



HEALTH NEWS FROM DR. YU

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department

Activate your Commute by Biking or Walking

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Spring is a great time to get moving. Warmer weather and longer days mean there are plenty of opportunities to be active outdoors – from taking a walk to enjoy spring blooms to working in your garden. Getting enough physical activity is even easier when done as part of a daily routine. The ways we travel to and from work or school are good examples.

Can you think of some ways to increase activity during your commute?

- Think of things like where you park. Could you park further away from your workplace to get a longer walk before and after work?
- Bicycling or walking to work can work wonders, as many people have already discovered.
- A public transit commute is also usually more active than driving, because of the walk to and from the bus stops. If the walk to the nearest bus stop is too far, consider combining transit and cycling. Intercity Transit makes this possible with bike racks on their buses.

Each of these active modes of travel has other benefits: saving money, reducing congestion, and curbing air pollution and climate change – and as a result provide even more health benefits.

An upcoming community event encourages us to get some healthy activity during our travel to work and school – the **Bicycle Commuter Contest**. Intercity Transit coordinates this Thurston County original, now in its twenty-fourth year. The contest runs during the whole month of May. Register now; it is free for those under 18 or five dollars for everyone else. Intercity Transit provides a mileage log to keep track of how far and how many days you pedaled. At the end of the month, return your log sheet and receive a packet of discount coupons for participating, and compete in various categories for even bigger prizes.

School kids are also getting into the active commute by participating in **Safe Routes to School** projects. Schools from Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Yelm are participating. The Walk and Roll program, administered by Intercity Transit and Thurston Regional Planning Council, has already taken many steps toward encouraging kids to walk and bicycle to school, including on-site traffic safety education and walking school buses. It is a great way for kids to learn healthy habits that will last them a lifetime. These projects also identify ways to improve the design of school entrances and neighborhood streets so families experience an inviting and safe environment for cycling and walking.

Move more, get fit, and have fun! Try any of these active commutes and see if you notice a difference in your own health and that of the community.

- Find more information about the Bicycle Commuter Contest at:
www.bccblogger.com or contact Duncan Green (dgreen@intercitytransit.com)
- Safe Routes to School projects at:
www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/personalhealth/chronicdiseaseprevention/SafeActiveRoutes.html

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