

NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK

What is National Prevention Week?

National Prevention Week is an annual health observance dedicated to increasing public awareness of substance abuse and mental health issues. This national observance, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), brings individuals, organizations, coalitions, states, and communities together through local events to educate the public about the importance of preventing substance abuse and mental disorders before they occur.

When is National Prevention Week?

National Prevention Week takes place **May 17–23, 2015**. Near the kickoff of summer, this is an ideal time for communities to come together and rally around prevention. National Prevention Week is also timed to allow schools to take part in a prevention-themed event before the school year ends, raising awareness among students of all ages.

What's the theme of National Prevention Week?

The National Prevention Week 2015 theme is “The Voice of One, the Power of All.” This theme highlights the important role that individuals and communities alike have in helping people lead healthy, productive lives.

What topics does National Prevention Week address?

Six of the seven days during National Prevention Week have a suggested health topic that organizations and coalitions can use to guide the focus of community events:

- Prevention of Tobacco Use (Monday, May 18)
- Prevention of Underage Drinking & Alcohol Abuse (Tuesday, May 19)
- Prevention of Opioid & Prescription Drug Abuse (Wednesday, May 20)
- Prevention of Illicit Drug Use & Youth Marijuana Use (Thursday, May 21)
- Prevention of Suicide (Friday, May 22)
- Promotion of Mental Health & Wellness (Saturday, May 23)

Organizations can plan events around one or all topics!

Who gets involved in this observance?

Community-based organizations, schools, community leaders, and behavioral health coalitions are the primary hosts of local National Prevention Week events. However, everyone can take part in National Prevention Week!

Individuals across the country can learn more about preventing substance abuse and mental disorders through the National Prevention Week website: www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week. The website includes promotional materials, event planning tips, tools, and information about scheduled events across the country.

What types of events do people host during National Prevention Week?

Since the first observance of National Prevention Week in 2012, there have been hundreds of community events across nearly all 50 states and U.S. territories.

Community events:

- Increase the visibility of topics related to prevention and important behavioral health issues;
- Provide a forum for community members to educate the public, community leaders, and other officials about behavioral health;
- Create opportunities for recognizing achievements and for networking and community collaboration; and
- Are a way to affect the choices people make about behavioral health.

Events may include, but are not limited to, school assemblies featuring guest speakers; health fairs; community fun runs; TV and radio public service announcement contests; and media campaigns to raise awareness about behavioral health issues and local resources.

Many communities also involve their local leaders and state policymakers in National Prevention Week by asking them to issue a proclamation recognizing National Prevention Week in their state or community and inform others about the observance on social media.

What tools are available for participating in National Prevention Week?

- SAMHSA provides a **National Prevention Week Toolkit** to assist communities with planning, promotion, and carrying out prevention-themed events. The Toolkit is available on SAMHSA's website at www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week. Information and materials in the Toolkit include event planning tools; guidance on identifying and connecting with potential partners; and strategies for publicizing events.
- The National Prevention Week **Prevention Pledge**, available on SAMHSA's Facebook page, is an easy, empowering way for people to commit to a healthy lifestyle and share personal messages about prevention with others.
- The **"I Choose" Project**, another component of National Prevention Week, is a fun and meaningful way for individuals to get involved in prevention. The project invites people to take a photo of themselves, their family, or friends holding a sign with a written statement expressing why they choose prevention. SAMHSA shares the "I Choose" photos in an online photo gallery for others to see. More information about the "I Choose" Project can be found on SAMHSA's website at www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week.