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HEALTH & WELLNESS ARTICLES to
POWER your COMMUNICATIONS

Ready-to-Use
Planning
GUIDE

HopeHealthLibrary.com

Ready-to-Use Planning GUIDE

Use this planning guide to organize your communications for the entire year.

You'll find the most popular monthly National Health Observances noted for you. Upcoming holidays during each month. Plus, ideas for what you may want to focus on in your communications.

If you ever need help with writing or design of your communications, give us a call at **800-334-4094**. You'll find our work is top-notch and our prices reasonable.

And, remember, visit **HopeHealthLibrary.com** often to check out the new articles we've added, and to download the *FREE* article of the month.

Best of health,
The HopeHealthLibrary.com Team

January

Monthly National Health Observances:

- National Glaucoma Awareness • National Blood Donor • National Radon Action • Cervical Health Awareness
- National Birth Defects Prevention • Thyroid Awareness

Holidays:

- New Year's Day • Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Additional Topic Idea:

With many people focused on New Year's resolutions, take a look at ways to make favorite foods more nutritious.

Communication Tip:

Take advantage of Monthly National Health Observances for your health and wellness communications. These dates can help you build monthly and weekly components of your plan and present opportunities to work with others in your community.

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February

Monthly National Health Observances:

- American Heart • National Children's Dental Health • National Wise Health Consumer
- Low Vision Awareness

Holidays:

- Groundhog Day • Valentine's Day • President's Day

Additional Topic Idea:

Winter is starting to drag on; consider messages on beating the winter blues and Seasonal Affective Disorder to help your audience get through until springtime.

Communication Tip:

Develop a content outline. This will help you stay on track in each issue and keep your strategy in mind. Each issue should have familiar features or sections; think of them as magazine departments.

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March

Monthly National Health Observances:

- National Colorectal Cancer Awareness • National Nutrition • Save Your Vision • Workplace Eye Wellness

Holidays:

- St. Patrick's Day

Additional Topic Idea:

With March Madness heating up, think about creating/reintroducing group fitness activities such as a basketball league or walking club.

Communication Tip:

Use short sentences in plain English. When writing, keep in mind how you would tell people if you were talking to them.

Instead of: Joe utilized numerous strategies to achieve his goals of increasing his daily activity and decreasing his consumption of unhealthy foods.

Try: Joe had two goals: adding activity to his day and eating less junk food. He tackled his goals in many ways.

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April

Monthly National Health Observances:

- Alcohol Awareness • National Autism Awareness • National Distracted Driving Awareness
- National Donate Life • Sports Eye Safety

Holidays:

- April Fool's Day • Administrative Professionals Day • Earth Day • Easter

Additional Topic Idea:

Tax time is a good time to bring up fiscal health topics of any kind.

Communication Tip:

Be positive and inspirational. You want to encourage healthy behavior. Be a cheerleader, not a scolder.

Instead of: Smoking is bad for you. You should give up this unhealthy habit before it's too late!

Try: Giving up smoking can help you feel better and live longer. Why not give it a try?

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May

Monthly National Health Observances:

- Arthritis Awareness • Better Hearing and Speech • Employee Health and Fitness • Healthy Vision
- Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention • Mental Health • National Celiac Disease Awareness
- National High Blood Pressure Education • National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention
- National Physical Fitness and Sports • Older Americans • Ultraviolet Awareness

Holidays:

- Mother's Day • Memorial Day

Additional Topic Idea:

Many farmers' markets open for the season in May — a great time to focus on fresh produce from local farmers.

Communication Tip:

Use bulleted lists when including steps or tips in an article or on a poster or Website. Organizing information into bulleted lists makes it easier to read and process.

Instead of: During our next monthly meeting, we will be discussing changes to our program, in addition to new incentives and updates to our points system.

Try: During our next monthly meeting, we will talk about:

- Changes to our program
- New incentives
- Updates to our points system

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June

Monthly National Health Observances:

- Fireworks Safety • Home Safety • Cataract Awareness • Men's Health

Holidays:

- Flag Day • Father's Day

Additional Topic Idea:

With summer in full swing, sun and swimming safety reminders are important.

Communication Tip:

In an article, don't leave your audience hanging. Include actions to take or where to go for more information.

Determine what you want your readers to do with the information. If you want them to sign up for a new weight-management program, tell them so and provide them with a link, e-mail address or location of where to sign up.

You may also want to include a few steps they could take on their own to get started on managing their weight — a sneak peek of what to expect with the program.

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July

Monthly National Health Observances:

- Juvenile Arthritis Awareness • UV Safety • International Group B Strep Awareness

Holidays:

- Independence Day

Additional Topic Idea:

Picnic and barbecues are summertime traditions. Help your audience find new ways to make outdoor dining more healthful.

Communication Tip:

One size, one style doesn't fit all. Don't assume that everyone in your audience absorbs and retains communications in the same manner and prefers the same medium. Craft your messages in various ways and provide them in more than one medium.

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August

Monthly National Health Observances:

- Children's Eye Health and Safety • National Immunization Awareness

Additional Topic Idea:

Before summer wraps up and kids head back to school, provide ideas for local staycations or day trips focused on active exploration of the local area.

Communication Tip:

Stick to one focus per message. Avoid distributing long articles or e-mails filled with jargon that cover many topics. Instead, consider targeting a key issue, such as weight loss, reduced stress, or preventing heart disease. Say it quick, and make it stick.

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September

Monthly National Health Observances:

- Fruits and Veggies – More Matters • Leukemia and Lymphoma Awareness
- National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery • National Cholesterol Education
- Ovarian Cancer Awareness • Prostate Cancer Awareness • Whole Grains

Holidays:

- Labor Day • Patriot Day • Grandparent's Day

Additional Topic Idea:

Fall football kicks off. Take the opportunity to provide fun, healthful tailgating tips and tricks.

Communication Tip:

Success can inspire success. Seek out testimonials. They give recognition where recognition is deserved. Plus, others like to learn how super achievers, people just like them, have reached their goals, whether losing weight, quitting smoking or taking up a new activity. Reading or hearing a success story can provide that *“If they can do it, so can I”* nudge for others to take action.

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October

Monthly National Health Observances:

- Eye Injury Prevention • Home Eye Safety • National Breast Cancer Awareness
- National Disability Employment Awareness • National Physical Therapy

Holidays:

- Columbus Day • National Boss Day

Additional Topic Idea:

It's a great time to talk about a fall color hike through the woods or strategies for raking leaves without wreaking havoc on one's back.

Communication Tip:

Less is more. Most readers' attention spans aren't long. The key is brevity. Think of teasers and billboards. Make your messages easy and scannable. Cut your articles to a couple hundred words.

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November

Monthly National Health Observances:

- American Diabetes • COPD Awareness • Diabetic Eye Disease • Lung Cancer Awareness
- National Family Caregivers • National Healthy Skin • National Hospice Palliative Care
- National Stomach Cancer Awareness

Holidays:

- Election Day • Veterans' Day • Great American Smokeout Day • Thanksgiving

Additional Topic Idea:

As the year begins to wrap up and before the holiday frenzy hits, take time to cover year-end finance issues such as the tax implications of charitable donations.

Communication Tip:

Specify with examples. Organizations tend to write or speak in generalizations (*"People often relieve stress through breathing exercises."*). When possible, get personal (*"Mary in Accounting says she felt stressed out and had high blood pressure until she took yoga classes, offered as part of our wellness program. She feels happier and healthier now — and encourages others to join her."*).

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December

Monthly National Health Observances:

- Safe Toys and Gifts • National Handwashing Awareness

Holidays:

- Hanukkah • Christmas • Kwanzaa • New Year's Eve

Additional Topic Idea:

The end of the year can be a magical time, but it can also be tough for many. Consider covering stress reduction and relationship issues to help your audience have as happy a holiday season as possible.

Communication Tip:

Think several newsletters ahead. To stop “*getting stuck*,” you need a systematic way to quickly and effectively communicate and share your new ideas, programs and events. Plan your messages one year out, working season by season. That way, you’ll keep your wellness programs fresh, repeat information you’ve identified as important, and make consistent messaging part of your culture.

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