September

National Health Observances

ODPHP
Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

Sponsor: American College of Sports Medicine (http://www.acsm.org/)

One in 3 children in the United States are overweight or obese. Childhood obesity puts kids at risk for health problems that were once seen only in adults, like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

The good news? Childhood obesity can be prevented. Communities, health professionals, and families can work together to create opportunities for kids to eat healthier and get more active.

Make a difference for kids: Spread the word about strategies for preventing childhood obesity and encourage communities, organizations, families, and individuals to get involved.

How can National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month make a difference?

We can all use this month to raise awareness about the obesity epidemic and show people how they can take steps toward a solution.

Here are just a few ideas:

- Encourage families to make small changes, like keeping fresh fruit within their children's reach or going on a family walk after dinner.
- Motivate teachers and administrators to make schools healthier. Help them provide healthy food options and daily physical activities for students.
- Ask doctors and nurses to be leaders in their communities by supporting programs to prevent childhood obesity.

How can I help spread the word?

We've made it easier for you to make a difference. This toolkit is full of ideas to help you take action today. For example:

- Add information about obesity prevention to your newsletter.
- Tweet about National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month.
- Host a community event where families can be active while learning about local healthy resources.

- Become a partner of *We Can!* (http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/partner-with-us/index.htm) a national movement to help children ages 8 to 13 stay at a healthy weight.

Get the Word Out

Sample Announcement for Newsletter, Listserv, or Media Release

Cut and paste this text into your newsletter, listserv, or media release. Add local details and quotes from your organization.

One in 3 children in the United States are overweight or obese. Childhood obesity puts kids at risk for health problems that were once seen only in adults, like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

The good news is that childhood obesity can be prevented. In honor of National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, **[your organization]** encourages your family to make healthy changes together.

- Get active outside: Walk around the neighborhood, go on a bike ride, or play basketball at the park.
- Limit screen time: Keep screen time (time spent on the computer, watching TV, or playing videos games) to 2 hours or less a day.
- Make healthy meals: Buy and serve more vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain foods.

Taking small steps as a family can help your child stay at a healthy weight.

- **[Add details about your local activities.]**
- **[Include quote from your organization.]**

For more information, visit [insert your organization's information].

Sample Tweets

- Tip for parents: get your kids involved in planning and cooking healthy meals. Find more tips at 1.usa.gov/hnuGz4
    - Tweet this message: CTT: http://ctt.ec/tY6uE
- Check out these 10 tips to help preschoolers build healthy mealtime habits. http://bit.ly/1WBemor
    - Tweet this message: http://ctt.ec/z5Qr2
- Use these tips to reduce your child's screen time: 1.usa.gov/69My6u
    - Tweet this message: http://ctt.ec/ocGqJ
- Make sure your child gets at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Get tips: 1.usa.gov/3wnZMl
    - Tweet this message: http://ctt.ec/B1f09
- Since 1980, childhood obesity rates have more than doubled. Help your child stay at a healthy weight. 1.usa.gov/LOWoNC
    - Tweet this message: http://ctt.ec/2ab25
- Tip for parents: make a physical activity plan for the whole family. 1.usa.gov/bg6vTr
    - Tweet this message: http://ctt.ec/eIHDc
- September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month. See how to get involved: http://bit.ly/1MphSyL
    - Tweet this message: http://ctt.ec/h628a
- Make creative snacks for your kids, like "ants on a log" (celery with peanut butter and raisins). 1.usa.gov/oFIXRJ
    - Tweet this message: http://ctt.ec/2Do54

E-cards

- September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month (http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=58)
- Eat Healthy (http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=6)
- Fruits and Veggies – More Matters (http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=23)
- Fun Healthy Snacks (http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=43)
- Get Fit Together (http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=55)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) E-cards

- Walking School Bus (http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?audience=42&cardid=655)
- Childhood Obesity Awareness Month (http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?cardid=574&category=192)
- Worldwide Day of Play (http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?cardid=590&category=192)
- Healthy Drink Options (http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?cardid=588&category=192)
- Let's Move Salads to Schools (http://tools.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?cardid=589)

Web Badge

- National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month – Healthier Kids, Brighter Futures! (http://healthfinder.gov/NHO/nhoBadges.aspx#september)

Get Involved

Take action to increase awareness about childhood obesity.

1. Host a community cleanup event to help make a neighborhood park safer for children to be active.
2. Promote farm-to-school programs (http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school) and school gardens. Encourage schools to join the HealthierUS School Challenge (http://www.fns.usda.gov/hussc/healthierus-school-challenge).
3. Host a community fitness event where families can get active while learning about local health and fitness resources.
4. Set an example by talking with family members and friends about eating healthy, getting enough physical activity, and limiting screen time.
5. Share resources from *Let's Move!* (http://www.letsmove.gov/resources) with local health clinics and community centers.

Adapted from The American College of Sports Medicine and Let'sMove.gov.

For more information and materials, contact the **American College of Sports Medicine** (http://www.acsm.org) at **coam@acsm.org**.

Share These Resources

Health Topics

- Help Your Child Stay at a Healthy Weight (http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/parenting/nutrition-and-physical-activity/help-your-child-stay-at-a-healthy-weight)
- Healthy Snacks: Quick tips for parents (http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/nutrition-and-physical-activity/nutrition/healthy-snacks-quick-tips-for-parents)
- Eat Healthy (http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/diabetes/eat-healthy)
- Get Active (http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/diabetes/get-active)
- Ride Your Bike Safely (http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/nutrition-and-physical-activity/physical-activity/ride-your-bike-safely)
- Swim Safely: Quick tips (http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/parenting/nutrition-and-physical-activity/swim-safely-quick-tips)

Healthy People Topic Areas

- Nutrition and Weight Status (http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=29)
- Adolescent Health (http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=2)
- Maternal, Infant and Child Health (http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=26)

Personal Health Tools

- Body Mass Index: Child and Teen (http://nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi/Calculator.aspx)
- MyPlate Blast Off Game (http://www.fns.usda.gov/multimedia/Games/Blastoff/BlastOff_Game.html)
- BAM! Body and Mind (http://www.cdc.gov/bam/)
- Eat Healthy, Move More Chart [PDF – 91 KB] (http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/downloads/tip-eat-healthy-chart.pdf)
- Healthy Adventure Infographic [PDF – 572 KB] (http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/downloads/healthy-adventure.pdf)

Other Resources

- Child Nutrition (http://healthfinder.gov/FindServices/SearchContext.aspx?topic=14549)
- Obesity in Children (http://healthfinder.gov/FindServices/SearchContext.aspx?topic=14533)
- Physical Activity (http://healthfinder.gov/FindServices/SearchContext.aspx?topic=657)
- BMI (Body Mass Index) (http://healthfinder.gov/FindServices/SearchContext.aspx?topic=14690)

Find More Information

- The American College of Sports Medicine (http://healthierkidsbrighterfutures.org/) National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month Sponsor
- How Much Physical Activity Do Children Need? (http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/children.html) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- 8 Healthy Eating Goals (http://www.fitness.gov/eat-healthy/how-to-eat-healthy/) The President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition
- Learn the Facts About Obesity (http://www.letsmove.gov/learn-facts/epidemic-childhood-obesity) *Let's Move!*
- Childhood Overweight and Obesity (http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Tips for Getting Active with Your Family (http://www.letsmove.gov/active-families) *Let's Move!*
- MyPlate Kids' Place (http://www.choosemyplate.gov/kids) United States Department of Agriculture
- Healthy Weight Basics (http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/healthy-weight-basics/index.htm) National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
- Nutrition Tools and Resources (http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/tools-resources/nutrition.htm) National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
- Campaigns and Informational Approaches to Increase Physical Activity (http://www.thecommunityguide.org/pa/campaigns/community.html) Community Preventive Services Task Force

Tips to Plan a National Health Observance

Each National Health Observance (NHO) presents an opportunity to educate the public, energize co-workers and community members, and promote healthy behaviors. The NHO toolkits (http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/) have the information and tools you need to get started.

Use the tips in this guide to plan a successful health promotion event.

Planning:

Planning is critical to the success of any outreach effort. Contact the NHO sponsoring organization several months ahead of time to request up-to-date information and materials. (Contact information for each month's sponsoring organization is provided in each toolkit).

- Consider enlisting the help of a community partner to help you plan and promote your event.
- Meet with those who will be valuable in your event coordination. To get started, sit down with potential partners, such as local businesses, local government agencies, key leaders, organizations, and media partners who share an interest in the NHO.
- Recruit volunteers, speakers, and community liaisons.
- Develop new or adapt existing materials to distribute at the event.
- Be sure to get them printed and/or copied in advance.
- Conduct a run-through before the event.

Promoting:

Develop a publicity and media outreach plan. Designate a media contact from your planning team and make sure he or she is available to answer questions and follow up on media requests.

- Start by creating a local media list.
- Use local-access television, radio, newspaper, and community calendars to promote your event.

- Post event announcements on your Web site. Encourage your partners to post similar announcements on their Web sites.
- Send a press release.
- Engage the media by offering a spokesperson from your organization or the community.
- Post flyers or posters throughout the community: on bulletin boards at local community centers, places of worship, libraries, post offices, local schools, recreation centers, clinics, pharmacies, stores, and businesses.
- Send flyers to each participating organization for distribution.

On the Day of the Event:

- Set up tables, chairs, and a check-in table prior to your event.
- Make plenty of sign-in sheets. Create a separate sign-in sheet for members of the media.
- Don't forget the refreshments!
- Make signs to direct participants and reporters to your event.

Tracking Media Coverage:

If you are distributing information to the media, plan ahead of time to track your coverage. There are both paid and free resources to track media coverage.

Free media tracking resources search for news articles based on your specific search term(s) and a date range. Some tracking services will send automatic email alerts to notify you when your event and/or keywords are mentioned.

Paid media tracking typically captures a wider range of media stories (both print and online) than free Internet search tools. Paid media tracking sources search within certain locations, news outlet types, and/or specific dates. Some paid media tracking tools offer email alerts and the ability to search archived Web and print news; they also allow users to tailor searches to obtain the most relevant media stories. Other paid media services monitor all forms of social media, including blogs, top video and image-sharing sites, forums, opinion sites, mainstream online media, and Twitter.

Be sure to share media coverage with your community partners, stakeholders, and all those who helped you plan and promote your event. Post a summary of media coverage on your organization's Web site. No matter the size or success of your

event, remember that your efforts are key to educating the public about important health issues.

Last but not least, share your feedback and results with us here at healthfinder.gov. You can contact us at info@nhic.org or send us a tweet @healthfinder (http://twitter.com/healthfinder).

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