

Overweight + Inactivity = Increased Risk of Chronic Disease

- Excessive weight and inactivity are consistently linked with increased incidence of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, and colon cancer.
- Eighty percent of American adults do not meet physical activity recommendations.
- Only 27% of students in grades 9–12 engage in recommended amounts of moderate-intensity physical activity.

AgriLife Extension's Response

- The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service developed Walk Across Texas! It is a fun fitness program created to help participants adopt the habit of regular physical activity.
- Teams of up to eight family members, friends, co-workers, or neighbors walk together or individually for eight weeks each year. Some also attend extension classes and receive information on nutrition, exercise, weight loss, and other health topics.
- Teams compete to see who can walk the 832 miles "across Texas" first, and all participants are recognized for their achievements.



- Since 1996, more than 155,000 Texans have completed the program to significantly increase their physical activity level.

Economic Impacts

- Medical research shows that exercise and weight loss can reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- Over the lifetime of the 12,500 participants in 2019, approximately 350 could prevent the onset of diabetes and/or cardiovascular disease through sustained levels of physical activity,
- The average annual health care cost (age-adjusted) for people without diabetes is \$7,151, while the average annual cost for people with diabetes is \$16,752.
- The average annual health care cost (age-adjusted) for people without cardiovascular disease is \$5,269, while the average annual cost for people with cardiovascular disease is \$11,192.
- The estimated lifetime health care cost savings are more than \$133,000 for type 2 diabetes and more than \$44,000 for cardiovascular disease. When avoidance of lost wages is included, the lifetime economic benefit for 2019 participants who completed the program is \$48 million.
- Participants are also expected to benefit through reduced incidence, severity, and health care costs of other chronic diseases that are linked to excessive weight and inactivity.