



Walk to School

October 2014

Victorian families challenged to *Walk to School* in October

4 September 2014

VicHealth is calling on Victorian families to limber up and walk (or scoot, ride or roll!) to and from school every day in October.

Registrations are now open for *Walk to School 2014*, a fun, free and family-friendly campaign that encourages primary school children and their parents to swap the road for the pavement and build healthy habits for life.

VicHealth CEO, Jerril Rechter, said only one in five Victorian primary school children get the recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.

“Regular physical activity is essential for a healthy mind and body and to prevent chronic illnesses, particularly those associated with obesity. Walking to school is a great way for parents and children to get active and spend more quality time together,” Ms Rechter said.

“We hope that children who take part in *Walk to School* will be inspired to adopt a year-round walking routine that will put them on the path to good health for the rest of their lives.”

Ms Rechter said the campaign is also beneficial for parents. “More than two-thirds of Australian adults are sedentary or only get very low levels of exercise, so getting out of the car for the school run is a great way for Victorian families to incorporate more exercise into their day.

“Encouraging children to walk to school is also a key step in overcoming parental anxiety and avoiding ‘cotton wool’ parenting. It can increase your child’s independence, self-confidence and social skills.

“Last year more than 30,000 students across Victoria joined *Walk to School* and together walked more than 400,000 kilometres. We hope 2014 will be even bigger.”

More than 50 local councils are also on board for this year’s event and will run competitions, organise healthy breakfasts, pilot walking programs and support schools to develop other initiatives such as ‘park and walk’ options for families.

Schools that participate in *Walk to School* will be provided with certificates to celebrate their students’ achievements and will be in the running for regional prizes. All Victorian primary school students can get involved in VicHealth’s fun walking-themed competitions throughout October, with prizes awarded each week.

The free *Walk to School* app for iPhone and android devices makes it easier for students and families to record their walks to and from school every day. The app includes a fun interactive game that allows children to create their own imaginary *Walk to School* journey and collect bonus creatures and objects for their world with each walk they record. *Walk to School* kicks off on Monday 6 October, 2014.

Register at www.walktoschool.vic.gov.au.

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