

Light activity can help avoid chronic disease

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Reducing time spent sitting and increasing light physical activity has important health benefits that may reduce the risk of diabetes and other cardiovascular diseases.

This is according to new research undertaken by The University of Queensland and Melbourne's International Diabetes Institute.

The research, published this month in the international journal, *Diabetes Care*, has not only confirmed that a sedentary lifestyle is associated with high blood glucose levels, but for the first time has shown that light intensity physical activity, like washing dishes, ironing and other routine domestic or occupational tasks, was associated with lower blood glucose levels.

High glucose levels are a precursor to diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

School of Population Health researcher Mrs Genevieve Healy said this was good news for the general population, but particularly for those who are overweight and at higher risk of developing chronic disease.

Associate Professor David Dunstan, senior research fellow from the International Diabetes Institute and co-author on the paper, said the message that 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise a day was important for good health, still stood.

"This research suggests that there are also real benefits from reducing

sedentary time and increasing the time spent on normal daily activities,” Dr Dunstan said.

Mrs Healy suggested that ”folding clothes or ironing as you watch TV, standing while on the phone or walking to see an office colleague rather than emailing them, are simple and easy ways to do this.”

The study recruited participants from the Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle Study (AusDiab) and involved measuring the glucose levels and daily activities of 173 men and women over a week.

Accelerometers were used to measure the intensity, frequency and duration of the activities.

The new evidence provided by this research points to a preventive strategy that may be more achievable for people who are at risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, but are not exercise conscious.

Source: Research Australia

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