Top Ten Things to Know
Sedentary Behavior and Cardiovascular Morbidity and Mortality

1. In 1960, about 15% of all U.S. jobs were sedentary; by 2008, more than 20% of U.S. jobs were sedentary. U.S. adults spend an average of 6 to 8 hours in sedentary behaviors and less than 0.5 hours in an average day in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity.

2. Current evidence suggests that sedentary behavior may contribute to excess morbidity and mortality. While more research needs to be done, evidence suggests that sedentary behavior contributes to risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

3. This scientific statement reviews the current evidence on sedentary behavior in terms of assessment methods, population prevalence, determinants, associations with cardiovascular disease incidence and mortality, potential underlying mechanisms, and interventions.

4. There is no gold standard for sedentary behavior assessment: device-based and self-reported measurements are complementary. Device-derived measures of sedentary time can provide improved measurement precision over self-reported assessments and unique insights into different patterns of behavior. While objective measures can provide the precise time an individual was sitting, self-report instruments are necessary to understand “why, where, and what” (i.e., context) the individual was doing.

5. Several factors may contribute to sedentary behavior, including psychosocial factors and wellbeing; the built environment; and genetic influences.

6. Prospective evidence is accumulating that sedentary behavior may be a risk factor for CVD and diabetes morbidity and mortality as well as for all-cause mortality. The degree to which this is independent of the effects of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity needs further study.

7. Reduced insulin sensitivity is found during prolonged sedentary behavior that may be mitigated with short bouts of physical activity.

8. Interventions focusing solely on reducing sedentary behavior appear to be more effective at reducing sedentary behavior than those that include strategies for both increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviors.

9. The use of technology to reduce sedentary behaviors requires further study but appears promising.

10. Given the current state of the science on sedentary behavior, it is appropriate to promote the statement, “Sit less, move more.”