

Finns urged to eat on their feet to stay healthy

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Finland's health ministry on Wednesday urged Finns to occasionally eat their meals standing up in a bid to combat health problems linked to a sedentary lifestyle.

"Many things can be done in a standing position or walking around instead of sitting down. Standing up also works for reading a newspaper, eating, taking a [coffee break](#) and watching television," the ministry recommended in a new publication entitled "Sit Less, Feel Better".

Public health officials have become concerned with Finns' increasingly sedentary lifestyle. Excessive sitting is associated with musculoskeletal disorders, cardiovascular disease and obesity.

"Among those who sit more than seven hours a day, every additional hour spent sitting down increases the risk of death by five percent," the ministry warned.

Studies cited in the publication show that adult Finns sit, lie down or stand still for more than three-quarters of their time awake.

The ministry said that while Finns generally exercise regularly, this alone cannot stop the adverse effects of sitting down for hours on end.

"People of all ages should avoid excessive sitting. They should walk or cycle short distances or stand in public transport, and try to maintain physically active ways of working," the publication recommended.

It noted that getting off [public transport](#) a stop early and walking an extra 300 metres (328 yards) twice a day would amount to around 150 kilometres (93 miles) in a year.

The ministry also raised concern over the increasingly sedentary lifestyle of Finnish children, many of whom nowadays spend their free time browsing smartphones or playing video games.

Children should not sit for more than an hour continuously, a practice in line with the 45-minute-long lessons in Finnish schools, the ministry said.

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