caused by obesity (2012 Harvard School of Medicine Study per Rails to Trails Conservancy Fall 2013)