

Strategies for Incorporating Green Space into Health Care

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Exposure to green spaces, such as parks, gardens, and natural areas, positively impacts cardiovascular health by promoting physical activity, reducing stress levels, and improving air quality.¹ Additionally, increased time spent in green spaces has been found to contribute to better mental health by reducing feelings of depression and anxiety and fostering social connectedness, protecting against cardiovascular disease.^{2,3}

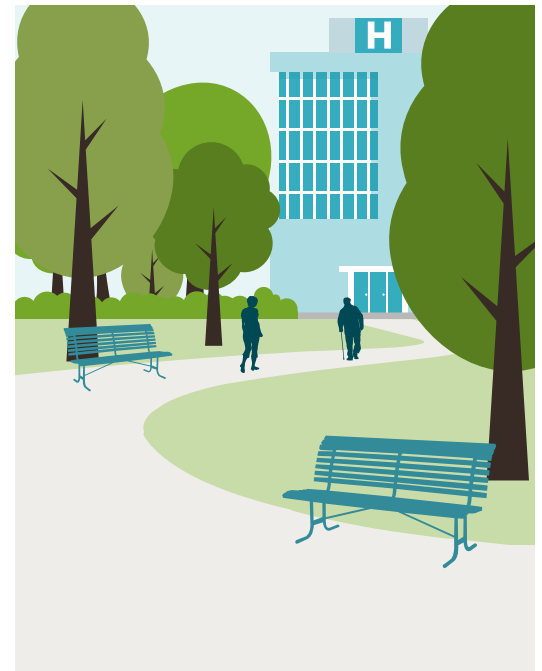
The links between green space and health are particularly relevant given disparities in access to green space that often mirror socioeconomic and racial inequities, potentially exacerbating cardiovascular health disparities.⁴ Recent interventions, such as urban greening programs that focus on vacant lot improvements and park renovations, show promising effects on cardiovascular risk factors.⁵

Health care systems are increasingly recognizing the importance of exposure to green space and implementing evidence-based approaches. They are also implementing strategic initiatives through community benefit programs and incorporating parks into community health needs assessments.⁶ Clinicians can refer patients to nature prescription programs like **Park Rx America** and **Walk with a Doc**, which have been shown to improve physical health, mental well-being, and social connectedness.⁶

Integrating Green Spaces into Health Care Design

- Planting shade trees
- Placing benches under shade trees
- Adding trees or shrubbery in open parking lots
- Creating gardens with walkways and benches
- Establishing community gardens
- Developing walking paths with exercise stations

For more information, access Cardi-OH's expanded resource on **air pollution exposure**.



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