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# A Prescription To Get Active

Doctors prescribe exercise rather than medication in this ground-breaking program

Imagine a world where your doctor wrote you a prescription to get active and you took that prescription to a health club for free access. Sound crazy? It's not and it's been happening across Alberta since 2011.

The program is called Prescription to Get Active and over 100 health clubs and recreational facilities across the province have jumped on board for free, offering classes and support.

Participating is simple: if you're an adult and not getting the recommended 150 minutes/week or a child getting less than 60 minutes/day of physical activity, your doctor can write you a prescription to exercise. You can take this to any of the participating facilities and use them for free for up to six weeks.

"More than 80 per cent of Canadians are sedentary," explains Scott Wildeman, president of Prescription to Get Active, "and it's creating an economic burden estimated at \$29 billion a year. Smoking, diabetes and obesity are a major health concern, yet low physical activity kills more people than all these conditions in combination."

Through the program, participants have free access to activities ranging from fitness classes to rock climbing to yoga. In 2017, 20,000 Albertans participated and the majority of the province's primary care networks are also involved.

"We've recently received funding from Alberta Health and Alberta Blue Cross to expand the program provincially, and we have aspirations to grow nationally," Wildeman says, "and we're building an app for people who prefer to work out at home."

"We are also moving toward tax credits and other health incentives for active Canadians," Wildeman explained. "It could be up to a 700 per cent return on investment for the government."

While the health benefits of staying active are well known, the cost savings are only just becoming recognized. Wildeman says if Canada's sedentary rate dropped by just 1 per cent per year, the government would save \$2.1 billion per year in health care costs. That's a huge cost savings and something we should all be actively working toward. ●

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

### STEP ONE

Talk to your doctor and their healthcare team about getting a Prescription To Get Active.



### STEP TWO

Record your prescription at [prescriptiontogetactive.com](http://prescriptiontogetactive.com). Opt-in for the newsletter to get motivation sent right to your inbox.



### STEP THREE

Find helpful resources and activity ideas on this website to learn how to get moving more.



### STEP FOUR

Fill your prescription at a participating recreation facility to get free access.



*\*Be sure to take your prescription with you to the recreation facility\**