

# Saitama Prefecture

Extending healthy life spans and reducing medical expenses



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## Situation

- Medical expenditures for residents of Saitama prefecture amounted to 1.6 trillion yen in fiscal 2008, roughly equivalent to the prefecture's annual general-account budget.
- The spending is expected to be 45% larger than the budget in fiscal 2017.
- At the national level, roughly one-third of medical expenditures is related to diseases associated with adult lifestyle habits.

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## Intervention

In order to promote lifestyle-related disease prevention, Saitama prefecture created “Saitama Model for Health and Longevity” in 2014. This model consists of the following 3 parts.

- **“Recommended programmes” with verified effects for improving physical data**
  - Daily 10,000-step exercise: walking of 10,000 steps every day for more than 6 months
  - Training to increase muscle strength: 9-month programme that combines muscle training with aerobic workouts
  - Balanced diets: In some cases, specially designed meals developed by a leading healthcare company in Japan were offered at every household in some public housing flats.
- **Operations to encourage implementation of the “Recommended programmes”**
  - The prefecture appointed those who completed training courses to be “Healthy Lifespan Supporters” in expectation that they take initiative to spread “Recommended programmes” in their communities.
- **Support for pilot cities and towns that promote the model**
  - The prefecture designated pilot cities and gave them financial and other types of support.

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## Impact

- The number of “Healthy Lifespan Supporters” reached about 40,000 in August 2015.
- In some cities, the health index of the programme participants was improved and their actual medical expenditures were reduced compared with those who didn’t participate the programme.

