



**Tool:**

Healthy Eating and Active Living  
Communications Calendar

Prepared for Missouri Foundation for Health  
June 2018





## Using a Communications Calendar

As you utilize the “Connecting with Decision Makers to Promote Healthy Eating and Active Living in Missouri” message guide, remember the helpful role that regular communications can play in raising awareness of and engaging community members in your efforts. The following communications calendar outlines key moments throughout the year that can be leveraged to promote healthy eating and active living.

This calendar maps out some ways that you can talk about healthy eating and active living throughout the year by tying your efforts to key moments, which can provide a “hook” for local media, and inroads with families, when health is top of mind.

A communications calendar also allows you to plan ahead. By knowing what opportunities exist in the weeks and months to come, you can identify which ones align best with your efforts and local interests, and take the time to plan communications activities.

In addition to the suggestions below, don’t forget to share relevant news articles, stories, and other content that supports your work! As you see news coverage about healthy eating and active living efforts in your community, or other work to help families maintain a healthy weight, consider sharing that information. Look for ways to tie those stories back to your efforts and demonstrate success.

**Join the conversation! Use the hashtag #HealthyFutureMO in your social media posts.**



## January

### **New Year's Day**

January 1

Tap into the focus on health and wellness in the New Year by asking what community members have planned to kick-off healthy habits in the new year. Encourage partners to pledge to lead the way towards a healthier future for your community in the year ahead.

### **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

Third Monday of January

Share volunteer opportunities that support healthy eating and active living efforts in your community. This could be to help planting community gardens, repairing indoor spaces, or preparing healthy meals at food banks. Emphasize that it takes everyone working together to make it easier for people in your community to get healthy and active.



## February

### **American Heart Month**

Share the importance of a healthy diet and exercise to a healthy heart, and highlight some local efforts to provide healthy options at restaurants and concession stands, promote livable streets policies, and support safe walking and biking routes.

### **Children's Dental Health Month**

Remind community members about the benefits of good oral hygiene on your overall health. Connect with a local dentist or hygienist and see if they would be willing to speak to local schools about brushing and flossing tips.



## March

### **National Nutrition Month**

Demonstrate efforts your organization has taken to promote health in your community, with an emphasis on increasing access to healthy food. Promote water consumption and healthy recipes.

### **National School Breakfast Week**

Early March

Discuss how healthy students are better learners, and how providing a nutritious meal at school gives our kids a head start. Consider pointing to research to emphasize this point.

### **World Water Day**

March 22

Utilize messages and materials provided in the Win with Water toolkit. Encourage followers to be part of the movement at home by choosing water to stay hydrated and healthy, and let them know that every small action counts. Also, consider promoting ways in which your organization has increased access to water for Missourians (such as installing new water bottle stations).

<p><b>National Doctor's Day</b></p> <p>Late March</p>	<p>Post a thank you to your local doctors for their role in helping the community to stay healthy, and emphasize that health care professionals see first-hand how obesity affects our state.</p>
<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 10px;">  <span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin-left: 20px;">April</span> </div>	
<p><b>National Garden Month</b></p>	<p>Share a story about your community's garden, if applicable. Explain how community members can get involved, what is growing in the garden this season, and the nutritional benefits of eating fresh fruits and veggies. Encourage community members to share photos of their own gardens!</p>
<p><b>National Public Health Week</b></p> <p>First week of April</p>	<p>Promote health tips that align with National Public Health Week's mission to champion the health of all people and all communities. Use the opportunity to share any healthy policy changes your community has implemented locally.</p>
<p><b>National Small Business Week</b></p> <p>Late April/early May</p>	<p>A healthy community is good for business. Share statistics and talking points relevant to small businesses from the message guide, and emphasize that by supporting efforts to build a healthier future, businesses are better equipped to thrive.</p>
<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 10px;">  <span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin-left: 20px;">May</span> </div>	
<p><b>National Bike Month/National Bike to Work Day</b> Mid May</p>	<p>Promote policies and environmental changes that enable the community to get and stay active. Consider sharing local bike paths or parks where community members can ride.</p>
<p><b>Mental Health Month</b></p>	<p>Explain the role that a healthy lifestyle can play in mental health, and encourage followers to invest in their mental health by getting active and exercising this month.</p>
<p><b>Teacher Appreciation Week</b></p> <p>Early May</p>	<p>Recognize the important role of teachers in the health and wellbeing of their students. Highlight healthy changes teachers are making, such as healthy celebrations or active brain breaks.</p>
<p><b>Memorial Day Weekend</b></p> <p>Last weekend in May</p>	<p>As the weather gets nicer, describe ways that community members can get active outdoors during the long weekend. Share information about any local parades or events as well as healthy alternative recipes for traditional holiday meals.</p>



## June

### National Fruit and Vegetables Month

Ask followers to share their favorite seasonal summer produce, and provide information on the local farmers market or other places community members can find fresh fruit and veggies. Promote healthy recipes with in-season produce.

### Official start of Summer

June 20th or 21st

Now that summer has officially begun and the daylight lasts longer, share information on local parks and outdoor spaces where families can get active and enjoy the warm weather.



## July

### Fourth of July

Share some healthy red, white, and blue themed treats and physical activities for the community to enjoy during Fourth of July celebrations.

### Parent's Day

Fourth Sunday in July

Discuss some of the research that shows the positive impacts of healthy parents on their kids.



## August

### Missouri State Fair

Mid-August

In the vein of state pride, showcase some of the healthy eating and active living efforts your organization is most proud of, and explain how they are contributing to making Missouri a better state. Promote healthy activities families can participate in.

### Back to School

Encourage parents and students to set healthy habits for the school year ahead. Share healthy snack and lunch ideas and quick dinner recipes for families.

### Healthy Cookout

Share healthier versions of crowd pleasing summer BBQ recipes that community members can enjoy this month.



## September

### National Childhood Obesity Month

Submit an opinion piece to your local newspaper about the changes you've made locally to help kids in your community grow up at a healthy weight.

### Family Health and Fitness Day

Last Saturday in September

Promote policies and environmental changes that enable the community to get and stay active. Consider sharing local bike paths or parks where community members can do so.



## October

<b>National Farm to School Month</b>	Celebrate the importance of healthy, local food in schools, food education and school gardens. Promote cooking with in-season produce, such as greens and cauliflower.
<b>National Walk/Bike to School Day</b>  Early October	Encourage families to get active on their way to school or work, whether that is by walking or riding their bikes. Encourage teachers and administrators to also walk or bike to school that day; teachers could serve as ‘neighborhood captains,’ leading children to school.
<b>Halloween</b>  October 31st	Highlight alternate uses for excess Halloween candy, such as candy craft ideas and names of organizations that accept candy as a donation. Encourage parents to help children separate remaining candy into small, plastic sized servings to teach moderation.



## November

<b>American Diabetes Month</b>	Partner with a local health care provider. Use your platform to share their perspective on how to prevent Type II diabetes and highlight local efforts to get the community active and eating healthy.
<b>Thanksgiving</b>  Fourth Thursday in November	Submit an opinion piece to your local newspaper encouraging families to bring “healthy to the holidays” – highlight community walks/runs (i.e. Turkey Trots) and encourage parents to cook a healthy dish with their children.



## December

<b>Holiday Season</b>	Share “Healthy Holiday” tips such as healthy dinner recipes that families can make together, a list of winter activities for families, new vegetables to try over winter break, etc.
<b>Indoor Activities</b>	Partner with recreation centers or other indoor spaces in your community to promote their hours and opportunities. Share holiday hours for free, local indoor activity spaces such as recreation centers.