

Protect your body. Protect your temple.  
A toolkit for building healthier  
places of worship.



S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control  
Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with the  
University of South Carolina Prevention Research Center

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The majority of Americans (77% of all adults) and South Carolinians (82% of all adults) identify with a religious faith (Pew Research Center, 2015). There are differences by race and ethnicity –

**“Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or injury.” This definition challenges communities to respond to health and disease in new ways.**

**–World Health Organization**

a greater percentage of Hispanic (80%) and African American (82%) adults in the United States identify with a religious faith than do non-Hispanic White adults (75%).

Faith-based organizations have a long history of meeting the needs of their attendees and local communities. The faith community has been a major focus of the spiritual, social, economic, educational, and political life of African-Americans and Hispanic populations, and weekly attendance at religious services is high in both Hispanic (39%) and African American (47%) populations as compared to non-Hispanic Whites (34%) (Pew Research Center, 2015).

The literature shows that health promotion programs delivered through faith-based settings can improve the health and health behaviors of members (Florez et al., 2020; Tristao, Porfirio, Arredondo, & Atallah, 2018; Bopp, Peterson & Webb, 2012; Dunn et al., 2021). Additionally, groups including the American Heart Association,

the American Diabetes Association, the National Center for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Physical Activity Plan, and the World Health Organization identify faith-based organizations as important settings for health promotion efforts.

Faith-based and public health communities overlap in their approach, goals, and philosophy. Both view health in a holistic way (mind, body, spirit), both appreciate the multiple determinants of health, and both value social justice. Faith-based settings offer a unique opportunity to reach large numbers of individuals typically underrepresented in health promotion efforts, including rural, racial and ethnic minorities, and low-income residents, as places of worship are located nearly everywhere. Places of worship are well-suited to identify the health concerns within their congregations and to address the needs of fellow members in a setting of support and trust.

African Americans in the United States have substantially higher mortality rates from chronic conditions such as heart disease, cerebrovascular disease (which includes stroke), cancer, and diabetes, while Hispanic populations have higher mortality rates from diabetes compared to their non-Hispanic White counterparts (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). Obesity is also more common in African American and Hispanic populations in the United States as compared to non-Hispanic whites (Hales et al., 2020). Behavioral risk factors for these diseases include sedentary behavior (i.e., sitting), low physical activity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use. These risk factors can be reduced

with approaches that focus on both individual-level change (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, skills) and environmental- and policy-level change (e.g., improving access to health promoting resources, improving education and economic stability) (Healthy People 2020).

In South Carolina, like the United States, heart disease is the leading cause of death, and cerebrovascular disease (stroke) is the 5th leading cause of death. According to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, deaths in 2019 from both heart disease and stroke were much higher among African Americans compared to non-Hispanic/Latinx Whites (189.9 vs. 159.7 per 100,000 people for heart disease; 58.0 vs. 38.1 per 100,000 people for stroke; both rates are age-adjusted). In contrast, these rates were lower for Hispanic/Latinx populations in South Carolina (73.3 for heart disease; 22.3 for stroke).

These racial and ethnic differences in health behaviors and outcomes are known as health disparities. Health disparities are the differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and morbidity that exist between racial and ethnic groups. In other words, a health disparity is the significant difference between the rate at which one population group experiences a chronic disease or illness when compared to another population group. Faith-based settings offer opportunities and community support to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities in South Carolina and across the United States.

## Purpose of Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to provide faith-based organizations with ideas and resources to help them plan, develop, and implement health related programs and activities. The activities and programs contained within the toolkit are easy to use and implement. You are encouraged to implement activities in each section so that attendees can make informed decisions regarding lifestyle changes and choices that can improve their quality of life. This toolkit is not designed to be all inclusive. You or those who attend your place of worship may be aware of other programs that interest you more or are more practical for you to put in place. Use whatever program or activity works best for you. Just make sure you get moving, eat smart, stop using tobacco, and have fun!

## How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is divided into four sections. The first section describes how to create a strong health committee in your place of worship. The remaining sections focus on three risk factors that have the largest contribution to chronic diseases and mortality:

- **Physical Activity**
- **Nutrition**
- **Tobacco**

Each section provides information on:

## Education and Awareness Activities

These are suggested ways to get information out to your attendees or community on various topics related to physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco. The Resources section offers suggestions on where to get reliable health information. Use this information, along with the monthly health observance list (see Resources Section), to plan your education and awareness activities.

## Ideas to Consider

These suggestions are provided to assist you in planning and developing programs and activities for your attendees and/or community. Use these, think of your own, or ask for ideas from the leaders of your place of worship, other health committee members, or the attendees. Be creative!

## Best and Promising Practice Models

These model activities or programs are ready for you to use. A brief description of the activity/program is provided. Some of the models require additional training. This will be noted in the description.

## Sample Policies

One of the best ways to improve health and implement change is to adopt a policy. This shows commitment from the leadership in your place of worship to improve the health of their congregation. Sample policies are contained within each section which can be adapted to fit your needs.

**For technical assistance and consultation contact the DHEC Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.**

## Terms You Should Know

### Aerobic physical activity

Activity in which the body's large muscles move in a rhythmic manner for a sustained period of time. Aerobic activity, also called endurance or cardio activity, improves cardiorespiratory fitness. Examples include brisk walking, running, swimming, and bicycling.

### Burden of disease

The overall impact of disease and injuries at the individual, societal and economic level.

### Cardio activities

See the definition for aerobic physical activity.

### Chronic disease

A disease that persists for a long time. The U.S. National Center for Health Statistics considers chronic diseases to be those that last three months or more. Chronic diseases generally cannot be prevented by vaccines or cured by medication, nor do they just disappear. Examples include arthritis, diabetes, and asthma.

### Ethnic groups

A group of human beings whose members identify with each other, usually on the basis of a presumed or real common culture, language, religion, behavioral or biological traits that contrast with other groups.

### Health risk appraisal

An assessment of a person's current health knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and practices.

### Incidence

A measure of the number of new cases of a characteristic that develop in a population in a specified time period.

**Morbidity**

Another word for illness.

**Mortality**

Another word for death. Mortality rate is the number of deaths due to a disease divided by the total population.

**Muscle-strengthening activity  
(Strength training, resistance  
training, or muscular strength and  
endurance activities)**

Physical activity, including exercise, that increases skeletal muscle strength, power, endurance, and mass.

**Physical strength**

The ability of a person to exert force on physical objects using muscles. Increasing physical strength is the goal of strength training.

**Prevalence**

The proportion of a population who have a specific characteristic in a given time period.

**Resistance training**

See definition for muscle-strengthening activity.

Sources: Wikipedia, CDC, Healthy-line.com, Medline.com, NIH, Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition



## What is a Health Committee

A health committee is an organized group within a place of worship that focuses on providing health education, promoting well-being, and improving the health of the congregation and/or local community. Health committees can facilitate a range of activities, including providing health education, raising awareness of health issues among the congregation, creating health promotion policies (guidelines), or providing structured activities and programs for the congregation and/or community.

There are many models for addressing health and wellness within a place of worship. However, for the purpose of this toolkit, we will focus on the lay health promotion model. This model relies on volunteers to plan health education activities, provide health education information, and encourage healthy lifestyles throughout the place of worship. The volunteers who make up the health committee do not need to have a background or training in health or medicine. People who are natural helpers, passionate about health, and who are respected by fellow attendees do well at this kind of work.

The health committee is usually made up of at least three or more members depending on the size of your congregation. One member serves as the health coordinator or leader. The health coordinator is responsible for: planning and leading committee meetings; serving as a liaison between the committee, the congregation, and the faith leader; and ensuring that health activities are planned and put into place including dissemination of reliable health information. The health coordinator serves as an advocate empowering the congregation to make healthier lifestyle choices.

## Tips for Identifying Health Committee Members

1. Every health committee needs a champion to succeed! This could be an existing health coordinator, if your place of worship already has one, or another member who is enthusiastic about health, committed to doing a good job, and able to motivate others.
2. One person cannot put the health-related activities in place. Look for volunteers who are creative, passionate about health, knowledgeable about the practices and operations of the place of worship and can be counted on to commit the time and energy to carry out activities.
3. Be creative about who is on the health committee. Engage members from special groups to ensure adequate representation from all ages and stages within the place of worship, including seniors, youth/young adults. Also consider those who are involved with cooking and menu planning, engaged with other auxiliary groups, or serve in a leadership role.

Faith leaders are critical to the success of the health committee and set the tone and pace for health promotion activities. If available, invite your faith leader(s) to be a part of the health committee. At a minimum, the team should keep your faith leader(s) informed about the health committee activities. Faith leaders should actively participate in healthy lifestyle practices along with the congregation and serve as role models by encouraging members of the congregation and reinforcing the health committee's messages. Having the full support

of faith leaders is a major key to success! Health committees are more likely to carry out activities when faith leaders view health as a priority — just as the spiritual mission is a priority — and when the health committee members are recognized for their efforts.

### Tips for How Faith Leader(s) Can Support the Health Committee:

1. Speak about the importance of health during worship and during other events.
2. Participate in health committee activities.
3. Allow the health coordinator or other committee members time to share health information and upcoming activities immediately before, during, or after worship.
4. Allow the health committee to include health information and activities in regular communications (bulletin inserts for churches, newsletters, social media, and other communications for all places of worship).
5. Recognize the health committee. Having the faith leader(s) recognize the health committee validates it and can affirm its importance. Recognizing the committee's effort (e.g., verbal praise; presenting a certificate, plaque or other acknowledgement; or designating a special recognition day) lets the committee know that their dedication is valued and appreciated.

So far, this chapter has covered the purpose of the health committee, desirable characteristics of committee members, and ways the faith leader(s)

can support the health committee. The rest of the chapter will focus on how to establish a health committee in your place of worship. As with any new activity or change, the building blocks to success include: having leadership support; being clear or transparent in planning; having opportunities for the congregation and leaders to give input; and creating buy-in from the congregation and leaders. As you consider forming a health committee, think about how you can engage and keep faith leaders and your congregation informed. Your health-related activities are much more likely to be supported and attended if leaders and the congregation are involved in the planning process.

### Steps for Establishing a Health Committee

1. Meet with your faith leader(s) and/or lay leadership to get permission and support to begin a health committee.
2. Recruit volunteers to serve on the health committee. Remember, they do not need to be health professionals. Volunteers should just have an interest in improving their own personal health and that of the congregation and/or local community. Though a health background and specific training is not required, it is important that committee members believe that they have the skills, knowledge, and ability to carry out their role.
3. Assess your place of worship's facilities, policies, and practices related to health. The Congregational Health Index ([emoregon.org/pdfs/IFFP/Congregational\\_Health\\_Index.pdf](http://emoregon.org/pdfs/IFFP/Congregational_Health_Index.pdf))

is a self-assessment tool and planning guide designed for health committees (they use the term “wellness teams”). The tool helps to identify strengths and weaknesses in your place of worship’s facilities, policies, and practices for promoting health, and to use that information to design an action plan for improvement that involves your congregation. Similar guides are included in other program materials described in Chapter 3, including African American Churches Eating Smart and Moving More: A Planning Resource Guide and the Faith, Activity, and Nutrition (FAN) Program.

4. Assess the needs, interests, and abilities of the congregation, as well as available resources, to ensure that relevant and enjoyable activities are being planned. Consider giving out a brief survey as a starting point. The Resources section of this toolkit includes the Health Needs and Interests Tool. Feel free to use this

**It is important that members of your congregation feel comfortable sharing personal health information. Therefore, any information shared with the health committee should be kept in the strictest confidence. Also, completed forms should be kept in a secure locked file cabinet or on a password protected computer. It’s best if you ask people to leave their name off the survey.**

tool “as is” or change it as you wish. Ideally, you will want to get input from all members of the congregation. The results of the survey will help with planning and developing programs and activities that meet their needs and interests. After your health committee has been in place for a while (at least six months), consider giving the congregation another survey to see

if there have been any changes in their health knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors. It might also be a good time to hear what they think of activities you’ve tried and future activities they’d like to see. Remember to keep individual responses confidential (i.e., don’t share who said what).

5. Share the compiled group results of the Health Needs and Interests Tool and the Congregational Health Index with the leadership and congregation. Look for and share several target areas and interests that came up most often in the surveys. As you review and discuss ideas, remember to focus on activities that will reach most members of the congregation — adults of all ages, youth, children, and people of all ability levels.
6. Develop a plan. Once you have identified the activities you plan to put in place, write down a plan and identify the resources you will need. Your plan should be in writing and should be as specific as possible. Note who will be the lead on the activity, how often you’ll do the activity, when the activity will be started, and how you will track completion of the activity. As described under #3 above, you can find sample templates for plans in existing tools. Most activities require no additional funding. They require a dedicated team to put them in place. However, if funds will be needed, consider preparing a simple budget to support your plan. For example, you may want to use incentives such as pedometers, water bottles, t-shirts, or other prizes to increase participation and motivate your congregation. Be sure to share the final plan with the leader(s) of your place of worship!

7. Set up regular health committee meetings. Having a consistent meeting time (e.g., monthly) allows the committee to plan

**Think of your plan as a roadmap. It should be used to direct what activities you carry out. Pick one or two activities to start with. Avoid introducing lots of changes at once. Also don't try to do everything in your plan at one time. Choose activities that will be the easiest to accomplish so that you will have some early successes. Then gradually move on to other activities.**

upcoming activities and decide who will be responsible for leading or carrying out each task. These meetings keep all members of the committee accountable.

8. Plan a “Kick-Off Celebration” to introduce the health committee to the congregation. The kick-off event is the launch of your health committee activities and should inform the congregation and get them excited about creating a healthier environment! Schedule the kick-off at a time when most members of your congregation will be present and encourage your faith leader(s) and other committee members to help promote the event. Use the event to preview upcoming activities and events. Examples of kick-off activities include:
- » Initiating physical activity and healthy eating demonstrations such as stretching, playing active games, tastings/samples of healthy snacks, preparing an easy healthy recipe.
  - » Describing upcoming contests and possible incentives.

- » Conducting a health bowl (a contest with health-related questions).
- » Handing out fact sheets and other health information.

9. Promote, promote, promote! Share your planned activities with the congregation and use creative ways to recruit participants for activities. Recruit participants by having a “sign-up” drive on a designated day of worship. Use bulletin inserts, newsletters, electronic or physical bulletin board announcements to promote events.



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADULTS

**Meet the aerobic activity recommendation through one of the following options:**

- ✓ A total of 150-300 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking) each week.

**OR**

- ✓ A total of 75-150 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity (such as jogging or running) each week.

**Muscle-strengthening activities. Adults should also do activities that strengthen muscles.**

- ✓ Muscle-strengthening activities for all the major muscle groups should be done at least 2 days each week. Examples of activities include lifting weights, working with resistance bands, doing calisthenics that use body weight for resistance (e.g., push-ups, pull-ups, planks), carrying heavy loads, and heavy gardening.
- ✓ Muscle-strengthening activities should be at a moderate or greater level of intensity and should be progressive (increase weight) over time.

Source: *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition (2018)*

Everyone can benefit from regular physical activity or exercise, but any amount of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity leads to health benefits and is better than no physical activity. Adults should simply try to sit less and move more.

Physical activity may help reduce your risk for many diseases such as heart disease, diabetes or “sugar,” and some types of cancer. Physical activity reduces stress and depression and improves cognition or mental awareness. It can also help with weight loss and/or control. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018), only about half of adults meet the guidelines for aerobic physical activity, and only about one in four meet the guidelines for both aerobic and muscle-strengthening physical activity (see “Recommendations for Adults” box for guidelines). Even fewer older adults meet these guidelines.

According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition, children and adolescents (6 to 17 years) should participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity each day. They should also take part in both muscle- and bone-strengthening activities. For children and adolescents, regular physical activity has beneficial effects on the following aspects of health:

- Weight
- Muscular strength
- Heart and lung fitness
- Bone mass (through weight-bearing physical activities)
- Blood pressure
- Anxiety and stress
- Self-esteem

Finally, the guidelines say that preschool-aged children (ages 3 through 5 years) should be physically active throughout the day to enhance growth and development. Adult caregivers of preschool-based children have an important role in encouraging preschoolers to engage in active play that includes a variety of activity types.

Regular physical activity is very important to long-term health and well-being. Physical activity or exercise does not have to be a chore; in fact, it can be fun! People should select activities that they enjoy and can fit into their daily lives.

## Tips for Safe and Successful Physical Activity Programs

- Advise participants to check with their health care provider before beginning any physical activity or exercise program, especially if they have a health condition.
- You may want to consider having participants sign a liability waiver form. See the Resources section for a sample form.
- Consider asking members to take the “Get Active Questionnaire” developed by the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology. You can download the two-page questionnaire here: [store.csep.ca/pages/getactivequestionnaire](https://store.csep.ca/pages/getactivequestionnaire). The questionnaire asks questions that help determine whether it is safe to participate in physical activity and times when a referral to the doctor might be important.
- Start slowly and gradually increase the amount of time and level of intensity as participants progress through the program. This gradual approach will lessen the risk of injury, allow participants to get used to the program, and increase the likelihood that they will continue. Encourage participants to remember that all physical activity counts and can be accumulated throughout the day. Physical activity does not need to be done all at one time in a day.
- Don't exclude members with disabilities or chronic health conditions from physical activity programs. However, you may need to adjust or modify the program to make

it safe. There is trustworthy and useful information available online about how to safely increase physical activity among adults with disabilities ([cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/pa.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/pa.html)) and chronic health conditions ([nia.nih.gov/health/exercising-chronic-conditions](https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercising-chronic-conditions)). These sites also include infographics and materials that you can print and share with members.

- Keep records of your activities and programs. Include the date and type of activity and sign-in sheets.
- Plan exercise programs tailored to the needs of your place of worship. Be sure to have water available.
- Advise participants to wear comfortable clothes and shoes appropriate to the type of activity they will be doing.
- Set rewards and celebrate success!

**Adapted from Tips for Starting Physical Activity. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/tips-get-active/tips-starting-physical-activity>.**

Places of worship can also provide opportunities for members to be active within existing events and meetings.

## Education and Awareness

### Bulletin Inserts

Develop fact sheets, fliers and other printed materials that can be inserted into weekly bulletins that promote and encourage physical activity. Inserts can focus on how to start an exercise program, how to stay motivated, and how to exercise safely, to

name a few. See the Resources section for sample bulletin inserts that were developed for churches.

The US Department of Health and Human Services has materials including fact sheets, posters, videos, and sample social media messages that are free and can be used and adapted to share with members.

[health.gov/our-work/physical-activity/move-your-way-campaign](http://health.gov/our-work/physical-activity/move-your-way-campaign)

### **Bulletin Board Display**

Use colorful printed materials such as posters, fliers, and facts sheets to develop an interesting display that promotes physical activity. Bulletin boards should be located in high traffic areas for maximum exposure. If possible, post a new display each month to maintain interest.

### **Newsletter(s)**

Newsletters from your place of worship can be used to highlight upcoming health activities, promote national health observances, and share important health information and individual or program achievements.

### **Social Media**

If your place of worship uses social media, consider sharing information and tips for how to become more active. Social media is also a great way to advertise upcoming physical activity programs or activity challenges (e.g., a walking contest).

### **Physical Activity Presentations/ Workshops**

Physical activity presentations and workshops are useful ways to enhance and reinforce health activities. For example, a health committee member could present information about the numerous

benefits of regular exercise. Invite a personal trainer, an aerobics instructor from a local gym, a health educator, or another professional knowledgeable about exercise or physical activity to speak to the members.

### **Health Minute**

A health minute is a brief announcement during regular worship services that promotes physical activity. The health minute can be presented to members by the person who reads the worship announcements or by a member of the health committee. The health minute can focus on information relating to risk factors, chronic diseases, and the importance of regular physical activity. You can enhance the effectiveness of the health minute if your religious leader endorses it and reinforces the connection between physical and spiritual wellness.

## **Best & Promising Practice Models**

### **Evidence-Based Cancer Control Programs (National Cancer Institute)**

Did you know that the National Cancer Institute has a searchable database of evidence-based cancer control programs? Within this database, there is a listing of evidence-based programs for physical activity, and five of these programs are for religious establishments. The faith-based programs include Faith in Action (Fe en Acción), Healthy Body Healthy Spirit, StrongWomen – Healthy Hearts, the Faith, Activity, and Nutrition (FAN) Program, and Walk Your Heart to Health. Learn more here: [ebccp.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/index.do](http://ebccp.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/index.do)

## Rural Health Information Hub

Sometimes it is hard to find programs that have been tried and found to work in rural settings. The Rural Health Information Hub contains health programs, approaches, and toolkits that have been shown to work or appear promising in rural settings. [ruralhealthinfo.org/project-examples](http://ruralhealthinfo.org/project-examples)

## Let's Go SC and Options for Action: Wholespire (formerly Eat Smart Move More South Carolina)

Wholespire's "Let's Go SC" allows you to find the location of parks, recreation facilities, school grounds (which often allow community members to use their recreation areas before and after school), and trails in your town. This website can help your place of worship make a guide of free places that members can be active.

<https://eatsmartmovemoresc.org/>

You might want to also check out the "Options for Action" page on Wholespire's website. Options for Action is a clearinghouse of strategies, best practices, and promising practices for creating healthier environments for healthy eating and active living. [eatsmartmovemoresc.org/resources/options-for-action/](http://eatsmartmovemoresc.org/resources/options-for-action/)

## Faith, Activity, and Nutrition (FAN) Program

**Target Audience: Christian congregations; all ages; program to create a healthier church environment for physical activity and healthy eating through policy, systems, and environmental change**

The University of South Carolina partnered with the African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Carolina to develop the Faith, Activity, and Nutrition

(FAN) Program. It has since been tested in over 200 churches representing diverse denominations and members. FAN is a flexible program that helps churches to create opportunities, set practices or guidelines, enlist faith leader support, and share messages for physical activity and healthy eating. Churches participate in a training and develop a 12-month plan to make changes in their church and community. Training in FAN is offered via an online training, and program materials are also available online.

**Cost:** Free. Information about the training is available online at [prevention.sph.sc.edu/projects/fantraining.htm](http://prevention.sph.sc.edu/projects/fantraining.htm). After completing a brief interest form, resources can also be downloaded from <http://prevention.sph.sc.edu/resources/fan-program-materials.htm>

## Walk to Jerusalem / Walk to Bethlehem

**Target Audience: Christian congregations; all ages; group walking activity**

This walking program was developed by St. John Health Organization in Warren, Michigan. The Walk to Jerusalem / Walk to Bethlehem are walking programs designed to increase the physical, spiritual and emotional health of participants. To accomplish the "imaginary" trips to Jerusalem or Bethlehem, participants log miles walked each week. The Walk to Jerusalem usually begins in January with the goal of accumulating enough miles to reach Jerusalem by Easter. The fall version of this walk is The Walk to Bethlehem. It usually begins in September with the intent of reaching Bethlehem by Christmas. These programs are for all ages. Each is a great way to get families to exercise together.

**Cost:** \$35. Both curricula are easy to use and do not require additional training. To order Walk to Jerusalem or Walk to Bethlehem materials call 1-888-440-7325, or visit [chreader.org/walk-to-jerusalem/](http://chreader.org/walk-to-jerusalem/)

### **Faithful Families Thriving Communities**

**Target Audience:** *All faith traditions; program to provide education and policy, systems, and environmental change*

Faithful Families Thriving Communities provides both education as well as training in creating policy, systems, and environment change within faith communities. Training is required to become a national implementing partner, and program facilitators and lay leaders are trained to co-deliver Faithful Families' Eating Smart and Moving More curriculum. This curriculum includes nine sessions on healthy eating and physical activity strategies. The lesson materials are also available in Spanish.

**Cost:** There is a fee for the 9-lesson curriculum and training. For more information on requirements and fees, visit [faithfulfamilies.com/](http://faithfulfamilies.com/).

### **African American Churches Eating Smart and Moving More: A Planning and Resource Guide**

**Target Audience:** *African American church leaders*

The African American Churches Eating Smart and Moving More Planning and Resource Guide assists churches when planning, promoting, and implementing programs for health and wellness. It includes guidelines and sample policies to create opportunities for church members to increase physical activity and eat healthier. The program guide was last updated in 2010.

**Cost:** No charge. Program guide is available for download at [eatSMARTmoveMorenc.com/resource/african-american-churches-eating-smart-and-moving-more-planning-and-resource-guide/](http://eatSMARTmoveMorenc.com/resource/african-american-churches-eating-smart-and-moving-more-planning-and-resource-guide/).

### **Improving Muslim Youth Participation in Physical Education and Physical Activity**

**Target Audience:** *Muslim youth*

This community guide is intended to help improve the participation of Muslim youth in school and community physical activity opportunities. It describes strategies to improve religious and cultural sensitivity and create inclusive spaces for physical activity. In particular, this guide encourages the adoption of organizational-level policies that ensure Muslim girls can fully enjoy the benefits of physical activities in public settings.

**Cost:** No charge. Information is available for download at: [https://ucsdcommunityhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Final1\\_CLS\\_MuslimGuide9interactive.pdf](https://ucsdcommunityhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Final1_CLS_MuslimGuide9interactive.pdf)

### **Resources to Start Your Own Walking Club**

**Target Audience:** *All ages; group walking activity*

The American Heart Association has developed resources for starting your own walking club. The resources are designed for the Walking Club Coordinator, and topics include walking 101, how to start a walking club, how to promote a walking club, how to host a walking club event, and how to grow a walking club.

**Cost:** Free and available online. [heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/walking/start-or-join-a-walking-club](http://heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/walking/start-or-join-a-walking-club)

## Get Fit for Life: Exercise & Physical Activity for Healthy Aging

### Target Audience: Older adults

This guide from the National Institute on Aging is designed to help older adults learn about the many types and benefits of physical activity, find out how to get started, learn how to reduce health risks by doing activities safely, and ways to celebrate progress. The guide also includes many resources that might be helpful to your place of worship.

**Cost:** Free. You can download a free pdf of the guide and can you order up to 25 free printed guides from the website <https://order.nia.nih.gov/publication/get-fit-for-life-exercise-physical-activity-for-healthy-aging>

## Ideas to Consider

### Create an exercise room

Dedicate an area in your church for exercising. Ask members to donate exercise equipment that is in good working condition, or have a fund raiser to purchase equipment for the room. Items could be as simple as weights, resistance bands, mats, exercise balls and a television to show exercise videos or clips. Start small and build on your idea to suit the needs of your members or community.

### Hold exercise classes with instructor-led video

Have a designated time to hold the exercise class. Classes should be held more than once a week to help members meet physical activity guidelines. Consider showing the exercise videos for different audiences (for example, videos that target older adults, a general group, or children). Show videos at different times during the day to meet the needs

of your members and/or community. You can also share links to videos for people who wish to be active at home. The National Institutes of Health has a series of exercise videos for older adults ([youtube.com/user/NatInstituteOnAging/playlists](https://www.youtube.com/user/NatInstituteOnAging/playlists) - see the “Go4Life Exercises” and “Go4Life Exercise Videos”). There are many other sources of free exercise videos if you search on the web.

### Partner with local gyms for reduced membership rates

Ask your local gyms if they are willing to provide reduced membership fees for members of your place of worship or community. Check with your county to find out about recreation options they may have for your group.

### Make use of resources in your community

Check with your local schools to see what their policies are about using their tracks or gymnasiums after hours. They may be willing to open their doors before or after hours to allow community groups access to exercise facilities. Work with your local parks to have distance markers added to pathways or sidewalks so participants can track their walking distance.

### Hold exercise competitions

Exercise competitions are physical activities in which individuals or groups compete against each other. Consider holding walking contests where members form teams and track their minutes or steps. Team progress can be shown on a bulletin board. This is a great way to include more members and build some healthy competition because people can walk on their own and submit their minutes or steps for the contest.

### Develop walking routes around your place of worship

Does your place of worship have land or a large parking lot where you could mark off the distance for walking? Or could you map out some simple walking routes or trails with the distance by your place or worship? For information about creating safe walking routes go to:

<https://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/resource/walking-map-guide/>

**TIP: Walking is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to stay physically fit and a perfect form of exercise for people who have been inactive.**

### Share health sermons or announcements

Ask your faith-based leaders to incorporate a health message into a sermon. A sermon combining a spiritual and physical health message can be an effective way to motivate members. For example, a faith-leader could present a sermon on “Walking in Faith.” This message can be very effective and can inspire the congregation to participate in a prayer walk.

The American Heart Association ([heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/getting-active](http://heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/getting-active)) and the National Institutes of Health ([nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/education-and-awareness/heart-truth](http://nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/education-and-awareness/heart-truth)) have many resources that are free and can be downloaded.

### Encourage testimonials

Many faith-based organizations have a tradition of sharing personal testimonials with members. Testimonials are an especially effective way of encouraging others to make positive changes in their own lives. Encourage members to share their successes.

### Set Policies or Guidelines

Policies (sometimes called guidelines) can be useful in organizational settings like places of worship. They reach everyone and can help create a healthier culture. You can think of policies as mission driven rules for how your organization will conduct business for physical activity. For example, you might set a policy that a physical activity opportunity will be offered in every meeting held at your place of worship. This policy can be accomplished by sharing walking maps and examples of stretch breaks and having religious leaders encourage people to adopt a more active lifestyle. The next page gives an example of a policy statement your place of worship could consider adopting. Feel free to adapt it to be appropriate for your setting.

**Note to Health Coordinator: Consider having participants sign a “Release from Liability” form. Advise participants to listen to their body and to stop exercising and consult a health care provider if they experience pain. If anyone experiences chest pain, dizziness, or severe headache call 911!**

## Policy for Promoting Physical Activity

(Adapted from NC Eat Smart Move More)

**Whereas:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(fill in name of your place of worship here)

is concerned about the health of our members and community;

**Whereas:**

People have become more and more interested in eating healthy and exercising more;

**Whereas:**

Heart disease, cancer and stroke — the top three causes of death in South Carolina and the United States — are largely affected by what we eat and how physically active we are;

**Whereas:**

Regular physical activity increases quality of life, improves mental health, improves endurance, strength, flexibility, balance, and reduces risk of chronic diseases.

**Therefore:**

Effective \_\_\_\_\_, it is the policy of \_\_\_\_\_  
(today's date) (fill in name of your place of worship)

that activities and events sponsored or supported by this organization will always include opportunities for physical activity by:

### Building physical activity breaks into meetings and activities

Examples include stretch breaks or icebreakers

### Identifying physical activity opportunities

Examples include provision of map with walking routes and local attractions, identification of recreational, exercise facilities, and organization of walking groups and other group activities.

### Providing encouragement from group leadership to engage in physical activity

Examples include community promotion of healthy lifestyles, faith leader promotion of physical activity for members, faith leader commitment to serve as role models for physical activity, and organization of group walks on a routine basis (for example once a month).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Religious Leader's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Health Coordinator's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



This section provides information about healthy nutrition, tips, and resources. Poor health has specific diseases and conditions linked to it. These include cardiovascular disease (heart disease), high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, excess weight and obesity, and certain cancers. Together with physical activity, a high-quality diet that does not provide an excess of calories should enhance the health of most individuals.

According to the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines ([dietaryguidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov)), the core elements that make up a healthy dietary pattern include:

- **Vegetables** of all types- dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other vegetables. Adults eating a 2,000 calorie diet should aim for about 2 1/2 cups each day.
  - **Fruits**, especially whole fruit. Vegetables and fruit are high in fiber, vitamins and minerals, and low in calories. Eating a variety of vegetables and fruit may help you control your weight and blood pressure. Adults eating a 2,000 calorie diet should aim for about 2 cups each day.
  - **Grains**, at least half of which are whole grain. They can help lower your blood cholesterol and help you feel full. This may help manage your weight.
  - **Dairy**, including fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese, and/or lactose-free versions and fortified soy, oat, almond, coconut beverages and yogurt as alternatives.
  - **Protein foods**, including lean meats, poultry, and eggs; seafood; beans, peas, and lentils; and nuts, seeds, soy products.
- **Oils**, including vegetable oils and oils in food, such as seafood and nuts.

The Dietary Guidelines also recommend that people limit certain types of foods. Limits are:

- **Added sugars** - Less than 10 percent of calories, starting at age 2, should come from added sugars. Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars.
- **Saturated fat** – Less than 10 percent of calories, starting at age 2, should come from saturated fat. Saturated fat is found in foods like butter, coconut and palm oils, fatty cuts of meat, poultry with skin, sausages, bacon, salami, many baked goods (e.g., cakes, pies, biscuits, pastries, croissants), cheese and other dairy products made from whole or 2 percent milk, cream, and ice cream. Reducing saturated fat can reduce your risk of heart disease and improve your blood cholesterol.
- **Sodium (salt)** – Less than 2,300 milligrams per day of sodium (salt). Some groups should have even less sodium – including children younger than age 14. Most adults and children eat too much sodium because it is often part of pre-packaged and processed foods and restaurant foods. Spices and herbs can help flavor foods in a healthy way. Reducing your sodium can help improve blood pressure control and reduce your risk of hypertension (high blood pressure).
- **Alcoholic beverages** - If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation. That means no more than one drink per day if you are a woman and two drinks per day if you are a man. Drinking less is better for your health than drinking more. And

some adults should not drink alcohol, such as women who are pregnant.

In addition to following these dietary guidelines, it is important to pay attention to portion sizes and not take in more calories than your body needs. Food from restaurants and fast food often have high levels of salt, saturated fat, and added sugar and portion sizes are usually large. If you choose to eat out, or need to eat out, try to choose healthier items. Many restaurants and fast-food places have nutrition information available.

The food you choose to eat each day effects your health – how you feel today, tomorrow and in the future. Encourage healthy eating at all events at your place of worship and in your homes to help improve the overall health of your congregation.

### Education and Awareness

#### **Bulletin Inserts**

Develop fact sheets, flyers and other printed materials that can be inserted into weekly bulletins to promote and encourage healthy eating. Inserts can focus on topics ranging from healthy cooking and snacking to packing healthy lunches.

The MyPlate website ([myplate.gov](http://myplate.gov)) is filled with colorful resources your place of worship can download and share or use in materials that you develop. Resources include tips sheets, fact sheets, infographics, posters, recipes, and more.

See the Resources section for sample bulletin inserts that were developed for churches.

#### **Bulletin Board Display**

Use colorful printed material such as posters, flyers, and fact sheets to develop an interesting display promoting healthy eating. Bulletin boards should be in high traffic areas for maximum exposure. If possible, post a new display each month to maintain interest.

#### **Newsletter(s)**

Newsletters from your place of worship can be used to highlight upcoming health activities, promote national health observances, and share important health information and individual or program achievements.

#### **Social Media**

If your place of worship uses social media, consider sharing information and tips for how to eat healthier. Social media is also a great way to advertise upcoming healthy eating programs or events (e.g., a potluck, cooking class).

#### **Healthy Eating Presentations/ Workshops**

Healthy eating presentations or workshops are useful ways to enhance and reinforce health committee activities. For example, a member of the health committee could present information about making healthy food choices or could conduct a cooking demonstration/class on preparing fresh vegetables. A nutritionist or another professional knowledgeable about healthy food choices would be an excellent choice to do a presentation or conduct a cooking demonstration/class. You can also call your local DHEC Nutrition Office for free resources such as recipes, cookbooks, cooking classes/demonstrations.

- Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) – 866-369.9333
- Lowcountry Food Bank (LCFB) – 843.747.8146
- Clemson University, Youth Learning Institute – 864.878.1103 [clemsonnaped.com/](http://clemsonnaped.com/)
- Nutrition Consortium at the University of South Carolina (USC) - [https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/public\\_health/research/research\\_centers/nutrition\\_consortium/index.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/public_health/research/research_centers/nutrition_consortium/index.php)  
Evaluation, policy, systems, and environmental change support.

## Health Minute

A health minute is a brief announcement during regular worship services that promotes healthy eating. This can be presented to the congregation by the person who reads the worship announcements or by a member of the health committee. The health minute can focus on information relating to risk factors, chronic disease and the importance of healthy eating. You can make your health minute even more powerful if your religious leader endorses it and reinforces the connection between physical and spiritual wellness.

## Best & Promising Practice Models

### Evidence-Based Cancer Control Programs (National Cancer Institute)

This database is described in Chapter 3. Within this database, there is a listing of evidence-based programs for diet/nutrition, and eight of these programs are for religious establishments. The faith-based programs include Body & Soul (see below), Complete Health Improvement Program, Eat for Life, Eating for a Healthy Life Project, Healthy Body Healthy Spirit, North Carolina Black Churches United for Better Health Project, StrongWomen-Healthy Hearts, and the Faith, Activity, and Nutrition (FAN) Program (see below). Learn more here: [ebccp.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/index.do](http://ebccp.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/index.do)

### Rural Health Information Hub

Sometimes it is hard to find programs that have been tried and found to work in rural settings. The Rural Health Information Hub contains health programs, approaches, and toolkits that have been shown to work or appear promising in rural settings. [ruralhealthinfo.org/project-examples](http://ruralhealthinfo.org/project-examples)

### Body & Soul: A Celebration of Healthy Eating and Living

**Target Audience: Designed for people of all ages in African American churches**

Body & Soul is a health program developed for African American churches. The program encourages members to eat a healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables every day for better health. The program works by gaining the support of

the leader in your place of worship and through planned educational activities and peer counseling to assist members. The Body & Soul Program Guide includes tools and handouts to help you get started, and it explains how to run the program in your place of worship and create a program to fit your congregation. The Body & Soul Peer Counseling Coordinator's Guide includes information about recruiting and training peer counselors, enrolling members, and maintaining the peer-counseling program.

**Cost:** No charge. The Body & Soul materials can be downloaded from the National Cancer Institute's Evidence-Based Cancer Control Programs website: [ebccp.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/programDetails.do?programId=257161#](http://ebccp.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/programDetails.do?programId=257161#)

### **Healthy Cooking For Your Congregation**

**Target Audience: All ages**

Healthy Cooking for your Congregation is a program developed by Bronx Health REACH. This six-week curriculum is designed to help faith-based organizations select, prepare, and serve healthy meals. A guide and resource book are available to help places of worship put this program into place.

**Cost:** No charge. Program materials and curriculum are available for download in both English and Spanish at: [institute.org/bronx-health-reach/our-work/faith-based-outreach-initiative/culinary-initiative/](http://institute.org/bronx-health-reach/our-work/faith-based-outreach-initiative/culinary-initiative/)

### **Fine, Fit & Fabulous: A purpose driven spirituality, nutrition, and fitness program**

**Target Audience: All ages**

Fine, Fit and Fabulous is a program developed by Bronx Health REACH. This 12-week program

combines nutrition and fitness in a spiritual context and uses scripture and spiritual group support to help congregations adopt healthier eating and exercise habits. Participants meet for structured 2.5 hour sessions every week for 12-weeks. One hour is devoted to group discussion, one hour to exercise/fitness instruction and thirty minutes to address participant goals, food and fitness logs, and weigh-ins. A 12-week curriculum guide is used to implement this program.

**Cost:** No charge. Program curriculum is available for download in both English and Spanish at [institute.org/bronx-health-reach/our-work/faith-based-outreach-initiative/fine-fit-and-fabulous/](http://institute.org/bronx-health-reach/our-work/faith-based-outreach-initiative/fine-fit-and-fabulous/)

### **Color Me Healthy**

**Target Audience: Children ages 4-5**

Color Me Healthy is a program that was developed through a partnership between N.C. Cooperative Extension and the N.C. Division of Public Health (Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch and Nutrition Services Branch). This train-the-trainer program is designed to reach children ages 4–5 with fun, interactive learning opportunities on physical activity and healthy eating. The 12-lesson curriculum is designed to be used in various settings such as child care centers serving children 4-5 years old. Places of worship interested in starting this program will need to attend a four hour training where they will receive the 12-lesson Teacher's Guide.

**Cost:** There is a fee for the program materials and training manual. Information about the program, including how to be trained and order the materials, can be found at [colormehealthy.com/](http://colormehealthy.com/)

## **African American Churches Eating Smart and Moving More: A Planning and Resource Guide**

**Target Audience:** African American church leaders

See Chapter 3 for a full description of African American Churches Eating Smart and Moving More: A Planning Resource Guide.

## **Faith, Activity, and Nutrition (FAN) Program**

**Target Audience:** Christian congregations; all ages; program to create a healthier church environment for physical activity and healthy eating through policy, systems, and environmental change

See Chapter 3 for a full description of the Faith, Activity, and Nutrition Program.

## **Faithful Families Thriving Communities**

**Target Audience:** All faith traditions; program to provide education and policy, systems, and environmental change for physical activity and healthy eating

See Chapter 3 for a full description of the Faithful Families Thriving Communities Program.

## **Ideas to Consider**

### **Start a faith or a community garden**

Many places of worship have land or space available for gardens, and many communities have land set aside for community gardens. Organize a garden club in your place of worship and include youth members. Grow your own local fresh fruits and

vegetables. Serve them to your congregation during events, share them with communities that experience food insecurity, or sell them to raise funds. Many online resources for starting a community garden are available.

Here are a three examples:

- [media.clemson.edu/public/extension/community\\_gardening.pdf](http://media.clemson.edu/public/extension/community_gardening.pdf)
- [arocha.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/GardenManual.pdf](http://arocha.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/GardenManual.pdf)
- [marshfieldclinic.org/Documents/garden-toolkit-2014-01-31-small.pdf](http://marshfieldclinic.org/Documents/garden-toolkit-2014-01-31-small.pdf)

### **Hold a food festival**

A food festival is an event where places of worship and community members come together and participate in activities such as label reading and cook-off contests. Recipes can be shared so that members are encouraged to prepare these healthy foods at home. Food festivals are designed to be a fun way for people to learn more about eating smarter to positively affect their own health as well as the health of their loved ones. You can also consider having a theme around a food festival to raise awareness and provide resources of specific health issues that may impact your community.

### **Have healthy cooking classes/ demonstrations**

Have a nutritionist come in to your place of worship and demonstrate how to prepare traditional foods in a heart healthy way. You can also organize classes to address preparing healthy meals for families and the congregation. Remember to include the youth in these activities so that they can learn to cook and eat healthy.

### Share health sermons or announcements

Ask your faith leader to incorporate a health message into a sermon. A sermon combining a spiritual and physical health message can be an effective way to motivate participants. For example, a faith leader could present a sermon on the importance of nutritious eating or encourage members to attend upcoming events focused on healthy eating.

### Encourage Testimonials

Many places of worship have a tradition of sharing personal testimonials with members of the congregation. This is an especially effective way of encouraging others to make positive changes in their own lives. Encourage members to share their success.

### Conduct a supermarket tour

Many supermarkets offer tours to assist consumers in learning about the different types of fruits and vegetables, cuts of lean meats, and low-fat dairy product choices and their substitutes (for example soy based dairy products). Contact your local supermarket to organize an informative tour for your members. Don't forget to include the youth so that they can learn to shop and eat smart also. This guide will help you plan your tour [localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/GroceryStoreTours\\_Guide.pdf?fwfwd=no](http://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/GroceryStoreTours_Guide.pdf?fwfwd=no)

### Set Policies or Guidelines

Policies (sometimes called guidelines) can be useful in organizational settings like places of worship. They reach everyone and can help create a healthier culture. You can think of policies as mission driven rules for how your organization will conduct business for physical activity. For example, you might set a policy that healthy food options will be offered in every meeting held at your place of worship that includes meals or snacks. This policy can be accomplished by sharing healthy recipes with the congregation, giving guidance for what is considered a healthy dish at potlucks, working with kitchen staff, and coordinating with lay leaders who work with children and adults to encourage them to advocate for healthy options. The next page gives an example of a policy statement your place of worship could consider adopting. Feel free to adapt it to be appropriate for your setting.

## Policy for Promoting Healthy Eating

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Background Information

A healthy diet may reduce a person’s risk for several major chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, some types of cancer, obesity, and diabetes.

A healthy diet is one that is low in saturated fat, sodium (salt) and sugar and high in fiber. This type of diet includes lean meats, low-fat or non-fat dairy products or fortified dairy alternatives, whole grains, fruits, vegetables and a variety of legumes (for example peas, beans and lentils).

Food intake (what you eat) should be balanced with physical activity to maintain a healthy body weight.

### Policy

Therefore, effective \_\_\_\_\_, it is the policy of \_\_\_\_\_ that healthy  
(today’s date) (fill in name of your place of worship)

food options will be included at every event that includes a meal or snack. Activities to support this policy include:

Serving more fresh vegetables, fresh fruits and baked lean meats, and preparing them to be lower in saturated fat, salt, and sugar.

Serving water as the primary beverage (add lemons and limes to make it more refreshing). Serving unsweetened tea, low-fat or skim milk, or milk alternative. Serving 100% fruit juices instead of fruit drinks.

Serving fresh fruit rather than cakes and cookies for dessert.

Switching to whole grain options (brown rice, whole wheat bread and rolls, whole wheat pasta).

Cooking with olive oil or vegetable oil.

Using a variety of fresh herbs and salt free seasonings instead of salt.

Organizing healthy pot-lucks by giving ideas and sharing recipes.

Holding food festivals for members to try healthier food options.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Religious Leader’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Health Coordinator’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





Tobacco-Free  
Facility

According to the CDC, cigarette smoking causes more than 480,000 deaths per year in the US, and more than 41,000 of these deaths are from secondhand smoke exposure. In 2018, 13.7% of all adults smoked cigarettes (15.6% of men, 12.0% of women). The percentage of smokers, though, differs by race and ethnicity. More people with mixed-race heritage (19.1%) and those who are American Indian/Alaska Native (22.6%) were smokers compared to Whites (15.0%) and African Americans (14.6%), whereas fewer Hispanics (9.8%) and Asians (7.1%) were smokers in 2018.

### Three good reasons why you should focus on tobacco use prevention in your congregation and community:

- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death – it causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and on average, smokers die 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.
- Tobacco use impacts young people. Each

**TIP: Quitting smoking has immediate as well as long-term benefits. Make this the year that you or someone close to you quits.**

day, about 2000 young people (< 18 years old) smoke their first cigarette, and over 300 become daily smokers. Furthermore, e-cigarette use has been increasing dramatically in middle and high school students.

- Many cigarette smokers want to quit! In 2015, nearly 7 in 10 adult cigarette smokers said they

wanted to stop smoking, and in 2018, more than half of adult cigarette smokers made an attempt to quit.

### Three things you and your congregation can do:

- Implement a tobacco free policy in your place of worship.
- Encourage those who smoke and use tobacco products to quit. Prevent youth and adults from starting smoking.
- Use the information provided in this section to help you and your congregation promote tobacco use prevention in your place of worship and community.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Smoking & Tobacco Use Fast Facts* (last updated May 21, 2020) and Surgeon General's report on E-cigarette use.

## Education and Awareness

### Bulletin Inserts

Develop fact sheets, flyers, and other printed materials that can be inserted into weekly bulletins to promote and encourage tobacco cessation prevention. Inserts can focus on topics ranging from cessation resources to the effects of smoking.

The CDC's Tips From Former Smokers® (Tips) campaign has a website with messages for faith-based organizations. The campaign has a variety of materials that can be shared with members: [cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/partners/faith/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/partners/faith/index.html)

### Bulletin Board Display

Use colorful printed material such as posters, flyers and fact sheets to develop an interesting display promoting tobacco use prevention. For example, create a bulletin board display showing the harmful

effects of tobacco use during Lung Cancer Awareness Month (November) or around the Great American Smokeout in November. Bulletin boards should be located in high traffic areas for maximum exposure. If possible, post a new display each month to maintain interest. See the Tips campaign materials described later in this chapter for materials you can share.

### **Newsletter(s)**

Newsletters from your place of worship can be used to highlight upcoming health activities, promote national health observances, and share important health information and individual or program achievements.

### **Tobacco Use Prevention Presentations/Workshops**

Tobacco use prevention presentations or workshops are useful ways to enhance and reinforce health ministry activities. An example would be to have a doctor or health professional speak to the congregation during one of the national health observances focusing on tobacco use prevention (See Resources for health observances). Organize a workshop for youth during youth events (e.g., summer camps/programs, sports events) on the harmful effects of tobacco.

### **Health Minute**

A health minute is a brief announcement during regular worship services that promotes tobacco use prevention and cessation. This can be presented to the congregation by the person who reads the worship announcements or by a member of the health committee. The health minute can focus on information relating to risk factors, chronic diseases, and/or the importance of not smoking or using

other tobacco products. The effectiveness of the health minute can be enhanced if the faith leader endorses it during worship and reinforces the connection between physical and spiritual wellness.

## **Best & Promising Practice Models**

### **Tobacco Quitlines**

**Target Audience: Adults and youth ages 13 and older**

**Program Description:** The North American Quitline Consortium provides links to smoking quit lines and free resources across the United States and in Canada. The site lists the website for the state, telephone numbers, services offered, specialized materials, and other information.

Visit [map.naquitline.org/](http://map.naquitline.org/) for a full listing by state (including South Carolina).

South Carolina's Quitline is a partnership between the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control and Free & Clear Inc. It is a comprehensive tobacco treatment service that features phone and internet counseling. Residents may qualify for free or discounted medications to help them with their quit attempt. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) to be connected to a trained counselor who has experience in tobacco cessation. For more information about the South Carolina Quitline, visit [scdhec.gov/health/tobacco-quitline](http://scdhec.gov/health/tobacco-quitline).

**Cost:** No charge.

### **Tips From Former Smokers® (Tips) Campaigns**

#### **Target Audience: Adults and youth**

**Program Description:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Tips From Former Smokers® (Tips) Campaign profiles real people living with serious long-term health effects from smoking and secondhand smoke exposure. They have a page on their website for Faith-Based Organizations that contains educational materials, ads, information on how to quit smoking, handouts, videos, posters, social media images, and more. They also include a list of faith-based organizations who are actively promoting the Tips campaign. For more information, visit [cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/partners/faith/](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/partners/faith/).

**Cost:** No charge.

### **Quit for Good Programs (Text Message Programs)**

#### **Target Audience: Adults and young adults in the United States who are ready to quit smoking**

**Program Description:** [Smokefree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov) offers several text message programs to help different groups quit smoking. Users can sign up and receive daily text messages to help them quit. There are several text message programs available, including for adults in general the US, pregnant women, military Veterans, young adults using smokeless tobacco, and Spanish-speakers. Find out more at: [smokefree.gov/tools-tips/text-programs/quit-for-good](https://www.smokefree.gov/tools-tips/text-programs/quit-for-good)

**Cost:** No charge

### **quitSTART App**

#### **Target Audience: Persons wishing to quit smoking**

**Program Description:** The quitSTART app is a product of [Smokefree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov). It is a free smartphone app that helps you quit smoking with tailored tips, inspiration, and challenges. It can be downloaded from Google Play and the Apple Store. Find out more at: [cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/quit-smoking/quitstart-app/](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/quit-smoking/quitstart-app/)

**Cost:** No charge

## **Ideas to Consider**

### **Share health sermons or announcements**

Ask your faith leader to incorporate a health message into a sermon. A sermon combining a spiritual and physical health message can be an effective way to motivate participants. For example, a faith leader could present a sermon on the importance of avoiding tobacco products.

### **Host a forum or support group**

Host a group session for members to discuss the harmful effects of tobacco use. Encourage attendees who smoke to quit and talk about what your place of worship can do to influence local and state policy regarding tobacco use in your community and the state.

### **Make use of resources in your community**

Explore what resources are available in your community that provide educational materials, support groups, or cessation programs. Make these materials readily available to your congregation.

## **No First Puff Pledge Program for youth**

Design a program to foster awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco use for youth. Offer an opportunity for accountability using positive peer pressure. No First Puff has three basic components: tobacco prevention education, a pledge for accountability, and follow-up support for tobacco abstinence. The program's emphasis is on youth, but it may be used for all ages. Hold a meeting with the youth. Ask them to sign a contract pledging to not take the first puff or chew tobacco. Most smokers have their first experience as teenagers. During regularly scheduled meetings, provide educational materials on the harmful effects of smoking and offer an opportunity for the youth to share their experiences and offer suggestions to help make the community tobacco free. Youth should renew their pledge periodically throughout the year.

## **World No Tobacco Day in May or Great American Smokeout Day in November**

Organize a walk for your congregation and invite local community members and organizations. During this event, share material about the importance of tobacco use prevention and cessation. Notify the local media and let them know about your event.

## **Poster contests for youth**

Host a poster contest during the month of November, Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Ask youth to draw posters or make collages that promote tobacco use prevention. Display the posters in the fellowship hall throughout the month. Vote on the poster that tells the best story in recognition of Great American Smokeout, also in November.

## **Encourage testimonials**

Many places of worship have a tradition of sharing personal testimonials with members of the congregation. This is an especially effective way of encouraging others to make positive changes in their own lives. Encourage members of the congregation to share their successes.

## **Set Policies or Guidelines**

Policies (sometimes called guidelines) can be useful in organizational settings like places of worship. They reach everyone and can help create a healthier culture. You can think of policies as mission driven rules for how your organization will maintain a tobacco free environment. For example, you might set a policy that tobacco use is not permitted within and around the place of worship. This policy can be accomplished by sharing tobacco-related educational materials with members, providing social support for tobacco cessation, and coordinating with lay leaders who work with children and adults to encourage them to avoid tobacco products. The next page gives an example of a policy statement your place of worship could consider adopting. Feel free to adapt it to be appropriate for your setting.

## Policy for Promoting a Tobacco-Free Place of Worship

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Purpose Statement

According to the U.S. Surgeon General's Reports (updated periodically) the Environmental Protection Agency of 1992, the South Carolina Clean Indoor Air Act of 1990, and the Federal Pro-Children Act of 1994, tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke (i.e., environmental tobacco smoke) are hazardous to human health. As a place of worship, we are dedicated to improving the health and well-being of our congregational members and community. We recognize that tobacco, in any form, is a major cause of preventable disease and death in this state and country. It also has been acknowledged as a fire hazard. Thus, smoking and the use of tobacco products are not allowed in this facility, its vehicles, or at any of its sponsored events and functions on or off its property, by all people (faith leaders, employees, members, visitors, contractors, delivery drivers, etc.)

### Goals

The goals of this policy are to provide a safe and healthy environment for our congregational members, employees, visitors, and community residents. These goals will be achieved through efforts designed to:

- Model tobacco-free behavior for our youth and adults;
- Eliminate exposure to environmental tobacco;
- Provide information and/or promote tobacco cessation programs for those in need; and
- Reduce fire hazards.

### Policy

Therefore, effective \_\_\_\_\_, it is the policy of \_\_\_\_\_ that,  
(today's date) (fill in name of your place of worship)

as a place of worship, we will:

- Prohibit tobacco use in or on any of the grounds of the institution and vehicles.
- Prohibit tobacco use at meetings, conferences, or any sponsored program activities.
- Support the prohibition of tobacco use by sponsoring tobacco-related educational sessions.
- Educate all members regarding the harmful effects of tobacco use.

### Enforcement

As a place of worship, we will be responsible for enforcing this policy and determining the appropriate sanctions for violations of the policy.

**Education and Assistance**

As a place of worship, we will be responsible for providing support, educational sessions and materials, and referrals for tobacco cessation services.

**Tobacco Industry Marketing or Sponsorship**

As a place of worship, we will not accept any sponsorship from any tobacco-related producers or marketers. In addition, we will not allow tobacco advertising on gear or other paraphernalia at any function or activity.

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**Religious Leader's Signature**

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**Date**

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**Health Coordinator's Signature**

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**Date**





# Physical Activity Waiver

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## Sample Physical Activity Waiver Form

(Adapted from Bronx Health Reach)

I agree and understand that participation in \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of activity)

sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_,  
(name of place of worship)

will not diagnosis or attempt to cure any diseases or physical conditions.

I further understand that I should continue under the care of my physician and not discontinue any medications without the advisement of my health care provider while participating in this program.

I acknowledge that my participation in this program is voluntary and I accept full responsibility for the management of my own health care.

I acknowledge that this program \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of program/activity)

is not a medical diagnosis or substitute for medication or medical advice. It is simply a program to help you get more light to moderate exercise.

I have read the above and agree to abide by the conditions, and I acknowledge that I am not aware of any health conditions that I have that would make taking part in exercise unsafe.

I further agree that neither the program nor any of its instructors are responsible for my health care or any injury that I may sustain during the exercise program.

I further understand that accepting and continuing in the program is conditional upon my written acceptance of the conditions set forth. If at any time I fail to abide by the above conditions, my participation in the program will be ended.

Participant name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Acknowledged and accepted by:

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_

Print two per page and cut in half; designed for churches but could be modified for other places of worship.

## **Make the Decision, Set Goals, and Track Progress**

“Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.”

### **Proverbs 16:3 (NKJV)**

With every New Year, we tend to set goals to be more physically active, eat healthy and lose weight. Try setting short-term and long-term goals that relate to healthier living and watch your health grow. Physical activity and healthy eating help keep your temple in good shape. Keep a log of your progress - small easy steps help us get to our goals. For example, a goal might be to “walk 8,000 steps today.” Small steps to help you reach this goal might be using the stairs instead of the elevator or parking your car further away in a parking lot. Reach out to family, friends, pastors and church members to help you reach your goals. Be sure to start with something easy and celebrate each small success. In the end, each success adds to meeting your long-term goal.

*Printed with permission from the Faith, Activity, and Nutrition (FAN) Program, University of South Carolina.*

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Print two per page and cut in half; designed for churches but could be modified for other places of worship

### **Take Control for Better Health!**

“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,”

*2 Peter 1:5-6 (NKJV)*

Making healthy changes takes self-control. Keep a watchful eye on your habits. People who watch what they eat take control of their health. Make a simple change: get to know your food label. Let food labels help you choose foods that are lower in saturated fat and salt. And be sure to eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains because these foods are full of fiber that is naturally good for a healthier you! Also, make and stick to a plan to build in moderate-intensity physical activity, like brisk walking, into your day. Record your activity to be accountable to yourself.

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## January

General Health for the New Year  
 National Blood Donor Month  
 National Folic Acid Awareness Week (first week)

## February

American Heart Month  
 National Wear Red Day  
 Children's Dental Health Month

## March

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month  
 National Nutrition Month  
 National Kidney Month  
 World Tuberculosis Day (March 24)  
 American Diabetes Alert Day (fourth Tuesday)

## April

National Minority Health Month  
 World Health Day  
 National Infant Immunization Week (last week)  
 National Alcohol Awareness Month

## May

National Stroke Awareness Month  
 National Physical Fitness & Sports Month  
 National High Blood Pressure Education Month  
 Mental Health Month  
 National Women's Health Month  
 World No Tobacco Day (May 31)  
 World Hypertension Day (May 17)  
 World Kidney Day (second Thursday)

## June

National Safety Month  
 National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Month  
 Men's Health Month  
 National HIV Testing Day (June 27)

## July

National Youth Sports Week  
 National Picnic Month  
 Hepatitis Awareness Week (week of July 28th)

## August

National Immunization Awareness Month  
 Talk to Your Doctor Month  
 National Water Quality Month  
 National Wellness Month

## September

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month  
 Healthy Aging Month  
 National Food Safety and Education Month  
 National Sickle Cell Awareness Month  
 Better Breakfast Month  
 Whole Grains Month  
 National Suicide Awareness Month

## October

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month  
 National Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness Month  
 Health Literacy Month  
 International Walk to School Month  
 Vegetarian Month  
 Eat Better, Eat Together Month

## November

American Diabetes Month  
 Lung Cancer Awareness Month  
 National Family Health History Month  
 Vegan Month  
 Great American Smokeout (Thursday before Thanksgiving)

### **December**

Safe Toys and Gifts Month

National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D)

Prevention Month

Worldwide Food Service Safety Month

Root Vegetables and Exotic Fruits Month

These observances are not a complete list of all health observances. They are from the following three sites:

- US Department of Health and Human Services, National Health Observances:  
[health.gov/news/category/national-health-observances](https://www.health.gov/news/category/national-health-observances)
- National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, National Health Observances:  
[nlm.gov/all-of-us/national-health-observances](https://www.nlm.gov/all-of-us/national-health-observances)
- National Day Calendar:  
[nationaldaycalendar.com/](https://www.nationaldaycalendar.com/)

Each site includes additional information about the observance, and the first two sites contain handouts and other information that could be shared with your congregation.

Instructions: Answer each question to the best of your knowledge. Do not put your name on the survey. All information is confidential and will be used for health committee program planning.

## Please Return This Survey To Your Health Coordinator

### Part I. Please tell us about yourself and your health

1. Would you say that in general your health is?  
 Excellent     Very good     Good     Fair     Poor
2. Weight without shoes: \_\_\_\_\_ Pounds
3. Height without shoes: \_\_\_\_\_ Ft. \_\_\_\_\_ Inch.
4. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Sex:  
 Female     Male     Other: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are you Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin?  
 Yes     No
7. Race/Ethnicity:  
 White  
 Black or African American  
 American Indian or Alaska Native  
 Asian  
 Pacific Islander  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_
8. In a usual week, what is your physical activity level? (Check only one)  
 Not physically active  
 Light (i.e. leisurely walking)  
 Moderate (i.e. brisk walking, bicycling, gardening, etc.)  
 Vigorous (i.e. running, aerobics, or anything that causes large increases in breathing/heart rate)

## Health Needs and Interests Tool

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9. On average, how many days per week do you do the activities from question 8?  
\_\_\_\_\_ days per week
10. On average, when you do the activities from question 8, how many minutes per day do you do them?  
\_\_\_\_\_ minutes per day
11. Are you currently participating in a physical activity/exercise program at a gym or recreation center?  
 Yes     No
12. Have you ever been told by a doctor or other healthcare provider that you have any of the following conditions? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)
- Diabetes
  - Cancer
  - High blood pressure/Hypertension
  - Heart disease/Heart attack(s)
  - High cholesterol
  - Stroke
  - Arthritis
13. Do you have any kind of health care coverage, including health insurance, prepaid plans such as HMOs, or government plans such as Medicare?  
 Yes     No
14. About how long has it been since you last visited a doctor or other health professional:
- Within the past year (anytime less than 12 months ago)
  - Within the past 2 years (more than 1 year but less than 2 years ago)
  - Within the past 5 years (more than 2 years but less than 5 years ago)
  - More than 5 years ago
15. How many pieces or cups of fruit do you eat each day?
- 1 or less
  - 2 – 3
  - 4 or more

16. How many cups of vegetables do you eat each day?

- 1 or less
- 2 – 3
- 4 or more

17. How many fried foods do you eat each day?

- 1 or less
- 2 – 3
- 4 or more

18. How many glasses of water do you drink each day?

- 1 or less
- 2 – 3
- 4 or more

19. How many sugar-sweetened drinks (e.g., non-diet soda, fruit drinks, sports drinks, sweet tea) do you drink each day?

- 1 or less
- 2 – 3
- 4 or more

20. Do you currently use any of the following tobacco products?

- I do not use tobacco products
- Cigarettes
- Cigars
- Chewing tobacco
- Snuff
- Vaping

21. How often do you use tobacco products?

- Not at all
- Some days: How many a day? \_\_\_\_\_
- Every day: How many a day? \_\_\_\_\_

22. During the past 12 months, did you ever try to quit smoking cigarettes or stop using tobacco products?

- I do not smoke or use tobacco products
- Yes
- No

23. Are you currently participating in a program to stop using tobacco products?

- I do not use tobacco products
- Yes
- No

**Part 2. Please tell us about your interest in having health programs at your place of worship.**

24. Rate your interest in participating in physical activity at your place of worship (e.g., walking groups or contests, active breaks during meetings).

- Very Interested
- Somewhat Interested
- Not At All Interested

25. Please share your ideas for how to help your congregation become more physically active.

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26. Rate your interest in participating in healthy eating programs at your place of worship (e.g., healthy cooking contests, cooking demonstrations, healthy potlucks, creating a community garden).

- Very Interested
- Somewhat Interested
- Not At All Interested

27. Please share your ideas for how to help your congregation eat healthier.

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28. Rate your interest in participating in tobacco use prevention programs or tobacco cessation programs at your place of worship.

- Very Interested
- Somewhat Interested
- Not At All Interested

29. Please share your ideas for how to help people in your congregation stop using tobacco and/or to prevent youth from starting to use tobacco.

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!**

### **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics**

[eatright.org](http://eatright.org)

Phone: 1-800-877-1600

### **American Cancer Society**

[cancer.org](http://cancer.org)

Phone: 1-800-ACS-2345 (1-800-227-2345)

### **American Diabetes Association**

[diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org)

Phone: 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)

### **American Heart Association**

[heart.org](http://heart.org)

Phone: 1-800-AHA-USA-1 (1-800-242-8721)

### **American Lung Association**

[lung.org](http://lung.org)

Phone: 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872)

### **American Stroke Association**

[stroke.org](http://stroke.org)

Phone: 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653)

### **Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids**

[tobaccofreekids.org](http://tobaccofreekids.org)

Email: [reckford@tobaccofreekids.org](mailto:reckford@tobaccofreekids.org)

### **Center for Black Health and Equity**

[centerforblackhealth.org](http://centerforblackhealth.org)

Phone: (919) 680-4000

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

[cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

Phone: (800) 232-4636

### **National African American Tobacco Prevention Network**

<https://www.bhthechange.org/resources/national-african-american-tobacco-prevention-network-naatpn/>

### **National Cancer Institute**

[cancer.gov](http://cancer.gov)

Phone: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

### **National Cancer Institute – Evidence-Based Cancer Control Programs (EBCCP)**

[ebccp.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/index.do](http://ebccp.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/index.do)

### **National Institutes of Health**

[nih.gov](http://nih.gov)

Phone: (301) 496-4000

### **National Physical Activity Plan (see the Faith-Based Sector Objectives)**

[paamovewithus.org/national-physical-activity-plan/](http://paamovewithus.org/national-physical-activity-plan/)

### **North American Quitline Consortium**

[map.naquitline.org](http://map.naquitline.org)

### **Physical Activity Alliance**

[paamovewithus.org/](http://paamovewithus.org/)

### **President’s Council for Physical Fitness and Nutrition**

[www.hhs.gov/fitness/index.html](http://www.hhs.gov/fitness/index.html)

Phone: (240) 276-9567

### **Rural Health Information Hub**

[www.ruralhealthinfo.org/](http://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/)

### **Smokefree.gov**

[www.smokefree.gov/](http://www.smokefree.gov/)

### **South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control**

[scdhec.gov](http://scdhec.gov)

Phone: (803) 898-3432

**South Carolina Tobacco Quitline,  
Department of Health and  
Environmental Control**

[scdhec.gov/quitforkeeps](http://scdhec.gov/quitforkeeps)

Phone: 1-800 QUIT-NOW (1-800-748-8669)

**Tobaccofree Earth**

[tobaccofree.org](http://tobaccofree.org)

Phone: 1-310-577-9828

**United States Department of  
Agriculture (USDA) MyPlate**

[myplate.gov](http://myplate.gov)

**University of South Carolina,  
Prevention Research Center**

[prevention.sph.sc.edu/](http://prevention.sph.sc.edu/)

**Wholespire (formerly Eat Smart Move  
More South Carolina)**

[wholespire.org/](http://wholespire.org/)

Phone: 803-667-9810

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