

National Health Observances: User Guide

“This resource guide has been so helpful! I always try to participate in relevant observances, but I don’t always know where to start or what to do. Having reliable resources all in one place makes it quick and easy for my organization to do this.” (State Coordinator)

A publication of the Center for Leadership Education in Maternal and Child Public Health

We created these health observance quick-guides for any organization who wants to do more to participate in national health observances. These days, there is so much available it can be hard to get started. We hope these guides help you distribute the important messages, and even create some of your own.

If you have questions, or if you have a resource to share with us, please contact the Center for Leadership Education in Maternal and Child Public Health: mch@umn.edu or 612-624-1818.

Please share these documents and consider tagging the Centers:

- @UMN_MCH
- @SahrcUMN



Guides currently available

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| American Heart Month | Healthy and Safe Swimming Week | Safety Month |
| Cervical Health Awareness Month | Healthy Vision Month | School Breakfast Week |
| Drug Facts Week | Immunization Awareness Month | Stalking Awareness Month |
| Eating Disorder Awareness Week | Mental Health Month | Suicide Prevention Month |
| Fruit and Veggies—More Matters Month | National Bullying Prevention Month | Teen Dating Violence Prevention Month |
| Healthy and Safe Swimming Week | National Farm Safety & Health Week | Walk to School Day, Bike to School Day |
| | Nutrition Month | Youth Violence Prevention Week |



The basics

It may be helpful to take time before using these guides to assess your agency's goals, resources, and partners for promoting health observances. You will likely have a few specific topics in mind, and should also have an idea of ways you want to promote them. Promoting and distributing materials might come directly from your agency, or from partners and community members. There may be advantages and disadvantages to both, depending on the materials and topic.

Each health observance will have one PDF document containing all available materials, resources, and other information for use.

Use the hashtag if available

Most of the health observances have one or more hashtags that are used on social media.

A Hashtag is very useful for joining a wider conversation about your chosen observance. It can be used to share your own event or materials with a bigger audience, or make it easier for people in your community to join in the promotion.

If a hashtag is available it is almost always a good idea to include it on any social media posts you do. Some printing and posting materials might also list the Hashtag to further promote it.

Create or adjust materials and messages to suit your audience

Some of the observances do not specifically target youth and young adults, or have limited materials for this population. Most organizations do have sufficient facts and information that can be adjusted for social media posts or turned into printable materials, customized to the population you want to focus on. It is important to consider plain language and developmental stages when adjusting or creating materials, especially for youth.

Another great way to adjust materials is to customize it for your state. You can add in connections to existing organizations or resources within the state to make it more relevant and relatable. Include state- or county-specific data if possible. Assess materials, messages and campaigns that are already available in your program, others in your agency or trusted colleagues in the state then include links or references to these. Posts for social media can easily be worded to include state-specific data or resources.

hash·tag

/ˈhɑːʃtɑːɡ/

noun

noun: hashtag; plural noun: hashtags

(on social media sites such as Twitter) a word or phrase preceded by a hash or pound sign (#) and used to identify messages on a specific topic.

Another way that a Hashtag can be useful is to find more materials or information about an observance that aren't as readily available. This is good for all observances, but especially ones with limited materials promoted by the main organization(s). Simply search the Hashtag on Twitter, Facebook, or another social media site to see what other groups or people are putting out for the observance.

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