

I. *Pick Your Path to Health* Campaign Background

This section is an introduction to the *Pick Your Path to Health* campaign, the health principles and initiatives it is based upon, the purpose of the campaign, and relevant health facts about its targeted audience (African American women, Latinas, Asian and Pacific Islander women, American Indian and Alaska Native women, women who live in rural areas, and women with disabilities).

Overview of Campaign

Pick Your Path to Health is a nationwide, community-based campaign sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health. The goal is to help women take simple and time-sensitive steps to improve their health and provide tools for local communities to promote practical, culturally relevant action steps to wellness. The campaign recognizes that women of the new millennium are confronted with numerous challenges—from the demands of home and family to the pressures of work—and suggests specific, life-oriented action steps in an effort to ease the path to better health.

Minority Focus

Pick Your Path to Health encourages health awareness among all women and specifically focuses on health issues as they relate to African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native women, Latinas, women who live in rural areas, and women with disabilities—all who are at a higher risk for many diseases.

Women's Health Issues

Pick Your Path to Health is adopted from Healthy People 2010—the Government's comprehensive set of health objectives aimed at reducing the existing health disparities between minority and white women over the first decade of the new century. Ten major health issues or leading health indicators for the Nation were identified. The 2004 monthly themes of the *Pick Your Path to Health* campaign are based on these health indicators.

January—Spirituality
February—Weight Management
March—Physical Activity
April—Alcohol Use
May—Mental Health
June—Responsible Sexual Behavior
July—Drug Abuse
August—Health Care Access
September—Prevention
October—Violence Prevention
November—Tobacco Use
December—Family

Overview of Campaign

Culturally Appropriate Materials

The campaign delivers workable health messages called “action steps” through six 12-month pocket planners addressing the health needs and concerns of African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native women, Latinas, women who live in rural communities, and women with disabilities. The planners offer action steps for each week and emphasize the importance of making small changes to improve women’s health. They also contain general health information, places to record health information, and various health resources. Other campaign materials include posters, community action kits, and a listserv that provides weekly action steps by e-mail.

Dedicated Partners

The campaign is supported by more than 100 national partners that help to spread campaign messages to communities and women across the Nation. The campaign also has media partners that help to spread campaign messages through placement of *Pick Your Path to Health* information in diverse community newspapers across the country.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

All Women

***January*—Spirituality: Find the strength within.**

- Make a list of 10 victories you can celebrate in your life.
- Measure success by how much health, peace, and joy you have.
- Reward yourself for all you do.
- Take a moment to celebrate your spirit.

***February*—Weight Management: Vital for long-term wellness.**

- Try healthy snacks. Refuel with a glass of low-fat milk or a piece of fruit.
- Carry a water bottle with you every day and refill it at least three times.
- Burn some of the calories you take in—exercise can help you lose weight.
- Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Dried fruits count!
- Make a low-calorie shopping list.

***March*—Physical Activity: Stay active. Live longer.**

- Treat your family to some time at a community recreation facility.
- Start to exercise gradually and work your way up.
- Start your spring cleaning early; it's a great way to exercise.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.

***April*—Alcohol Use: Know your limits.**

- Resist the pressure to serve alcohol. Host an alcohol-free party.
- Volunteer to be the designated driver.
- Don't get in a car if the driver has been drinking alcohol, no matter who they are.
- If you may be pregnant, don't drink. Alcohol can harm your baby even before you know you're pregnant.
- Be aware of how many drinks you have—if you can't stop when you want to, get help.

***May*—Mental Health: Lower your stress.**

- Have one good belly laugh today.
- Take 15 minutes for yourself each day.
- If you're feeling overwhelmed, ask for help.
- Get together with friends to cry, laugh, and support each other.
- Don't be afraid to seek counseling.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

All Women

June—Responsible Sexual Behavior: Think before you act.

- Don't be afraid to say "no!" It's your body and your life.
- You don't need symptoms to be sick. Get tested for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- Put the "he" into health. Ask about your partner's sexual history.
- Listen to your instincts. If it doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

July—Drug Abuse: Use and you lose.

- Don't experiment—you can become addicted even the first time.
- Protect your health and your future. Drugs can damage your body and ruin your relationships.
- Follow your doctor's instructions when taking any medication. Misuse can be dangerous.
- Call Narcotics Anonymous at 1-818-773-9999 to help or get help from your local chapter.
- If you're taking prescribed medication, ask your doctor before taking any other medication or herbal supplements.

August—Health Care Access: Your health matters.

- Schedule routine check-ups for your family.
- Ask your local clinic about free or low-cost mammograms and Pap smears.
- Need a babysitter? Don't let that stop you from seeing your doctor. Turn to community groups for help.
- Get better results from your provider. Ask questions and expect answers.
- Call 1-800-KIDS-NOW to learn about low-cost health insurance.

September—Prevention: It's better than a cure.

- Eat a well-balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D—it can help prevent osteoporosis.
- Ask your local pharmacist where to get a flu shot.
- If you are over 40, ask your doctor about mammograms.
- Schedule your Pap test and pelvic exam.

October—Violence Prevention: Empower yourself.

- Make a list of safe places you can go to protect yourself from abuse.
- Empower yourself! Sign up for a self-defense class.
- Keeping abuse a secret does not help anyone. Call 1-800-799-SAFE.
- Help a friend in danger.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

All Women

November—Tobacco Use: Smoking—costly to your LIFE and your wallet.

- Find a support program in your community to help you stop smoking. Call 1-800-994-WOMAN.
- If you haven't started smoking, don't start.
- Create a no-smoking rule in your house.
- Ask your health provider about methods to help you quit smoking.

December—Family: Get support from those who care.

- Plan a “funny family story night” and take turns being silly.
- Invite your child's friends over for a get-acquainted party.
- Make bedtime a set time for kids each night. You'll have more time to relax.
- Start a new family tradition—focus on health.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

African American Women

January—Spirituality: Find the strength within.

- Every day, think of something you are grateful for.
- Focus on the strengths, not the faults, of others.
- Write in your calendar one positive thing about each day.
- Think of something you have done to help someone.
- Gather a collection of your favorite inspirational words or natural wonders.

February—Weight Management: Vital for long-term wellness.

- Set practical short-term and long-term weight goals.
- Keep a bottle of water with you all day and refill often.
- When eating out, select foods that are steamed, broiled, baked, or grilled.
- Select a mix of colorful fruits and vegetables each day.
- Have low-fat, low-sugar snacks on hand to combat hunger and prevent overeating.

March—Physical Activity: Stay active. Live longer.

- Put on your favorite music and dance.
- If possible, take the stairs to use a restroom on a different floor.
- Take a walk during your mid-morning, lunch, and mid-afternoon breaks.
- Climb stairs either inside or outdoors for a sure-fire aerobic treat.
- Encourage your family and friends to support and join you in your activities.

April—Alcohol Use: Know your limits.

- If you can't wait to have your first alcoholic drink of the day, consider getting counseling.
- Substitute non-alcoholic versions of drinks.
- Don't drink and drive, or ride in a car if the driver has been drinking.
- Don't be pressured to drink more alcoholic beverages than you should.
- Know the warning signs of alcoholism. Read them on the next page.

May—Mental Health: Lower your stress.

- Soak worries away in a warm bath. Light a candle and add scented bath products.
- Take a nap. Put aside your worries and regain strength.
- Love yourself unconditionally. Forgive yourself and move forward.
- When things get overwhelming, take a moment to breathe deeply and meditate.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

African American Women

- If you feel sad all the time, call the National Mental Health Information Center at 1-800-789-2647.

June—Responsible Sexual Behavior: Think before you act.

- Don't be pressured into having sex—it does not have to be a part of dating.
- If you choose to become sexually active, know your partner's sexual history and get tested for STDs, including HIV. Ask your partner to do the same.
- Seek advice from your health care provider about responsible sexual behavior.
- Seek counseling if you or someone you know has been sexually abused.
- Teach your children to respect their bodies and protect their health.

July—Drug Abuse: Use and you lose.

- Take medications only as directed by your doctor or pharmacist.
- Talk to your children, family, and friends about drugs.
- Don't experiment with drugs. One experience can get you hooked!
- Set a good example. Your children will follow your behavior, not just your explanation.
- To learn the warning signs of drug addiction, visit www.drugabuse.gov.

August—Health Care Access: Your health matters.

- Before your medical appointment, make a list of questions you want to ask your doctor.
- Look for health information and screenings in your community.
- Call 1-877-KIDS-NOW to learn about free or low-cost health insurance for your family.
- If you feel that your doctor is not taking your concerns seriously, get a second opinion.
- Learn your rights as a patient from your health care provider or local health clinics.

September—Prevention: It's better than a cure.

- Talk to your doctor about what vaccinations you and your family need.
- Keep a complete record of your immunizations.
- Always wear your seatbelt when in a moving vehicle.
- Get a flu shot once a year to help protect yourself against the flu.
- Wash your hands often, especially when you are near others who are sick.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

African American Women

October—Violence Prevention: Empower yourself.

- Avoid walking alone at night. Ask a friend to walk you home or to your car.
- Protect yourself. Sign up for a self-defense class, such as karate or Tae Kwon Do.
- Don't accept abuse. Get help from friends, a health care provider, or local women's shelter.
- Never accept a drink from a stranger or leave your drink unattended.
- Role play with children about potentially dangerous situations and practice ways to respond.

November—Tobacco Use: Smoking—costly to your LIFE and your wallet.

- Pick a "quit" date and stick to it.
- As you quit, set aside the money you saved and buy yourself something special.
- Identify situations when you are most likely to smoke and try to cut back.
- Help a family member or friend quit smoking.
- Talk with your children about the dangers of smoking.

December—Family: Get support from those who care.

- Call a relative you haven't spoken to in a while just to catch up.
- Turn off the television. Talk, play games, or read together instead.
- Create new family traditions and rituals that make being together more special.
- Let go of old gripes. Focus on the present and the future, not the past.
- Stay involved in your children's education. Join the PTA.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

American Indian and Alaska Native Women

January

Man Moon - Solitude

- Dig out an old fear and throw it away; contemplate a healthier approach to life.
- Help those around you who need it—clear the snow from their path, or fix a loose step.
- Teach your children to respect their bodies and their spirit, it will keep them safe.
- Keep your heart strong, take a walk with a friend.
- Make a hearty “Surprise” soup with leftover turkey bones, and freeze some for later.

February

Wind Big Moon - Introspection

- Fill your spirit with beautiful memories of times past, and share them with someone special.
- Promise yourself to eat less fat this week. Include plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Get some neighbor kids and adults together for a round dance in the park or in the snow.
- Rekindle that sense of pride—start a journal about your family.
- Relax—close your eyes and sit quietly. Listen to your heartbeat drum.

March

Ash Moon - Understanding

- When you go walking, breathe in Mother Earth. Think of balance.
- Start seedlings of your favorite vegetables in a sunny window for this year’s garden.
- Look at life through your kids’ eyes. Treat them as the precious gifts they are.
- Share the health. Gather your friends for a potluck of traditional foods.
- Practice understanding with a frustrated coworker. Be supportive and an active listener.

April

Planting Moon - Regeneration

- All life is starting up again. You can grow again too, this time from the inside out.
- Spread the chores around to each family member.
- Take your muscles out for a stretch—go bicycling with a friend.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

American Indian and Alaska Native Women

- Talk to your health counselor about safe relations.
- Give thanks for our Elders. Through them, the Circle is unbroken.

May

Corn Planting Moon - Acceptance

- Step out from the shadow of those in your way and follow your own path.
- Walk in courage, honesty, humility, and generosity. These are the warriors' paths.
- Try out a new fruit salad recipe.
- Skip rope for a healthy heart. Don't know how? Ask your children to teach you.
- Sit with an Elder in the sunshine. Let her teach you respect for yourself and all things.

June

Corn Tassel Coming Out Moon - Listening

- If what your date wants sounds wrong, it's wrong and let your heart say "No."
- Practice active listening with your children. Their simple words hide intricate meaning.
- Think fresh air and exercise. Take the family berry picking.
- Save the family from accidents. Check your house for loose boards and sharp nails.
- Healing Circles are places to listen, to be heard, and to be healed. Find one and live.

July

Sun House Moon - Passion

- Engage your passionate side, volunteer at the local friendship center or Elder home.
- Attend your tribal Pow Wow. Renew old ties and make new ones.
- Honor the ancestors with a traditional meal. You'll be honoring yourself, too.
- Celebrate the love in your house with a giveaway.
- If you choose intimacy with the right person, both of you will appreciate being tested for STDs and HIV first.

August

Lake Moon – Change

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

American Indian and Alaska Native Women

- Life is lived in the space between events. Is your life where you want it to be?
- Make one change for heart health. Try baking instead of frying.
- Educate others about your culture—volunteer to tell stories at your local school.
- Make sure you and your family’s immunizations are up-to-date. Visit your doctor.
- Make a change from sugared drinks to non-sugared. Your teeth will thank you.

September

Corn Ripe Moon - Awareness

- Find a quiet, green place and pray to the four directions.
- Take time to savor your food. What you eat can prevent obesity and diabetes.
- Open your eyes and ears to signs of abuse, if you feel someone near is suffering, there are counselors who can help.
- Take an Elder out for appointments and shopping.
- Try catching the kids doing something good. Let them know you noticed in a special way.

October

Leaves Falling Moon - Respect

- Take time to thank each person who helps you through your day.
- Visit your relatives. Let them know how much you appreciate them.
- Find a place to jog or power walk. Start out slowly and work your way up.
- Start a routine of regular family meetings, and involve healthy food.
- Think about starting a healing circle if domestic violence is an issue in your community.

November

Corn Depositing Moon - Mortality

- To be mortal is to embrace each day’s purpose. Are you thinking too far ahead?
- Visit the place where your ancestors rest. Take the kids and tell them ancestor stories.
- Concentrate on all that you have; make two lists: “I need” and “I want.” Which one is longer?
- Live each day as if it were your last one. Then you’ll be ready when the last one comes.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

American Indian and Alaska Native Women

- To make mistakes is to be truly alive. To learn from them is to gain real wisdom.

December

Night Fire Moon - Suffering

- From suffering learn compassion. Heal yourself and others with compassion.
- Think about preventing illness and suffering by embracing better ways to live.
- Pain is your body's way of telling you to seek help. Find the right place to get good medical care.
- If you could turn back time, what lifestyle changes would you make to prevent suffering?
- Be a friend that makes a difference; make sure she doesn't drink and drive.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Asian and Pacific Islander Women

January—Spirituality: Find the strength within.

- Take a class in a subject that interests you, such as dance or art.
- Always keep a positive attitude.
- Keep a journal. Write down how you feel every day.
- Begin or end your day with a five-minute meditation.
- Take part in your community's volunteer work—it can enrich your life as well as your heart.

February—Weight Management: Vital for long-term wellness.

- Have breakfast every day. Try topping your cereal with fruit.
- Select a mix of colorful vegetables each day to get the nutrients your body needs.
- Switch from whole milk to 1 or 2 percent or skim milk.
- Use nonstick pans or cooking spray rather than oil or butter.
- Celebrate the lunar calendar New Year with a healthy and balanced diet.

March—Physical Activity: Stay active. Live longer.

- Choose a new sport or activity, and be physically active at least five times a week.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk down the hall instead of using the phone or e-mail.
- Get up and move around during TV commercial breaks.
- Go for a walk with your family or friends after dinner at least twice each week.

April—Alcohol Use: Know your limits.

- Find a designated driver. Don't ride with someone who has been drinking.
- Consult your health care provider if a family member drinks a lot at home.
- Know the signs of alcoholism. Read the warning signs on the next page.
- Don't be pressured to drink more than you should.
- To learn more about alcohol or drug problems, visit www.niaaa.nih.gov.

May—Mental Health: Lower your stress.

- Break large tasks into smaller ones. Set priorities and do what you can.
- Refresh your body and mind with a relaxing activity, such as a massage or walk.
- Learn to play. Find pastimes, such as gardening, to escape from the pressures of life.
- Start your day with a smile. Tune into positive messages.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Asian and Pacific Islander Women

- If you feel depressed, call the National Mental Health Information Center at 1-800-789-2647.

***June*—Responsible Sexual Behavior: Think before you act.**

- Don't be pressured into having sex—it does not have to be a part of dating.
- If you choose to become sexually active, know your partner's sexual history and get tested for STDs, including HIV. Ask your partner to do the same.
- Seek advice from your health care provider about responsible sexual behavior.
- Seek counseling if you or someone you know has been sexually abused.
- Teach your children to respect their bodies and protect their health.

***July*—Drug Abuse: Use and you lose.**

- Take prescription drugs only as directed by your physician.
- Trust your instincts. If you think a family member is using drugs, don't look the other way.
- Using drugs harms you and the ones who love you—don't start.
- Don't experiment—you can become addicted even the first time.
- Watch out for symptoms of drug abuse. To learn more, visit www.drugabuse.gov.

***August*—Health Care Access: Your health matters.**

- Schedule your routine health checkup today.
- If you don't understand what your doctor is saying, speak up.
- When making a medical appointment, ask about availability of translation services.
- Attend free health screenings offered by your community health centers.
- Look for health information and screening opportunities in your neighborhood.

***September*—Prevention: It's better than a cure.**

- Talk to your doctor about what vaccinations you and your family need.
- Consult your doctor about anemia, and consider taking iron supplements.
- Talk to your doctor about your risk for diabetes.
- Have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked to help reduce the risk of heart disease.
- Make sure you and your family get flu shots before flu season begins.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Asian and Pacific Islander Women

October—Violence Prevention: Empower yourself.

- Protect yourself. Sign up for a self-defense class, such as karate or Tae Kwon Do.
- If you find yourself in an abusive relationship, seek help.
- Develop a safety plan to be used in emergencies. See the next page for details.
- Don't ignore violence around you or wait for it to go away.
- Visit www.atask.org for information in your language about domestic violence.

November—Tobacco Use: Smoking—costly to your LIFE and your wallet.

- Identify situations when you are most likely to smoke and try to cut back.
- Refuse to be a victim of second-hand smoking—make your home smoke-free.
- Educate your child on the harmful effects of smoking.
- Don't give up. If you go back to smoking, pick another quit date and get family support.
- When you quit, throw away all of your cigarettes, lighters, matches, and ashtrays.

December—Family: Get support from those who care.

- Make dinnertime a time to hear about your family's day.
- Make Sunday a "Family and Friends Day," and plan a fun group activity.
- Learn to show love for your family in small ways.
- Listen to your partner's concerns. Your support matters.
- Explore your heritage. Connect with your family by celebrating your shared past.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Latinas

January—Spirituality: Find the strength within.

Enero—Espiritualidad: Halle la fuerza dentro de sí misma.

- Keep your spirit free from gossip and rumor.
Mantenga su espíritu libre de chismes y rumores.
- Celebrate your traditions.
Celebre sus tradiciones.
- Go for walks with your friends or family.
Vaya de paseo con sus amigos o familiares.
- Write down your thoughts in a journal.
Anote sus pensamientos en un diario.
- Learn to truly love yourself!
¡Aprenda a amarse a sí misma verdaderamente!

February—Weight Management: Vital for long-term wellness.

Febrero—Control del Peso: Vital para el bienestar de la salud a largo plazo.

- Find nutritious meals at ethnic restaurants.
Descubra comidas nutritivas en los restaurantes étnicos.
- Fill a bowl with fruits and eat them throughout the week.
Llene un recipiente con frutas y cómalas durante la semana.
- Write down everything you eat for a week.
Anote todo lo que come durante una semana.
- Stay away from pills that promise to help you lose weight.
No tome píldoras que prometan ayudarlo a adelgazar.
- Try not to skip meals.
Trate de no saltarse ninguna comida.

March—Physical Activity: Stay active. Live longer.

Marzo—Actividad Física: Manténgase activa. Viva más tiempo.

- Make a year-long exercise plan.
Haga un plan de ejercicio para todo el año.
- Ease into an exercise routine.
Comience una rutina de ejercicio de forma gradual.
- Seek motivation to stay physically active.
Busque la motivación para mantenerse activa físicamente.
- Invite your children to join you when exercising.
Invite a sus niños a hacer ejercicio con usted.
- If you sit at work all day, get up and walk around often.
Si está sentada en el trabajo durante todo el día, levántese y camine con frecuencia.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Latinas

April—Alcohol Use: Know your limits.

Abril—Uso de Alcohol: Conozca sus límites.

- Try not to drink excessively during holidays.
Trate de no beber en exceso durante los días festivos.
- For an alcohol-free party, add carbonated water to fruit drinks.
Para una fiesta sin alcohol, añade agua gaseosa a los jugos.
- Don't ride in a car if the driver has been drinking.
No viaje en automóvil si el conductor ha estado tomando bebidas alcohólicas.
- Give support to a loved one trying to give up alcohol.
Muestre su apoyo a un ser querido que esté tratando de dejar el alcohol.
- For help with alcohol problems, call 1-800-662-4357.
Para ayuda con problemas de alcohol, llame al 1-800-662-4357.

May—Mental Health: Lower your stress.

Mayo—Salud Mental: Reduzca el estrés.

- Talk to someone you trust if you feel sad often.
Hable con alguien de confianza si se siente triste a menudo.
- Every once in a while, do something fun for yourself.
De vez en cuando, trate de hacer algo divertido para usted misma.
- Stay active indoors. Stretch or dance to feel energized.
Manténgase activa dentro de la casa.
- Use this calendar to schedule fun “dates” with your friends.
Use este calendario para marcar las fechas de salir a divertirse con sus amigas.
- Make a list of your family's activities and set priorities.
Haga una lista de las actividades de su familia y dé prioridad a las mismas.

June—Responsible Sexual Behavior: Think before you act.

Junio—Comportamiento Sexual Responsable: Piense antes de actuar.

- Don't be pressured into having sex if that's not what you want.
No se sienta presionada en tener relaciones sexuales si no lo desea.
- If you choose to become sexually active, know your partner's sexual history.
Get tested for STDs and ask your partner to do the same.
Si decide estar sexualmente activa, conozca los antecedentes sexuales de su pareja. Háganse ambos la prueba de enfermedades transmitidas sexualmente.
- Ask your doctor about responsible sexual behavior.
Pregunte a su médico sobre comportamiento sexual responsable.
- Seek counseling if you or someone you know has been sexually abused.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Latinas

Busque consejería si usted o alguien que conoce ha sido víctima de abuso sexual.

- Teach your children to respect their bodies and protect their health.
Enseñe a sus hijos a respetar sus cuerpos y a proteger su salud.

July—Drug Abuse: Use and you lose.

Julio—Abuso de Drogas: La adicción le llevará a la perdición.

- To learn more about drug addiction, visit www.drugabuse.gov.
Para más información sobre la adicción de drogas visite www.drugabuse.gov.
- Talk to your children often about not experimenting with drugs.
Hable con sus hijos con frecuencia sobre la idea de no experimentar con drogas.
- Finish all medications as prescribed and stay on schedule.
Acabe todos los medicamentos según lo recetado y tómelos de forma puntual.
- Ask your doctor for help if you think you are addicted to medications.
Pida ayuda a su médico si piensa que está adicta a alguna medicación.
- Consult your doctor before taking any natural remedies.
Consulte con su médico antes de tomar cualquier remedio natural.

August—Health Care Access: Your health matters.

Agosto—Acceso a los Cuidados de la Salud: Su salud es importante.

- Always read the instructions attached to your prescriptions.
Lea siempre el folleto que viene adjunto a sus recetas.
- Look for health information and services in your community.
Busque información y servicios para la salud en su comunidad.
- Call 1-877-KIDS-NOW to learn about free or low-cost health insurance.
Llame al 1-877-KIDS-NOW para más información sobre seguros de salud gratis o de bajo costo.
- When moving, ask your doctor for a copy of your medical records.
Cuando vaya a mudarse a otro lugar, pida a su médico una copia de su expediente médico.
- Ask for translation services if you think you need them.
Solicite servicios de traducción e interpretación si cree que los necesita.

September—Prevention: It's better than a cure.

Septiembre—Prevención: Es mejor prevenir que curar.

- Stay informed about health issues. Visit www.4woman.gov.
Manténgase informada sobre los temas de salud. Visite www.4woman.gov.
- Make all appointments for annual checkups in advance.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Latinas

- Haga todas las citas para los chequeos anuales con anticipación.
- Post emergency telephone numbers on your refrigerator.
Fije los números de teléfono de emergencia en su refrigerador.
- Aim for 8 hours of sleep every day.
Trate de dormir ocho horas al día.
- Keep all medications out of children's reach.
Mantenga todos los medicamentos fuera del alcance de los niños.

October—Violence Prevention: Empower yourself.

Octubre—Prevención de la Violencia: Ármese de valor.

- Learn your local police department's nonemergency phone number.
Infórmese del número de teléfono directo de la policía local.
- Seek help if your partner's behavior is abusive.
Solicite ayuda si el comportamiento de su pareja es abusivo.
- Take a self-defense class in your community.
Tome una clase de defensa personal en su comunidad.
- Don't let a volatile temper get out of hand—seek counseling.
No permita que un temperamento volátil salga fuera de control—busque asesoramiento.
- See the next page for tips on developing a safety plan.
Vea la siguiente página para desarrollar un plan de seguridad.

November—Tobacco Use: Smoking—costly to your LIFE and your wallet.

Noviembre—Uso de Tabaco: Fumar—un alto costo para su VIDA y para su bolsillo.

- Have gum or mints available at home as an alternative to smoking.
Tenga caramelos de menta o goma de mascar disponible en casa como alternativa.
- Invest the money you saved on cigarettes in exercise classes.
Invierta el dinero que ahorró en cigarrillos en clases de gimnasia.
- Visit www.4woman.gov/Quitsmoking for help in quitting.
Visite www.4woman.gov/Quitsmoking para ayuda sobre cómo dejar de fumar.
- Make sure your child's day care programs are smoke-free.
Asegúrese de que el uso de tabaco está prohibido en los programas de guardería de sus niños.
- Keep a list of activities you can do instead of smoking and do one.
Mantenga una lista de actividades que puede hacer en lugar de fumar y haga una de ellas.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Latinas

December—Family: Get support from those who care.

Diciembre—Familia: Reciba apoyo de las personas que la quieren.

- Plan a family cooking night so everyone can help.
Planee una noche para que la familia cocine junta de forma que todos puedan ayudar.
- Read a book out loud with your family before going to bed.
Lea un libro en voz alta con su familia antes de acostarse.
- Connect with your family by celebrating your shared past.
Forme lazos de unión con su familia recordando los tiempos pasados compartidos.
- Plan a cleaning session with the entire family.
Planee una sesión de limpieza a fondo con toda la familia.
- Do volunteer work as a family.
Haga trabajo de voluntariado con toda la familia.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Women Who Live in Rural Areas

January—Spirituality: Find the strength within.

- Make a New Year’s resolution that will improve the quality of your life, and stick to it!
- Focus on the strengths, not the faults, of others. Learn to be more tolerant.
- Write down three positive things about each day.
- Go outside on a clear night and look at the stars.
- Go for a hike and appreciate the natural beauty around you.

February—Weight Management: Vital for long-term wellness.

- Calories count! Keep track of how many calories you take in each day.
- Use alternatives to frying your food—try adding spices to your baked dishes.
- Choose whole grain foods more often, such as whole wheat breads, oatmeal, or brown rice.
- Instead of cake, have a piece of fruit.
- Eat before you get too hungry to avoid overeating or snacking on unhealthy foods.

March—Physical Activity: Stay active. Live longer.

- Aim for 20 minutes of aerobic activity each day, such as walking, jogging, or swimming.
- Get up and move around during TV commercial breaks.
- Instead of talking on the phone with a friend, make a date to walk and talk.
- Spring into the weekends—dance to your favorite music or start a garden.
- Stretch all of your major muscle groups before and after exercise to avoid injuries.

April—Alcohol and Drug Abuse: Destroys families, destroys lives.

- Know your limit. Alcohol doesn’t solve problems, it can add to them.
- Volunteer to be the designated driver.
- Drink a glass of water for each alcoholic drink you have.
- Take prescription drugs only as directed by a physician or a pharmacist.
- Using drugs harms you and the ones who love you—don’t start.

May—Mental Health: Lower your stress.

- Depression is more common than you think. Learn its warning signs on the next page.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Women Who Live in Rural Areas

- Let the warm weather and fresh air help you relax.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help if you feel overwhelmed.
- If you think you may be depressed, call 1-800-789-2647 for help.
- Call your state or county health department for mental health care programs.

***June*—Responsible Sexual Behavior: Think before you act.**

- Don't be pressured into having sex—it does not have to be a part of dating.
- If you choose to become sexually active, know your partner's sexual history and get tested for STDs, including HIV. Ask your partner to do the same.
- Seek advice from your health care provider about responsible sexual behavior.
- Seek counseling if you or someone you know has been sexually abused.
- Teach your children to respect their bodies and protect their health.

***July*—Heat Stress Prevention: Keep it cool.**

- Drink at least 8 ounces of water every 20 minutes while working in the heat.
- If you have a mole that changes color or shape, tell your doctor immediately.
- Always wear protective clothing and sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 when outside.
- During hot weather, don't over-exert yourself or become too tired.
- Know the symptoms of a heat stroke: excessive sweating, fatigue, thirst, and confusion.

***August*—Health Care Access: Your health matters.**

- Offer your neighbors a ride to medical appointments.
- Before your appointment, make a list of questions you want to ask your doctor.
- Call your local VA Hospital for information on transit buses for the elderly and disabled.
- Ask your doctor about free medications for persons with limited income.
- Look for free health information and screening tests in your community.

***September*—Prevention: It's better than a cure.**

- Schedule regular health screenings at the same time each year to help you remember them.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Women Who Live in Rural Areas

- Wash your hands often, especially when you are near others who are sick.
- Ask an elderly family member about your family’s health history.
- Talk to your doctor about what vaccinations you and your family need.
- Make sure you have a first-aid kit at home or in your car for emergencies.

***October*—Violence and Injury Prevention: Empower yourself.**

- Make sure that outside lights are working. Check locks and entrances.
- Store flammable liquids and poisons in their proper location.
- Make sure that you’re not alone when using dangerous equipment like chainsaws.
- Carry your keys as you walk through the parking lot.
- Check well water for bacteria, heavy metals, and pesticides every 6 months.

***November*—Tobacco Use: Smoking—costly to your LIFE and your wallet.**

- Identify situations or times when you are more likely to smoke, and try to cut back.
- Chewing tobacco is as addictive and unhealthy as cigarettes. Don’t allow either at home.
- Make a pact with yourself not to smoke or allow smoking around your children.
- Support and encourage a friend or family member who is trying to quit.
- Make a list of 10 things to do with your money instead of smoking.

***December*—Family: Get support from those who care.**

- Make Sunday a “Family and Friends Day,” and plan a fun group activity.
- Say something positive to your family every day.
- Make time to have fun and laugh with your family.
- Learn about your family members’ interests.
- Mark on your calendar important dates for your friends and family. Call them on that day.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Women with Disabilities

January—Spirituality: Find the strength within.

- List three things you would like to do to simplify your life.
- Connect with others—join a disability or faith organization, or an Internet-based chat group.
- Share your talents and become a mentor. Volunteer at your local school, library, or church.
- Begin or end your day with a five-minute meditation.
- Find an accessible place of worship near you. Call the Accessible Congregations Campaign at 202-293-5960.

February—Weight Management: Important for long-term wellness.

- Check with your doctor before starting a weight management program to make sure it fits your medical needs.
- Identify your “ideal” weight with your doctor, and work towards reaching and/or maintaining that weight.
- Eat foods rich in calcium such as cheese, yogurt, and broccoli to reduce your risk of osteoporosis.
- Whenever possible, include physical activity in your daily life.
- Eat smaller, balanced meals and select at least five colorful fruits and vegetables to eat daily.

March—Physical Activity: Stay active. Live longer.

- Get started on a fitness plan that is right for you. Visit www.rtcil.org for more information.
- Try various types of physical activities—they provide different benefits.
- Find inexpensive ways to keep in shape, such as using household items for weight lifting.
- Find a disability-friendly gym or contact your local YWCA or parks and recreation center.
- Visit www.ncpad.org for more information on physical activity.

April—Alcohol and Drug Abuse: Destroys families, destroys lives.

- If you are concerned about your use of alcohol or drugs, talk with your physician.
- Ask your doctor about interactions between your medications, and between medications and alcohol.
- Don’t use alcohol or drugs to mask pain. Ask your doctor for alternative treatments.
- Consult your doctor if you are concerned about your increased use and dependence on prescription drugs.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Women with Disabilities

- Call SAMHSA at 1-800-729-6686 for referrals to a community support group or treatment organization.

May—Mental Health: Lower your stress.

- Learn the symptoms of depression on the next page, and get help if necessary.
- Schedule a 10-minute break every day to remove yourself from a stressful environment.
- Talk to a friend or professional about any problem—get a fresh point of view and possible solutions.
- Try one relaxing thing each day—take a bubble bath, read a chapter of a book, or listen to music.
- Focus on your own health needs; you know best what you can and cannot do.

June—Sexuality: Taking responsibility for your sexual health.

- Don't be pressured into having sex—it does not have to be a part of dating.
- If you choose to become sexually active, know your partner's sexual history and get tested for STDs, including HIV. Ask your partner to do the same.
- Seek advice from your health care provider about responsible sexual behavior.
- Seek counseling if you or someone you know has been sexually abused.
- Teach your children to respect their bodies and protect their health.

July—Self-esteem: You matter.

- Nurturing yourself is not selfish—it's okay to put yourself first.
- Focus on the things you can do.
- You deserve to be treated with respect.
- Do something that you have always wanted to do—take a class, travel, or meet new people.
- Contact your local Center for Independent Living to learn about independent living skills, accessibility, and legal issues.

August—Health Care Access: It's your right.

- Call the ADA Information Line at 1-800-514-0301 for information on accessible health care facilities.
- Notify your health care provider if you require any special assistance when making an appointment.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Women with Disabilities

- Before your appointment, make a list of questions you want to ask your doctor.
- If you feel your doctor is not taking your concerns seriously, get a second opinion or consider changing doctors.
- Find out about your state's Medicaid waiver programs to help with medical expenses.

September—Prevention: It's better than a cure.

- Visit www.4woman.gov for a personalized chart on health screenings.
- Schedule regular screenings at the same time each year to make them easier to remember.
- Talk with your doctor about osteoporosis. You may need to be screened at a younger age than other women.
- Make your home easy to navigate and injury free.
- Make sure you have at least two evacuation routes in your home in case of fire or other emergency.

October—Violence Prevention: Empower yourself.

- See the next page to identify signs of domestic violence in your life.
- Refusal to provide care may be a form of abuse. Don't accept abuse!
- Don't ignore violence around you or wait for it to go away.
- Let someone else know if you feel something is not right about the way you are being treated.
- Always have a safety plan. For more information, visit www.bcm.tmc.edu/crowd.

November—Tobacco Use: Smoking—costly to your LIFE and your wallet.

- Go to www.smokefree.gov for information and support to help you quit.
- Identify times of the day or situations when you are more likely to smoke and try to cut back.
- Every time you get a craving, wait at least 5 minutes before lighting up.
- When you quit, use the money you have saved to buy yourself something special.
- Support and encourage friends or family members who are trying to quit with acknowledgement of their efforts.

December—Healthy Relationships: Get support from those who care.

- Don't be afraid to ask for help or support if you need it.
- Express your feelings to a loved one—give a hug, offer a compliment, or send an e-mail.

Monthly Themes and Action Steps

Women with Disabilities

- Share laughter with friends, caregivers, co-workers, and others whose company you enjoy.
- Designate a “Family and Friends Day,” and plan a fun group activity.
- Join a club or organization that matches your interests.

Overview of Women’s Health

Small first steps can start a woman on the path to wellness. But her individual health risks will be determined to a certain extent by her lifestyle and background. While research is uncovering the role of biology, environment, cultural traditions, and the interplay of these and other factors, some women’s health issues are clear.

<p>Heart disease is the number one killer of American women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More women than men die of heart disease. Several risk factors contribute to the likelihood of women getting heart disease, including smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, lack of physical activity, and a family history of the disease. • African American women have the highest mortality rates from heart disease (155.9 per 100,000) among all American women. More than one-third (33.8 percent) of this population has high blood pressure, in contrast to 19.3 percent of white women. In addition, African American women have higher rates of smoking and obesity than do White women.
<p>Cancer is the second leading cause of death among American women.</p>	<p>Lung cancer, <i>the leading cancer killer of women, is on the rise. This increase can be attributed primarily to the increase in smoking among women.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White women have the highest mortality rate from lung cancer (27.9 per 100,000) among all women. • African American women have the highest mortality rate from lung cancer (27.7 per 100,000) among all minority groups. <p>Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among all American women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African American women have the highest rate of mortality from breast cancer (27.0 per 100,000) among all population groups.
<p>Stroke is the third leading cause of death for American women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stroke occurs at a higher rate among African American and Hispanic women compared with White women. • African American women have the highest death rate from stroke of all women, at 39.6 deaths per 100,000, compared with 22.9 for White women.
<p>Diabetes is the fourth leading cause of death for African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabetes ranks among the top 10 causes of death for all women. • Older American Indian and Alaska Native women are among the most likely to have diabetes (32 percent of their population). • Older Mexican American women are the second most likely group to have diabetes. They have the highest incidence of diabetes among Hispanic women. Almost one-third (30 percent) of these women suffer from the disease. • Among African American women, 25 percent have diabetes, compared with 15 percent of white women. African American women are more likely to be blinded, become amputees, develop end-stage renal impairment, and die from diabetes than are White women.

Overview of Women's Health

<p>HIV/AIDS is the second leading cause of death among American women aged 25 to 44.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly reported AIDS cases among adolescent and adult women have increased steadily, from 7 percent in 1985 to more than 23 percent in 1998. • The epidemic has increased most dramatically among women of color. Among women with AIDS, African Americans and Hispanics account for more than three-fourths (76 percent) of all AIDS cases as of June 1998, even though they represent less than one-fourth of the U.S. population. • Among African American women between the ages of 25 and 44, AIDS results in more deaths than any other single cause. These women have the highest mortality rate from AIDS (22.0 per 100,000 persons) among all American women. They are 10 times more likely to die from AIDS than are white women. • Hispanic women have the second highest mortality rate from AIDS (7.5 per 100,000). They are almost 3.5 times more likely to die from HIV/AIDS than are White women. In 1996, HIV/AIDS became the second leading cause of death for Hispanic women between the ages of 25 and 44 and the eighth leading cause of death for all Hispanic women.
<p>Alcohol and other drug abuse are serious health concerns for all women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are less likely than men to use or abuse alcohol; however, death rates among female alcoholics are 50 to 100 percent higher than among their male counterparts. • Among American Indian and Alaska Native women, 2 to 3 percent consume at least 60 drinks within 30 days. They have the highest mortality rates related to alcoholism among all American women. • Among white women, 17 percent drink frequently as compared with 11 percent of African American women. However, these two populations have the same percentage (2 to 3 percent) of heavy drinkers, women who consume at least 60 drinks within a month. • Nearly 4.1 million women in this country currently use illicit drugs, and more than 1.2 million misuse prescription drugs. • Among all American women, White women have the highest mortality rate (63 percent) from drug-related causes. • Among minority populations, African American women have the highest mortality rate (29 percent) from drug-related causes.
<p>Mental health problems affect large numbers of women each year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major depression and dysthymia (a less severe, more chronic form of depression) affect approximately twice as many women as men. An estimated 12 percent of women in the United States experience a major depression during their lifetimes, compared with 7 percent of men. • Hispanic women have the highest lifetime prevalence of depression (24 percent) among all women. Nearly twice as many Hispanic women reported being depressed (11 percent) as African American women (6 percent) and White women (5 percent). • At least 90 percent of all cases of eating disorders occur in women.

Overview of Women's Health

<p>Violence against women is a major public health problem in our country.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 4.5 million women are victims of violence each year. Of these, nearly two of every three are attacked by a relative or someone they know. • Among American Indian and Alaska Native women, the rate of violent victimization was 98 per 1,000 females, a rate significantly higher than that found among all other women. • African American women are more likely to be the victims of violent crimes (56 cases per 1,000) than either Hispanic women (52 cases per 1,000) or white women (42 cases per 1,000).
<p>Smoking is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in the United States.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among women, the use of tobacco has been shown to increase the risk of cancer, heart and respiratory diseases, and reproductive disorders. • As of 1996, roughly 22 million adult women smoked cigarettes. • More than 140,000 women die each year from smoking-related diseases. • American Indian and Alaska Native women were the most likely to smoke cigarettes (50 and 60 percent, respectively) among all women. • Among all women, African American women had the second highest percentage of current smokers (27 percent), followed by white women (24 percent).
<p>Overweight and obese women are at increased risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and other health problems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 1994, 39 percent of women between the ages of 25 and 74 were defined as overweight. • More than one-half (52 percent) of African American women between the ages of 20 and 74 were classified as overweight in 1994 as compared with more than one-third (35 percent) of white women. • Among Hispanic women, Mexican American women had the highest rate of obesity (50 percent).

SOURCES: Office on Women's Health (OWH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), *Women's Health Issues: An Overview*. 2000; OWH, DHHS, *The Health of Minority Women*. 1999.

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Overview of Healthy People 2010

What Is Healthy People 2010?

One tool to help a community create a dynamic vision for its future is Healthy People 2010. Healthy People 2010 is a comprehensive set of health objectives to be achieved over the first decade of the century. It is designed to serve as a road map for improving the health of all people in the United States. It includes national health promotion and disease prevention goals, objectives, and measures that can help serve as a model for you to develop your own goals and objectives to improve the health of everyone in your community.

Healthy People 2010 was developed by citizens from throughout the Nation in a multiyear process that was coordinated by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). For two decades, HHS has used Healthy People objectives to improve the health of the American people.

Healthy People 2010 is designed to achieve two overarching goals: (1) to increase the quality and years of healthy life, and (2) to eliminate health disparities. (A health disparity is a gap in the health status of different groups of people in which one group is healthier than the other group or groups.) These two goals are supported by 467 objectives in 28 focus areas.

Healthy People 2010 also identifies a smaller set of health priorities that reflects 10 major public health concerns in the United States. These 10 topics highlight individual behaviors; physical, social, and environmental factors; and important health system issues that greatly affect the health of individuals and communities. Examined together, they constitute a set of leading health indicators that provide a snapshot of the health of the Nation, as well as guidance and focus for the public, media, and elected officials.

Goal I: Increase Quality and Years of Healthy Life

Healthy People 2010 seeks to increase life expectancy and quality of life by helping individuals gain the knowledge, motivation, and opportunities they need to make informed decisions about their health. At the same time, Healthy People 2010 encourages local and State leaders to develop community-wide and statewide efforts that promote healthy behaviors, create healthy environments, and increase access to high-quality health care. Because personal and community health are often inseparable, it is critical that both individuals and communities do their parts to increase life expectancy and improve quality of life.

Overview of Healthy People 2010

Goal II: Eliminate Health Disparities

Healthy People 2010 recognizes that communities, States, and national organizations will need to take a multidisciplinary approach to achieve health equity—an approach that involves improving health, education, housing, labor, justice, transportation, agriculture, and the environment, as well as data collection itself. However, the greatest opportunities for reducing health disparities are in promoting community-wide safety, education, and access to health care, and in empowering individuals to make informed health care decisions.

Healthy People 2010 is firmly dedicated to the principle that—regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, income, education, geographic location, disability, or sexual orientation—every person in every community across the Nation deserves access to comprehensive, culturally competent, community-based health care systems that are committed to serving the needs of the individual and promoting community health.

Healthy People 2010: 28 Focus Areas

1. Access to Quality Health Services
2. Arthritis, Osteoporosis, and Chronic Back Conditions
3. Cancer
4. Chronic Kidney Disease
5. Diabetes
6. Disability and Secondary Conditions
7. Educational and Community-Based Programs
8. Environmental Health
9. Family Planning
10. Food Safety
11. Health Communication
12. Heart Disease and Stroke
13. HIV
14. Immunization and Infectious Diseases
15. Injury and Violence Prevention
16. Maternal, Infant, and Child Health
17. Medical Product Safety
18. Mental Health and Mental Disorders
19. Nutrition and Overweight
20. Occupational Safety and Health
21. Oral Health
22. Physical Activity and Fitness
23. Public Health Infrastructure
24. Respiratory Diseases
25. Sexually Transmitted Diseases
26. Substance Abuse
27. Tobacco Use
28. Vision and Hearing

Overview of Healthy People 2010

In A Snapshot

Healthy People 2010 identifies a set of health priorities that reflects 10 major public health concerns in the United States. These 10 leading health indicators are intended to help everyone more easily understand the importance of health promotion and disease prevention. Motivating individuals to act on just one of the indicators can have a profound effect on increasing the quality and years of healthy life and on eliminating health disparities—for the individual, as well as the community overall.

Subject/Topic	Public Health Challenge
Physical Activity	Promote regular physical activity
Overweight and Obesity	Promote healthier weight and good nutrition
Tobacco Use	Prevent and reduce tobacco use
Substance Abuse	Prevent and reduce substance abuse
Responsible Sexual Behavior	Promote responsible sexual behavior
Mental Health	Promote mental health and well-being
Injury and Violence	Promote safety and reduce violence
Environmental Quality	Promote healthy environments
Immunization	Prevent infectious disease through immunization
Access to Health Care	Increase access to quality health care

From: *Healthy People in Healthy Communities*, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of Public Health and Science, Department of Health and Human Services, 2001.