

## **Have You Helped Your Heart Today? Small Steps for Big Gains**

Researchers at Bath and Bristol Universities have found that just 15 minutes of daily exercise can lower a child's chance of being obese by almost 50%. The activity must be like a brisk walk, so that the child is a little out of breath.

The study measured the activity level of 5,500 12 year olds, for 10 hours a day. Each child wore an "Actigraph Monitor" which records every move. Most wore one for a week but all wore the Actigraph for at least 3 days. They also had their body fat measured with a scanner that can distinguish between muscle and fat.

Professor Chris Riddoch from Bath University said the study provides some of the first evidence of the link between physical activity and obesity in children. Professor Andy Ness of Bristol University said "We know that diet is important – but this research tell us that we mustn't forget about activity.". It's been really surprising to us how even small amounts of exercise appear to have dramatic results.

Recommendations for an hour a day of physical activity can be discouraging. It is hard to find the time in our busy schedules. Just fifteen minutes of brisk walking is much more doable. The key is to do it EVERY DAY and watch for positive results.

For more information contact The Health Heart Program of the Columbia County Dept of Health (518) 828-3358 ext 1314/15. Or log on to <http://www.columbiacountyny.com/depts/healthy/heart/html>