

If you don't make it possible for your children to get regular exercise, they could pay dearly for it later in life.

Even a new bike and helmet will be less costly than the medical expenses related to not riding, or doing other exercise.

Can't afford a new bike for your child?

Bikeworks in south Seattle sells used and reconditioned bikes for all ages. Visit them on the web at www.bikeworks.org, or in person at Bike Works, 3709 S. Ferdinand, Seattle, WA 98118.

206-725-9408 or e-mail info@bikeworks.org.

Need a helmet?

The Cascade Bicycle Club offers low-cost helmet sales. Find out more at www.cascade.org, or contact them directly at 206-522-BIKE (3222) or e-mail info@cascadebicycleclub.org.

Want to see a Safe Routes to School program started at your child's school?

Contact the Bicycle Alliance of Washington at 206-224-9252 or e-mail info@bicyclealliance.org.

Brought to you by



The Bicycle Alliance advocates for bicyclists and a bicycle-friendly Washington.



Citations

Health Canada, Skagit County Dept of Health, American Heart Association, King County Dept of Health, America Bikes

Photos: Mark Davison
Design: Kat Marriner, Pineleaf Productions

It's up to YOU.



Your child can grow up fit, or face a lifetime of medical bills.

Your child can enjoy their childhood, or miss out.

You can make a difference, and 2 wheels might be just what you need.

Tra Shawn Nared from John Muir Elementary keeps his lungs healthy to ease his asthma.

Medical experts agree that no pill holds greater promise for sustained health than a lifetime of physical activity.



Tony Pruitt from Madrona K-8 has diabetes. Riding regularly helps him stay healthy and keep up with his brother Walter.

You can help your child by encouraging them to be physically active. Even moderate exercise can lead to better weight control, stronger bones and muscles, more flexible joints, better posture and balance, improved self-esteem, increased energy, higher capacity for learning, the ability to relax or fight stress, and continued independence later in life.

If you live within a mile or two of your children's school, then bicycling is a reasonable possibility. Even if it's done only on a seasonal basis, cycling still can have a positive health impact. And the younger kids start, the greater the chance that they will bike as adults, enabling them to enjoy the cumulative effect of a lifetime of benefits.

Inactive children risk becoming obese. Today, 1 in 8 children are severely overweight. Obesity often leads to high blood pressure, depression, joint strain, heart problems and diabetes. Type 2 diabetes can lead to loss of vision, loss of foot or leg, kidney problems or nerve damage. At a minimum, it is likely to lead to multiple trips to the doctor's office. Obesity-related problems can ultimately be responsible for premature death.

There is no cure for diabetes but it can be controlled through proper weight and activities such as bicycling.

Perhaps your child has asthma. One in 10 kids do. Asthma, like diabetes, can be life-threatening if not properly managed, and part of a good management plan is daily exercise. Activities such as biking help asthmatics work the heart and breathing muscles, strengthening them both and making it possible to do more while taking in less air. That, in turn, reduces fatigue or the chances of an attack.



Danielle Williams (on right) from White Center Heights Elementary has asthma and she and her sister Miracle ride bikes for fun and good health.

Biking to school or just around the neighborhood is an effective way to integrate physical activity into your child's daily life. You may have concerns about biking. Sure, accidents happen. But the reality is, they happen infrequently. And when they do, they're usually not life threatening. Children can and do learn to ride their bikes safely.

