

Acknowledgments must be given to MCS Physical Activity Monitoring Team, MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health, UCL Institute of Child Health and the Millennium Cohort Study Team at the Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Institute of Education, University of London.

Child of the New Century Age 7 Survey Physical Activity Monitoring

What will happen to the information collected on the activity monitor and timesheet?

The information will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. The information you provide will be used solely to build up a picture of life in the UK today and will not be released in any way that enables you to be identified.

Will I get any feedback about my child's activity levels?

Your child will receive a feedback certificate summarising their activity levels within 4 weeks of sending back the activity monitor.

How do I find out more about this part of the study?

This part of the study is being carried out in collaboration with the researchers at the Institute of Child Health, University College London. They are responsible for sending out the activity monitors and sending you feedback after the monitor has been returned to them. **If you have any other questions or would like further information about this part of the study, please call Carly Rich on 0800 030 4124 (free phone).**

Thank you for your help

We would like to measure your child's physical activity using an activity monitor. This leaflet explains more about the activity monitor and activity monitor documents.

What is the Actigraph activity monitor?

The activity monitor is a small, lightweight device that is worn around the hips on a belt. It is designed to measure physical activity by measuring and recording all your child's movements.

The activity monitor contains a spring which moves up and down when your child moves around. The movements of the spring are recorded onto a micro-chip inside the activity monitor.

On the back of your child's activity monitor is a number. This will be the same number that is on your child's timesheet. It would be helpful if you and your child could remember this activity monitor number. This is because a family member, friend or another child in their class might also be wearing a monitor and we do not want them to get mixed up. Please do not take the sticker off the monitor when you return it.

How should the activity monitor be worn?

The activity monitor is worn on a belt. It should be positioned on top of the right hip (on top of the 'bony' part of the hip). The activity monitor should be fitted tightly but comfortably to your child's body. The belt can be adjusted to the correct fit. In order to accurately record your child's movement, it is important that the activity monitor only moves when your child's body moves. For this reason, it is essential that the activity monitor is fitted snugly against your child's body and that it does not have any 'free movement' i.e. it should not be allowed to 'flop around'.

It should usually be worn on top of indoor clothing. If your child prefers he or she can also wear it against the skin underneath their clothing, though they may find that the belt rubs slightly on their skin or that the monitor feels cold. It should not be worn on top of outdoor clothing like coats. Finally, it doesn't matter which way up the monitor goes.

When should my child start wearing the activity monitor?

Your child should start wearing the activity monitor on the morning after you receive it. It doesn't matter which day of the week your child starts on. The activity monitor is pre-programmed to turn on automatically at 5am in the morning of the second day after it is posted out. Unless the monitor has been delayed in the post, this should be the morning after you receive it.

If you think your monitor has been delayed in the post, this is fine. Your child should still start to wear it on the morning after it is received as normal. We will know from the timesheet when your child actually started wearing it. The monitor is not programmed to turn off on a particular date so it should remain on for 7 days (even if there is a delay receiving it).

At what times should my child wear the activity monitor?

The activity monitor should be worn every day for 7 continuous days. It should be put on first thing in the morning as soon as your child gets up and worn until your child goes to bed. The activity monitor should not be worn during swimming or when your child is having a bath or shower. However, the monitors are shower proof so it doesn't matter if they get a little bit wet in the rain. The monitors are robust so don't worry about them getting damaged during your child's usual activities even if this includes things like contact sports (e.g. rugby). It is important for us to measure your child's activity during these times. Equally, wearing the monitor during activities like these should not injure your child or other children. However, if you are concerned about this, it is fine to ask your child to remove the monitor for example during contact sports. We would like your child to behave just as they would normally.

What is the timesheet for?

You will be sent a timesheet and asked to keep a record of the dates that the activity monitor is worn, the time that the activity monitor is put on in the morning and taken off at night and any periods that the monitor was not worn for any reason. In addition, any periods spent swimming or cycling should be recorded on the timesheet.

We want to record the time your child has spent swimming as this is the only kind of physical activity for which the monitor cannot be worn. We also want to record the time your child has spent cycling because this kind of activity cannot be measured very accurately by the monitor (though it should still be worn during cycling). We would also like you to indicate whether or not the week that your child wore the activity monitor was a typical week in terms of their physical activity.

What about when my child is at school?

If your child receives their activity monitor during term-time please encourage your child to wear it at school. We hope that most teachers will be happy for children to wear the monitors at school. A letter is enclosed for your child's class teacher which explains to them why your child is wearing the monitor. You should fill in the relevant details on the letter, including your child's activity monitor number which you can find on the back of the activity monitor or on the timesheet. We understand that you may not always know if your child has taken the activity monitor off when they are at school. It would be helpful if you could ask your child if they took the activity monitor off at school for any reason, and record this on the timesheet. If your child receives their activity monitor outside term-time, they should still start to wear the monitor straight away. Please do not wait until your child goes back to school to start wearing the monitor. You don't need to give the letter to the teacher if your child is not at school during the 7-day monitoring period.

When should I return the activity monitor and completed documents?

The activity monitor, belt and completed timesheet must be returned as soon as possible after the 7-day monitoring period is over. Enclosed is a pre-paid envelope to send them back in. You do not need a stamp. It is very important that the activity monitor is returned promptly. This is because we only have a limited number and the monitor will be sent to another family.

Please try not to lose or damage the activity monitor. However, if you do lose or damage the monitor, please call Carly Rich on 0800 030 4124 (free phone). We will not charge you to replace or repair it. We would still like you to return the monitor even if it is damaged.