

Metabolism & Physical Activity

What is Metabolism?

Metabolism is a process where the food we eat is converted into a specific type of fuel for the cells in our bodies to use. When food is processed the end result is the creation of building blocks called fatty acids, amino acids and glucose. These building blocks are used to provide energy (or fuel) for each cell to do its job as part of your essential bodily functions.

Your body requires energy for four main functions:

1. For your organs (such as lungs, heart, brain) to function. This component of metabolism is also known as basal metabolic rate. In fact, your brain alone uses about one third of your daily supply of building blocks, especially glucose. (Basal Metabolic Rate)
2. For growth and repair of body tissues, including fighting infection and when the body is under stress.
3. For energy used when you move your muscles, such as during physical activity.
4. To digest and break down food into its building blocks, also called the thermic effect of food.

Therefore our bodies need energy to keep us alive even when we are laying down/asleep (Basal Metabolic Rate).

What is physical activity?

The World Health Organisation defines physical activity as **any bodily movement** produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure – including activities undertaken while working, playing, carrying out household chores, travelling, and engaging in recreational pursuits.

The term "physical activity" should not be confused with "exercise". Exercise is a subcategory of physical activity that is planned, structured, repetitive, and aims to improve or maintain one or more components of physical fitness

So physical activity is any movement your body makes. Ask yourself these questions

Think about the past 24 hrs;

How long did you sleep for?

How many hours did you sit down for?

How many hours were you moving around for? e.g. cleaning, cooking, playing with children

You may have been more physically active than you think! For more advice and support around this topic please discuss with your team. - (Created by CWP Dietitians, Reviewed Sept 2024)