



**INTERNATIONAL  
ADOLESCENT  
HEALTH WEEK**

**How to start planning for  
International Adolescent  
Health Week**

## International Adolescent Health Week Early Planning

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### **How to use this toolkit:**

This planning toolkit has been created to make it easy for individuals, organizations, and youth groups to participate in International Adolescent Health Week. This toolkit suggests a simple planning timeline over the winter, approximately for 2-3 months and 1 month in advance of the start of International Adolescent Health Week. This timeline is merely a suggestion to assist you. You are free to use and adapt any of the materials herein for your Adolescent Health Week activities; however, use of these materials is not required in order to promote adolescent health during Adolescent Health Week. Due to the continuing global Covid pandemic, please adhere to your local guidelines and recommendations when planning IAHW activities. Participating organizations are at liberty to celebrate International Adolescent Health Week in any manner they wish and are encouraged to be creative in adapting these ideas to meet the needs of the adolescents you wish to reach. Approval of activities or educational materials is not required.

### **Background:**

The International Adolescent Health Week is an annual week-long designation to raise the profile of adolescent health. This international celebration consists of dynamic participatory events to inspire adolescents and their communities to advocate for a successful transition into adulthood. With more than a billion adolescents worldwide, this age group comprises one of the largest segments of the world's population. The rapid physical and emotional growth of this age group differentiates it from the needs of children and adults; while health behaviors resulting in illness later in life often start in the adolescent years. The International Adolescent Health Week is unique in that it focuses the entire world on a holistic view of adolescent health at the same time with an independent, adolescent-centric week devoted to this important chapter of life.

The goals for Adolescent Health Week are to:

- Increase recognition of the unique health issues facing adolescents worldwide by both adults and adolescents
- Increase engagement of adolescents in their own health decisions
- Stimulate events worldwide highlighting issues facing adolescents and ways to address them during International Adolescent Health Week.

Over the course of the week, activities may focus on any adolescent health issue which is relevant in your community, including youth focused policy addressing healthy and safe communities, socio-economic determinants of health, adolescents' rights, as well as specific preventive, physical and mental health issues.

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30 years ago, the 190 member countries of the United Nation passed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), one of the most ratified human rights treaties of all time. The UNCRC embodies the profound notion that children are not just objects who belong to their parents, and for whom decisions are made, but are human beings with their own inherent rights. It provides an internationally ratified framework for how adolescent health professionals engage and work with young people and their families. The UNCRC underpins how adolescent health professionals engage and work with young people, as it recognizes the growing maturity of children and adolescents to make independent choices and judgements on matters affecting their future - including their health. In the absence of national laws that support adolescents' rights to health in many countries, health professionals invoke the UNCRC to protect the rights to health of the adolescents with whom they work, and to protect them in delivering health care to young people. Many members of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine and the International Association of Adolescent Health celebrated the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC, knowing that child and adolescent rights lie at the core of ensuring that no-one is left behind in the progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Only the United States has not ratified this framework for the protection of children's rights which protect children from traumas such as forced labor, discrimination and child marriage, and which grant all children the right to health care and education. IAHW is an opportunity to demonstrate to young people how international protections like these can enhance their ability to advocate for themselves when it comes to health.

Schools, medical practices and other organizations working with or for adolescents can celebrate any aspect of adolescent health that is relevant to their work, for instance: a short web presentation on healthy relationships during the school assembly can support conversations about interpersonal violence in smaller break out groups throughout the week; a free adolescent yoga class can be held outdoors or online to promote mindfulness, stress management and physical activity; simple recipes for healthy snacks can be shared online throughout the week; health classes can moderate discussions around sleeping and its effects on young people's daily functioning, emotional regulation and behavior; or medical professionals and youth can contact government officials to advocate for policies that promote healthy youth and healthy communities. Activities can be as big or small as determined by the school community; the important aspect is that they contribute towards increasing awareness and dialogue about adolescent health.

An important aspect of health education and preventive skills is ensuring adolescents have strong health literacy skills, especially with regards to online health information. This is increasingly important as more hours of the day are spent online for educational and recreational activities, and there is a significant increase in false medical information circulating. Nearly 100% of adolescents in countries with easily accessible internet search for answers to health questions online. In addition, a third of adolescents change their health behaviors based on what they find online. Numerous organizations (e.g. United Nations, American Academy of Pediatricians, National Library of Medicine, etc.) recognize the importance of health literacy and digital literacy, and are developing initiatives to improve these skills in all patient populations, including amongst adolescents. Digital health literacy is perhaps even more important in countries or populations with fewer health resources, as patients cannot afford to spend money on ineffective health treatments or advice. However, there is still a significant gender and geographic gap in terms of internet access worldwide – with 346 million youth not connected to the internet.

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Behaviors of young people are influenced both positively and negatively by friends, family, schools, community, and society. The week provides an opportunity across our global communities to emphasize young people's health education and engagement in a positive way. Adolescents are agents of change and International Adolescent Health Week specifically involves them in health discussions that can positively affect their well-being. In addition to learning the very important skills of health self-advocacy, adolescents too can positively influence health behaviors in other adolescents, their own families, and communities.

Lime green, which represents health, happiness, and the high energy and passion of adolescents, is the official color of Adolescent Health Week.

A simple one-pager can be found on our website. Please feel free to reproduce and share freely as a brief reference.

Additional toolkits are available, with links to resources, sample social media posts, and specific ideas for activities which can be conducted in medical practices and hospitals, in schools, and in communities and youth groups. Due to the continuing global Covid pandemic, many of the suggestions and activities are either digital or those which could be done whilst adhering to physical distance guidelines. Please adhere to your local guidelines and recommendations when planning IAHW activities. Young people themselves are encouraged to make IAHW their own, and to serve as leaders for their peers, and inspiration for positive change in their communities. Toolkits are available for download at [internationaladolescenthealthweek.org](http://internationaladolescenthealthweek.org).

## International Adolescent Health Week Early Planning

### Starting December or January (2-3 months in advance of IAHW)

Planning ideas for schools and universities:

- Update online calendars to include International Adolescent Health Week.
- Appoint a person (health teacher, gym teacher, guidance counselor, school nurse or other active, interested staff member) to take the lead in implementing Adolescent Health Week at your school or who can be a faculty sponsor for a student club to develop activities around Adolescent Health Week.
- Assemble a student team of leaders who can help. This might be done within a pre-existing student club (health club, community service club) or may be used to start a new club.
- Identify free or inexpensive prizes that can be awarded for different contests that occur over the course of Adolescent Health Week. Examples include:
  - Homework pass
  - Extra credit for participation
  - Free snack in cafeteria
  - Free dress day if your students wear uniforms
  - Winner can toss a pie or water balloons (or similar fun activity) at a willing teacher or administrator in an assembly or over a lunch
  - Recognition on school announcements
  - Eat lunch with a faculty member, dean or principal of the student's choice
  - Pick music for lunch or other community time
- Announce the IAHW in Parent organizations (PTO/PTA) and school-based communications. Encourage PTO/PTA to coordinate activities during Adolescent Health Week for parent and student involvement.
- Consider purchasing inexpensive lime green spirit wear for the week – bandanas, wrist bands, etc. Custom made spirit wear can be made using the official logos.
- Download or copy free official logos designed by International Youth and include on handouts and other materials used during IAHW (logos available at <https://internationaladolescenthealthweek.org/index.html>)

## International Adolescent Health Week Early Planning

<b>Starting December or January (2-3 months in advance of IAHW)</b>	
<p>Planning ideas for Medical Practices, Hospitals and other Medical Organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for staff to wear lime green ties, scarves, t-shirts, or other lime green attire during Adolescent Health Week.</li> <li>• Consider an adolescent health issue that you might highlight in a letter to the editor in local press.</li> <li>• Partner with a local school to plan activities or to share educational materials.</li> <li>• Plan an event to occur during adolescent health week, and promote it with local newspapers, television, and radio media.</li> <li>• Reach out to local media / morning news to set up an interview to share information about adolescent health issues in your practice or community, and what you are doing to improve the health of adolescents in your community.</li> <li>• Purchase or order lime green giveaways for patients (toothbrushes, bandages, condoms, water bottles, etc). Use the youth designed Adolescent Health Week logos and promote your organization on these items.</li> </ul>
<p>Community Planning Ideas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact local government officials to garner support for Adolescent Health Week. Request a proclamation or resolution declaring local, state, regional or country recognition of Adolescent Health Week and the importance of promoting adolescent health.</li> <li>• Identify local businesses that may illuminate buildings lime green (“event lighting”). Many businesses and communities will do so at no cost for health related and non-profit observances.</li> <li>• Plan a digital event geared towards adolescents and invite press to attend.</li> <li>• Reach out to businesses, museums, etc. which serve adolescents to see if they can offer discounts to adolescents over the week or free admission to adolescents wearing lime green during the week. Encourage such community partners to use social media to promote their involvement in Adolescent Health Week.</li> <li>• Create spirit wear or t-shirts using the official youth designed logos to sell, use as prizes or giveaways, or to wear all week long</li> </ul>
<p>Social Media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow IAHW social media pages for updates:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Twitter: @IAHW2022</li> <li>○ Instagram: @adolescent_health_week</li> <li>○ Facebook: @internationaladolescenthealthweek</li> <li>○ #IAHW2022</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## International Adolescent Health Week Early Planning

### Starting mid-February (1 month in advance of IAHW)

<p>Planning ideas for schools and universities:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announce International Adolescent Health Week in PTO/PTA and school-based communications.</li> <li>• Finalize plans for activities.</li> <li>• Check in with the faculty lead and the student leaders / club about their plans for the week and to encourage them to drum up excitement for the week.</li> <li>• Inform students and staff that they will be encouraged to wear something lime green (t-shirts, scarves, bandanas, nail polish, eye shadow, hair bands, shorts, anything)</li> <li>• Create a simple social media plan for your school share IAHW posts or consider having health classes or clubs create a specific Adolescent Health Week social media page to use over the course of the week to share student posts, adolescent health facts (examples provided), run contests, etc.</li> <li>• Consider purchasing inexpensive spirit wear for the week – bandanas, wrist bands, etc. if not already done.</li> <li>• Collect free or inexpensive prizes that can be awarded for different contests that occur over the course of Adolescent Health Week. Examples include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Homework pass</li> <li>○ Extra credit</li> <li>○ Free snack in cafeteria</li> <li>○ Free dress day if your students wear uniforms</li> <li>○ Winner can toss a pie or water balloons (or similar fun activity) at a willing teacher or administrator in an assembly or over a lunch</li> <li>○ Recognition on school announcements</li> <li>○ Eat lunch with a faculty member, dean or principal of the student’s choice</li> <li>○ Pick music for lunch or other community time</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Ideas for Health Class activities to lead into Adolescent Health Week:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect anonymous student questions about different health topics to use / answer during the upcoming week.</li> <li>• Identify (from accurate sources) interesting health facts to share on school-wide announcements to occur during the upcoming Adolescent Health Week.</li> <li>• Create small posters with interesting health facts to hang inside bathrooms or in halls during Adolescent Health Week.</li> <li>• Draft social media posts to promote and build momentum and excitement in advance of the upcoming celebration of Adolescent Health</li> </ul>

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<b>Starting mid-February (1 month in advance of IAHW)</b>	
Planning ideas for Medical Practices, Hospitals and other Medical Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan to have staff wear lime green ties, scarves, t-shirts, or other attire for Adolescent Health Week.</li><li>• Submit letter, article or opinion piece on an adolescent health topic to local press.</li><li>• Finalize plans with local schools regarding activities or educational materials.</li><li>• Promote planned events to occur during adolescent health week with local newspapers, television and radio media.</li><li>• Reach out to local media / morning news to set up an interview to share information about adolescent health issues in your practice or community, and what you are doing to improve it in your community.</li><li>• Obtain lime green giveaways for patients (toothbrushes, bandages, condoms, water bottles, etc).</li></ul>
Community Planning Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finalize event planning.</li><li>• Advertise your organization's involvement in Adolescent Health Week.</li><li>• Reach out to press for coverage of your participation and/or mission as it relates to adolescent health.</li></ul>
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow IAHW social media pages for updates:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Twitter: @IAHW2022</li><li>○ Instagram: @adolescent_health_week</li><li>○ Facebook: @internationaladolescenthealthweek</li></ul></li><li>• Start using hashtags to spread the word and to drum up excitement on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ #IAHW2022</li><li>○ #BecauseAdolescentHealth</li><li>○ #AdolescentHealthIs</li><li>○ #PaintTheWorldLimeGreen</li></ul></li><li>• Promote events and your organization's support of and participation in Adolescent Health Week via social media using #IAHW2022.</li></ul>