



Your School

OUR NATION'S HEALTH IS IN POOR SHAPE. Strong, healthy communities are dependent on strong public health systems, and that includes your school and campus communities. National Public Health Week (NPHW) continues our campaign to create the healthiest America in one generation, with a special focus on public health's critical role in making America healthier, one community at a time.

We will do anything to protect our children, especially their health. Since they spend most of their time at school and around other children, they too rely on public health so they can do their job—learning, growing, and playing. National meal programs, physical activity and nutrition education are the key components that make for healthy and active children. And as our youth get older, they play an even more active role in their own health. We have to teach college students the importance of being responsible for their personal health and how it relates to the health of their campus. These students are the future of public health.

Did You Know?

- Many children consume at least half of their daily calories at school.¹
- The average child gets less than 15 minutes of vigorous activity a day.²
- Nearly 1 in 3 children are overweight or obese.³
- Eighty-five percent of college students report feeling stressed on a daily basis.³



TAKE ACTION: National Public Health Week Activities

Start small...

- ✓ Include fruits, vegetables and whole grains in your children's lunches and snacks.
- ✓ Encourage schools to eliminate trans-fat and incorporate the recommended servings of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy products in schools meals.
- ✓ Encourage students to consider public health professions.
- ✓ Post the *A Healthier America* video to your Facebook page, your blog or Twitter account and share your personal health story with your friends.
- ✓ Find a news article or commentary about public health in schools and post it on your blog, Facebook status or Twitter feed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health regularly update news stories on their sites and are a good place to find interesting stories based on new research. You can also try the health sections of your local paper as well as the national papers such as *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. For example, the nutritional value of school lunches is a constant debate and you will likely find many things written about it.
- ✓ Write a letter to the editor of your local paper that stresses the importance of public health during NPHW and beyond.

Think big...

- ✓ Support mandatory physical education for grades K-12.
- ✓ Meet with school officials to discuss offering healthier cafeteria and vending machine options.
- ✓ Host a heart-healthy bake sale and share healthy recipes.
- ✓ Incorporate environmentally-friendly projects into school curriculum.
- ✓ Work with your Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to host health-related events for parents and children.
- ✓ Work with your campus health center to help make students more aware of services, such as screenings and contraceptives.
- ✓ Start a running or walking group in your dorm and challenge other dorm buildings to do the same.
- ✓ Invite local policymakers and other experts to a community roundtable to discuss the role of public health in our nation's health reform discussions and what still needs to be done.
- ✓ Add your own activities, too!

¹ Boarnet et al. Evaluation of the California Safe Routes to School legislation: urban form changes and children's active transportation to school. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. February 2005; 28 (2 Suppl 2):134-40.

² Klatt et al. The Role of Peer E-mail Support As Part of a College Smoking-Cessation Website. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. December 2008; 35(6 Suppl):S471-8.

³ Nichol et al. Effectiveness of influenza vaccine in the community-dwelling elderly. *New England Journal of Medicine*, October 2007; 357(14):1373-81.