HEALTHY PLACES

This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

Healthy places are those designed and built to improve the quality of life for all people who live, work, worship, learn, and play within their borders -- where every person is free to make choices amid a variety of healthy, available, accessible, and affordable options.

Healthy People in Healthy Places is a CDC health protection goal. CDC is working hard to ensure the places we live, work, and play have safe, healthy environments, especially those at greater risk for health disparities. Those places include communities, homes, schools, workplaces, healthcare settings, institutions, and travel and recreation

CDC recognizes several significant health issues that are related to Healthy Places. For example, poorly designed communities can make it difficult for people with mobility impairments or other disabling conditions to move about their environment. This makes people with a disability often more vulnerable to environmental barriers, such as lack of access to mass transit routes or other public services.

Healthy community design can benefit children in many important ways. At a time when obesity and diabetes are rising among children, when asthma continues to be highly prevalent, and conditions such as attention deficit disorder may be on the rise, it is crucial to seek, understand, and implement environmental design solutions that might help with these health challenges. School design is one example of how the built environment can influence children's health. When new schools are built at a long distance from where families live, then children need to be driven to school, depriving them of an opportunity for physical activity and contributing to air pollution and risk for automobile crashes.

Another example is the link between land use and mental health. Though not yet completely understood, it is clearly a topic that can affect the overall health of a community. Effects on mental health can include both increased stress and cognitive impairment, which in turn can have physical health implications. Some of this increased stress can be caused by long and taxing daily commutes because sprawl separates our homes from workplace, business, and school locations.

CDC is committed to forming new partnerships and seeking solutions to community-wide public health problems. Every person has a stake in environmental public health. As the environment deteriorates, so does the physical and mental health of the people within it.

To access the most accurate and relevant health information that affects you, your family and your community, please visit www.cdc.gov.