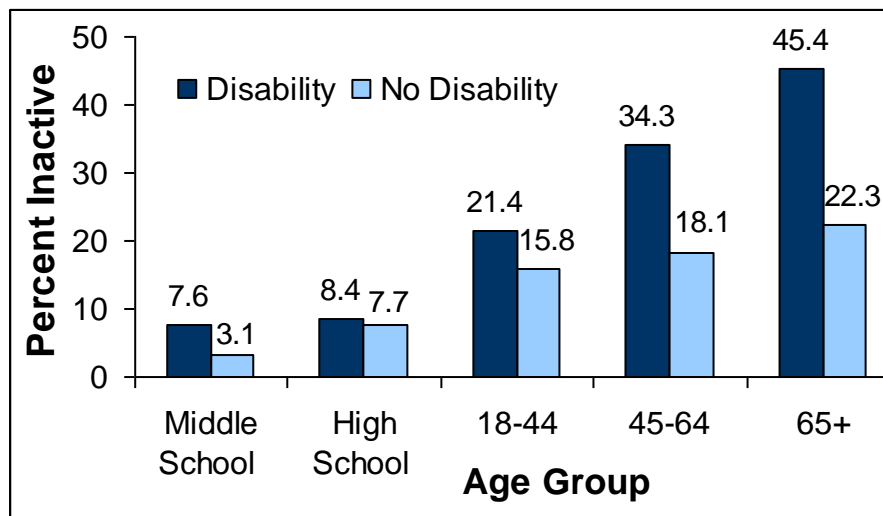




## Promoting Physical Activity among People with Disabilities in Massachusetts

Across the lifespan people with disabilities are more likely to lead a sedentary lifestyle than those without a disability. In Massachusetts, 1 out of 5 children and adults report having one or more physical or cognitive disabilities. Encouraging people with disabilities of all ages to engage in physical activity can reduce the risk or delay the onset of many secondary conditions.

**Figure 1.** Prevalence of inactivity by disability status for MA youth in the past week and MA adults in the past month



### Some Benefits of Physical Activity:

- Reduces risk of cardiovascular disease
- Reduces risk of Type 2 Diabetes
- Improves mental health and mood
- Improves ability to do daily activities and prevent falls

Data Source: YHS 2009, MA BRFSS 2008-09

### The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) physical activity recommendations for people with disabilities:

- Follow the guidelines for their age group.
- Work with a health care provider to determine the appropriate amount and type of activity
- If it is not possible to reach the guidelines, individuals should engage in regular physical activity according to their abilities and should avoid inactivity

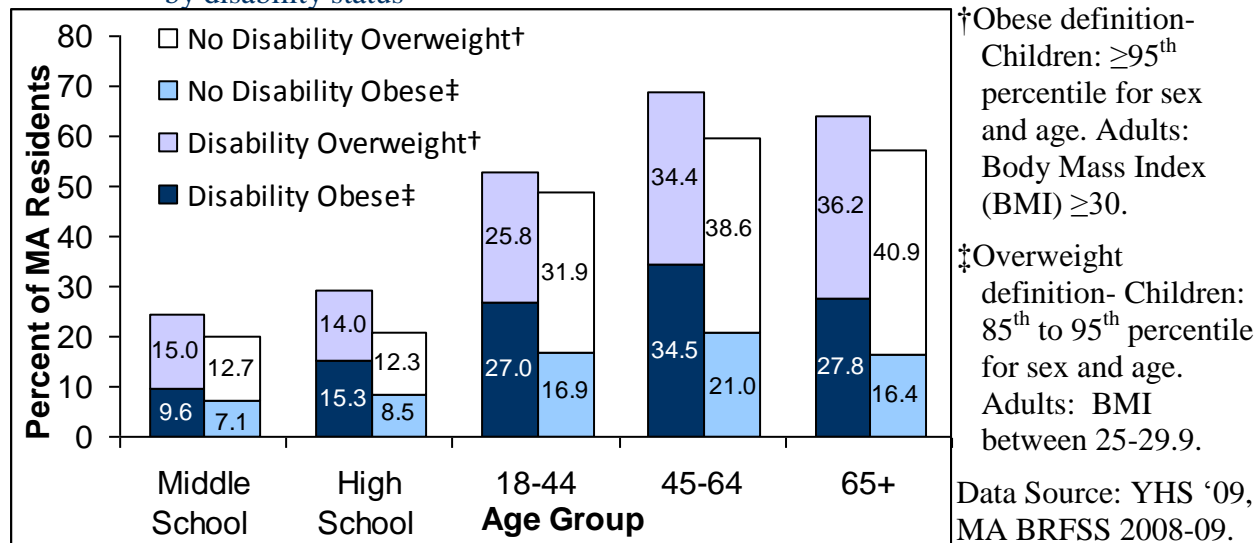
| For all Children:  | For all Adults:  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 ½ hours of <b>moderate-intensity</b> aerobic activity each week or 1 hour and 15 minutes of <b>vigorous-intensity</b> aerobic activity each week</li> <li>• Plus <b>muscle-strengthening</b> activities 2+ days a week</li> </ul> |

Content Sources: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity)  
National Center on Physical Activity and Disability, <http://www.ncpad.org/>

## Disability and Obesity across the Lifespan

Obesity is a common secondary condition among people with disabilities due to the barriers related to accessing opportunities for physical activity. While overweight and obesity increase across the lifespan in both people with and without disabilities, individuals with disabilities are more likely to be obese compared with those without disabilities. For people with disabilities, obesity poses even a greater risk for chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

**Figure 2.** Weight status (Overweight†/Obese‡) across the lifespan by disability status



## Community Infrastructure to Support Active Living

A number of Massachusetts communities are making strides in removing physical barriers within the built environment:

- 79% of Massachusetts communities have a comprehensive master plan which includes health and safety concerns, zoning, and land-use policies.
- 43% have master plans that address walkability.
- 34% have a policy regarding lighting on sidewalks.

Source: MDPH Survey of Policies and Programs Related to Health for Cities and Towns in MA, 2007

## DPH Policy and System Strategies

- **Mass in Motion-** A state-wide initiative promoting wellness and preventing overweight and obesity, with a focus on healthy eating and physical activity.  
**[www.mass.gov/massinmotion](http://www.mass.gov/massinmotion)**
- Inclusion of students with disabilities and special education teachers in healthy living programs such as Eat Well & Keep Moving within primary schools.

### For more information contact:

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TTY: (617)624-5002

[www.mass.gov/dph/healthequity](http://www.mass.gov/dph/healthequity)  
[www.mass.gov/dph/healthanddisability](http://www.mass.gov/dph/healthanddisability)