Are you up for the challenge?
#VAHealthyYouthDay
January 18, 2017
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Virginia Healthy Youth Day promotes healthy lifestyles for Virginia’s children, including eating right, exercising and avoiding the use of tobacco products.

Participating in Virginia Healthy Youth Day helps raise awareness about the two leading causes of preventable deaths in our nation: tobacco and obesity.
**Tobacco at a glance:**

- Tobacco use kills more Americans every year than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, illegal drugs, murders, suicides and fires combined.

- Tobacco use is responsible for more than 10,300 deaths annually in Virginia, while 150,000 current Virginians under age 18 will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.

- More than 80 percent of adult smokers started before age 18, initiating smoking at an average age of 13 years old to 14 years old.

**Obesity at a glance:**

- One in three children in Virginia is obese or overweight.

- Being overweight or obese can lead to serious, lifelong health problems such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease, conditions that until recently were almost exclusively limited to adults.

- Experts say that this generation of children may be the first in U.S history to have shorter life expectancies than their parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>High School Smoking Rate</th>
<th>Middle School Smoking Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13% of Virginia high school students were considered obese.

74.9% of Virginia high school students were not physically active for at least 60 minutes per a day for all 7 days of the week.

44.2% of Virginia middle school students were not physically active for at least 60 minutes per a day for all 7 days of the week.

30% percent of high school students don’t drink soda.
VHFY is challenging schools, community groups, nonprofits and other stakeholders across Virginia to get as many people as possible to take the pledge for healthy living! Be one of the top three groups posting pictures of people taking the pledge on social media and you could win a package to attend the Weight of the State conference in Richmond on April 3-4, 2017! The grand prize winner will receive two nights of free hotel lodging and full conference registration!

TO PARTICIPATE ON JAN. 18, 2017:

1. Recruit students, teachers, community members, local celebrities and politicians to take the pledge to live a healthier lifestyle.

2. Take a picture of people holding their signed pledge cards.

3. Post the picture on Instagram, Facebook and/or Twitter with the hashtag #VAHealthyYouthDay

4. Follow your local state delegates and senators on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and share your photos on their page or by tagging them.

Are you up for the challenge?
Incorporate activities into your Virginia Healthy Youth Day celebration!

TOBACCO PREVENTION

The Straw Demonstration
Activity Type: Classroom, School
Age Group: Grades 3 and up
Description: Use this activity to demonstrate how smoking affects healthy lungs. (Students with asthma or other breathing or other health disorders should be excluded from this activity.) **

Have students jog in place for one minute. Then have students repeat this activity but this time ask them to jog while breathing through a straw for just 30 seconds. Make sure students plug their nose to prevent cheating. Ask students how they felt while jogging and breathing through the straw. Explain to them this is how chronic smokers feel on a daily basis even without physical activity.

**Invite students who have respiratory problems to share firsthand experience with an asthma attack or breathing difficulty and how scary it can be to not catch your breath.

Tobacco Prevention Forum
Activity Type: School, Community
Age Group: Grades 3 and up
Description: invite a speaker such as your local firefighter, pediatrician or any related professional to talk about the dangers of smoking. Make this fun! Provide demonstrations showing the ingredients in a cigarette, images demonstrating the effects of long-term smoking on the body, and interactive confidence-building activities teaching youth to say no to tobacco.

Body Mapping
Activity Type: Classroom, School
Age Group: Grades 5 and up
Description: Put students into groups. Have one student lie on butcher paper and trace an outline of their body. Then write all the ways tobacco can affect a person (i.e. draw lungs and write lung cancer, draw and label hairy tongue, etc.) Have students present their work to the class.

Create Warning Labels
Activity Type: Classroom, School
Age Group: Grades 3 and up
Description: Have students create their own warning labels about the use of tobacco products. Students will then share their facts and designs to the class. Display students’ work in the classroom or outside the class to educate other students.

MEDIA LITERACY
Activity Type: School, Classroom
Ages: Grades 5 and up
Description: Gather a variety of printable tobacco ads. Put students into groups and have each group analyze an ad to determine the message being promoted. Discuss if this message is true or misleading.
**Tobacco Prevention Booths**  
**Activity Type:** School, Community  
**Age Group:** Grades 3 and up  
**Description:** Tobacco-use prevention booths are a great way to educate the public about the health consequences of smoking. Booths can be set up anywhere: around the school campus or at a local community health event.  
- Display a model of a healthy lung showing healthy pink tissue along with a display of a diseased lung displaying irregular and blackened tissue.  
- Display a Jar of Tar. Fill a clear empty jar with one cup of molasses to represent tar from smoking. Provide information explaining that the amount of tar in the jar is the amount of tar that enters the lungs of a pack-a-day smoker in just one year. Provide education about how tar affects breathing and leads to chronic lung diseases.  
- Provide “Quit Kits” and other resources to help with smoking cessation.  
- Provide a display of pictures of items that contain ingredients that are put into cigarettes such as Acetic Acid (which can be also found in vinegar & hair dye), Ammonia (which is found in a typical household cleaners), Arsenic (pesticides), Butane (cigarette lighters) and Benzene (gasoline).  
- Provide information about Virginia’s (800) QUIT-NOW phone line for smoking cessation help.

Next, have students brainstorm in groups how they could use that extra money for other purposes. Allow students to use the Internet or catalogs to research ideas for ways they could spend that amount of money on something positive and helpful.

**Smoking in the Movies**  
**Activity Type:** Classroom, School  
**Age Group:** Grades 5 and up  
**Description:** In 2012 the U.S. Surgeon General concluded that smoking in the media is linked to youth smoking initiation. Smoking in movies affects how youth and adults perceive cigarettes (social acceptability, distorted perception on the harmful effects of cigarettes). Have students watch a series of video clips from different films or TV shows showing actors and/or actresses smoking. Then have a class discussion on how this scene or actor/actress could potentially influence youth to smoke. What is the underlying message about cigarettes in this film? Explain to the class that tobacco companies pay movie companies to advertise their products within films.  
For more resources, visit: [www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/](http://www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/)

**Tobacco Prevention Activities for Youngsters**  
**Activity Type:** Classroom  
**Age Group:** Preschool to Grade 2  
**Smoke Free Zone:** Have preschoolers create or decorate a door hanger or sign for their family’s car or home that says SMOKE FREE ZONE, emphasizing the importance of clean air for kids. Examples of messages include, “No smoking in my world” or “Healthy kids are smoke free!”

**The Real Cost of Smoking**  
**Activity Type:** Classroom, School  
**Age Group:** Grades 5 and up  
**Description:** Not only does smoking affect your health but it also takes a toll on your pocketbook! Let students calculate the cost of a pack-per-day habit. First find the average cost of a pack of cigarettes. (In Virginia, the average cost is $5.81.) According to a 2011 Daily Finance article, daily smokers smoke an average of 13 to 16 cigarettes per day or four to six packs per week.
Managing Emotions

Activity Type: Classroom
Age Group: Preschool

a) Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down Game: The following activity will help students learn healthy ways to manage emotions such as sadness, anger, and frustration. Read the below items to kids. Have students place their thumbs up if the activity is a positive way to manage stress or hold their thumbs down if it is a negative way to manage stress.

Activity examples:
- When I get angry, I yell at my brother.
- When I get sad, I try to make someone laugh.
- When I feel bored, I bounce a ball.
- When I get frustrated, I count to 10 seconds and try to calm down.
- When I get frustrated, I don’t listen to my parents.
- When I get bored, I whine to my mom.
- When I get sad, I listen to music.
- When I get angry, I take a few deep breaths to help relax.
- When I get bored, I play a game with my friends.
- When I get frustrated, I find someone to pick on.

b) Relaxation techniques:
- Deep Breathing: Have students practice deep breathing exercises whenever they feel angry or frustrated. Have students put their hands on their hearts or tummies while their eyes are closed. Instruct students to count five long, slow easy breaths. One full breath is a breath in and out. Have students then open their eyes and ask how they feel after the exercise.
- The Smile Challenge: When a child is feeling sad or angry, challenge them to make someone else laugh or smile. This activity will help to change the negative emotions of the student into positive ones.
OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS (OTPs) PREVENTION

OTP Prevention Booths

**Activity Type:** Community, School

**Age Group:** Grades 3 and up.

**Description:** Use the booths to demonstrate the health consequences of using smokeless tobacco products.
- Display an interactive model of the teeth, tongue and mouth showing the harmful effects of smokeless tobacco use. Purchase a Mr. Dip Lip educational model or contact Charlie McLaughlin at the Virginia Foundation for Health at (804) 786-2279 or cmclaughlin@vfhy.org to see if a model is available for loan.
- Display images of the damaging health effects of smokeless tobacco use on real people.
- Compare candy with smokeless tobacco products to show how similar they look in packaging and marketing. Discuss how Big Tobacco companies are making these tobacco products in ways that appeal to kids through flavoring and packaging.
- Allow youth and adults to hand in all promotional gear associated with tobacco such as hats, shirts, etc. In exchange, give them $10 dollar cash prizes or gift cards for books, food, etc.
- Have a staff member ask young people questions about tobacco use among their age group. Provide them with accurate statistics. Help kids obtain an accurate perception on tobacco use among their social peers.

Spit Makeover Contest

**Activity Type:** Classroom, School

**Age Group:** Grades 3 and up

**Description:** Ask a teacher, health educator or special guest speaker to deliver a presentation about the harmful effects of smokeless tobacco products such as dip and chew to an audience of elementary or middle school students. After the presentation ask students if they could imagine themselves with rotten teeth. Then give each student a set of fake rotten teeth (such as those you would find in a Halloween store) and take before and after photos!

Tobacco Skits

**Activity Type:** Classroom, School

**Age Group:** Grades 3 and up

**Description:** Have students separate into groups and have one student from each group choose a tobacco-related topic from a hat. Students must then create a 1-2 minute skit based on their chosen topic. Topics can include tobacco addiction, how to say no to tobacco, the health consequences of smokeless tobacco products or showing how tobacco companies market their products to kids. After rehearsal students should present skits to the class or school!

Tobacco Dangers Art Contest

**Activity Type:** Classroom, School

**Age Group:** Grades 3 and up

**Description:** Hold an art contest in your school or classroom! Have students create artwork displaying messages about the dangers of using tobacco products. Prizes can be awarded to 1st-, 2nd- or 3rd-place winners in each grade!
PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Take Class Breaks
Activity Type: Classroom
Age Group: Preschool and up
Description: Get students active by taking 5- to 10-minute breaks for physical activity at the beginning, middle or end of each class. Activity breaks reenergize students and help them stay focused.
- Throw a class dance party using age-appropriate music. Teachers can lead the class with awesome and fun dance moves.
- Have students do a short activity circuit in the classroom including 10 jumping jacks, 10 push-ups, 10 squat thrusts, 10 mountain climbers and jogging in place.
- Take students outside for a nature walk and connect with the outdoors!

Get Unplugged!
Activity Type: Classroom, School
Age Group: Grades 3 and up
Description: First have students record the amount of time each day they spend watching TV, playing video games or surfing the Internet. Add up total hours. Then challenge students to stay screen free for one week. Have them draw or write what they did each day in a journal or use free downloadable time tracker sheets on VFHY’s website.


For Preschool-2nd grade - Have students draw their favorite physical activities and then share them to the class. Educate students about the importance of physical activity and the benefits of less screen time.

Hold a Healthy Kids Walk Event
Activity Type: School, Community
Age Group: Preschool and up
Description: Healthy Kid Walks can be held anywhere! Have students walk around a gym, track or park, or host a Walk to School Day event. Kid Walks are a great way to promote physical activity among youth. Walking before the school day begins gives students a chance to get energized and focused for the day while also learning about safe routes to school.

Host a Physical Activity Event
Activity Type: School, Community
Age Group: All ages
Description: Invite an instructor, personal trainer or physical education teacher to lead youth and families in exercises at a community or school physical activity event. Host group activities such as Zumba lessons or teach youth how to dance to salsa or hip hop music!
PROMOTING HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

**Play with your food!**

**Activity Type:** Community, School  
**Age Group:** All ages  
**Description:**  
Provide nutritional cooking workshops in schools or at facilities in the community. Cooking meals provides a variety of benefits, including teaching children basic math and science skills, encouraging creativity, building self-confidence and promoting lifelong healthy eating habits.  

**For preschoolers:** Create a healthy snack that involves less cooking. Choose fruits and vegetables that look interesting in color and texture. Children love to play with their food before trying it!  

**Examples:**  
- **Flower Arrangement:** Using toothpicks, have children put together pre-sliced fruit to look like a flower arrangement.  
- **Parfait:** Have children create their own yummy parfait using strawberries, blueberries and plain yogurt.  
- **Ants on a Log:** Have youngsters fill celery sticks with plain yogurt or peanut butter (if no children with peanut allergies are in the classroom). Then add raisins to the top that represent the ants.

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**Rev Your Bev**

**Activity Type:** Community, School  
**Age Group:** Grades 3 and Up  
**Description:** Educate youth and families about the health consequences of sugar-sweetened beverages such as soda and energy drinks. Set up a Rev Your Bev booth at a local community event or around school campus. Booths can include a display of various sugar-sweetened beverages with the corresponding amount of sugar cubes inside each drink placed beside each drink bottle. This will teach kids how much sugar is in each sugar-sweetened beverage.

**Drinks can include:**  
- **Energy Drinks-16oz= 24 cubes**  
- **Sports Drinks-32oz= 22 cubes**  
- **Sweet Tea-24oz= 30 cubes**  
- **Big Soda-64oz= 87 cubes**  
- **Cola Bottle-20oz = 27 sugar cubes**

**Want to use other drinks?**  
2.3 grams of sugar= 1 sugar cube

Download free Rev Your Bev resources here:  
RevYourBev.com/resources
Plant a Garden

**Activity Type:** Community, School  
**Age Group:** All ages  
**Description:** Planting and growing a garden introduces young people to a variety of fruits and vegetables and promotes healthy eating habits. Children learn how to be responsible and independent as they nurture their plants and keep them alive. Don’t let the cold weather slow down the growing process! Build indoor container gardens in the windowsill of a classroom. Examples of foods to grow include tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, melons, etc.

Healthy Eating Forum

**Activity Type:** School, Community  
**Age Group:** All ages  
**Description:** Invite a local farmer, chef, restaurant owner or school nutrition director to talk about healthy eating. Provide food sampling and preparation demonstrations or display examples of different fruits and vegetables available at farmers’ markets or grocery stores. Discuss the health consequences of high-fat, energy-dense foods and the benefits of eating healthy, fresh foods. Give tips on how to choose healthy options when eating out and encourage families to cook meals together!
## Pledge Scavenger Hunt

Include faculty and staff in collecting healthy living pledges. Encourage your school principals, teachers, nurses and community leaders to take photos with their signed pledges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your best friend</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Community leaders (mayor, supervisor, council member, police chief, sheriff, etc.)</th>
<th>Doctor or dentist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guidance counselor</td>
<td>School secretaries</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall/recess monitor</td>
<td>Local business leaders</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Local media personality (TV reporter, radio show host, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Athletes</td>
<td>Lunch staff</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I pledge to eat right, be active and live tobacco-free.
I pledge to eat right, be active and live tobacco-free.

Name: ____________________________________________
Hometown: ________________________________________

Name: ____________________________________________
Hometown: ________________________________________

Name: ____________________________________________
Hometown: ________________________________________
Calendar of Healthy Events 2017
Make Healthy Youth Day Last all Year!

We hope Virginia’s Healthy Youth Day will jump start your health promotion activities all year!

January
Jan. 18
Virginia Healthy Youth Day

February
American Heart Month
Feb. 15
24/7 Tobacco-Free Spirit Day

March
National Nutrition Month
March 2-9
National Sleep Awareness Week

April
April 22
Earth Day
April 24-28
Every Kid Healthy Week

May
Physical Fitness & Sports Month
May 1-7
Screen-Free Week
May 18
Rev Your Bev Day
May 31
World No Tobacco Day

May 18
Start of the 2017 Eat Smart, Move More, Maintain, don’t gain! Holiday Challenge.

June
June 5
World Environment Day
June National Hunger Awareness Month

July
National Parks and Recreation Month

August
Aug. 7-13
National Farmers’ Market Week

September
National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month
Hunger Action Month

October
Oct. 2
Child Health Day
Oct. 4
International Walk to School Day
Oct. 16
World Food Day

November
Nov. 14
World Diabetes Day
Nov. 14
Start of the 2017 Eat Smart, Move More, Maintain, don’t gain! Holiday Challenge.
Nov. 16
Great American Smokeout

December
Until Dec. 31, 2016
Eat Smart, Move More, Maintain, Don’t Gain! Holiday Challenge