The Monday Campaigns

Jump Start Your Week!

Implementing a Physical Activity Promotion Initiative to Prevent Chronic Disease in Upstate New York

Healthy Monday Syracuse
The day all health breaks loose
Healthy Monday

The Monday Campaigns is an initiative that dedicates the first day of every week to health. It is associated with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. Every Monday, individuals and organizations come together to commit to healthy behaviors that can help end chronic, preventable disease.

Why Monday? Research conducted by Johns Hopkins identified that Monday is a day when people are making an effort to be healthy more so than any other day of the week¹. On Mondays, more people are starting an exercise program, adopting healthier diets, quitting smoking and making doctor’s appointments. Monday is seen as a fresh start and new beginning to work toward health goals. Unlike a New Year’s resolution, Healthy Monday offers 52 chances a year to commit to being healthy. Evidence also supports that people who engage in healthy behaviors on a Monday are better positioned to be successful in carrying out these behaviors for the remainder of the week².

¹ Source: Healthy Monday: Two Literature Reviews Center for a livable Future, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, http://www.jhsph.edu/bin/l/n/healthymondayreport.pdf

Individuals and organizations around the world have adopted the concept of Healthy Monday. The Monday Campaigns encompass a range of healthy behaviors from Meatless Monday, encouraging a reduction in dietary saturated fat by eating less meat, to Move it Monday, encouraging individuals to become more physically active. Syracuse University has embraced Healthy Monday with its campaign, Healthy Monday Syracuse.

The Healthy Monday Syracuse initiative is managed locally by the Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University. The focus of the Center is to improve the health of the community by supporting programs that have been demonstrated to address chronic disease, engaging in research to identify effective approaches to address the burden of chronic disease, supporting the development of a workforce of public health practitioners who are equipped to address chronic disease and advocating for policies that support health. Healthy Monday Syracuse supports physical activity, nutrition and stress management efforts on the Syracuse University campus and in the local community through collaborative programming and the utilization of social media.

The Monday Mile

The Monday Mile is a fun way to motivate people to be physically active. It can be easily worked into one’s schedule and is a great way to jump-start the week. The Monday Mile is an environmental, programmatic and health promotion initiative encouraging physical activity with a goal of reducing chronic disease.

The Monday Mile can help people establish fitness goals to work toward and achieve the Surgeon General’s recommended guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity every week. This can be averaged out to 20-30 minutes of exercise every day, which is just about the time it takes the average person to walk one mile. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified that more than one-third of U.S. adults do not meet the recommended guidelines for exercise. Regular physical activity is linked to a decreased risk of chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes and certain types of cancer. In addition, regular exercise is beneficial to improving mood, strengthening bones and muscles and promoting healthy patterns of sleep.

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Healthy Monday Syracuse began its Monday Mile campaign in 2012 with the installation of marked one-mile Monday Mile walking routes throughout the city of Syracuse and Onondaga County. The following pages describe the program activities that have been and are currently implemented, the resources that have been utilized to carry out these initiatives and the community partners who lend the support to make these programs a success!

Introducing the Monday Mile in Onondaga County, NY

The Monday Mile in Onondaga County consists of 18 one-mile walking routes that have been mapped out across the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County. Permanent signs identify the routes and provide distance markers and directional arrows. In an effort to support the health of the community, the Onondaga County Executive’s office and office of the Mayor of Syracuse issued a joint proclamation in 2012 that henceforth September 10th would be recognized as “Move it Monday Day”. Support of community leaders and partnerships with both City and County Parks departments as well as the Syracuse Department of Public Works have provided a platform to introduce the Monday Mile locally.
Monday Mile routes are located in six Syracuse City parks; Thornden, Schiller, Barry, Upper Onondaga, and Burnet and four Onondaga County parks; Jamesville Beach, Highland Forest, Beaver Lake, and Onondaga Lake Park. A route along Onondaga Creek Parkway near Kirk Park in Syracuse’s south side lies along a section of what will become an extension of the Onondaga Creekwalk, a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly trail connecting points throughout the city of Syracuse.

Area hospitals also have routes on or near their campuses. Routes are located at SUNY Upstate University hospital’s Community and Downtown campuses, which also provides convenient access to the VA Medical Center and Crouse Hospital. St. Joseph’s Health has a loop on their campus, bridging the hospital with the surrounding Northside neighborhood. A route in downtown Syracuse links the County courthouse and City Hall and a route in Syracuse’s near west side neighborhood supports neighborhood revitalization efforts and provides opportunities for residents to be physically active. Syracuse University has two loops on its campus, one on main campus and the other on south campus, the residential quarters of several thousand students.

The Monday Mile has gained interest from surrounding communities who would like to adopt this initiative as part of their community health improvement plan. Currently we are working closely with several agencies in Madison and Cayuga Counties to assist them in the development of Monday Mile routes across their respective counties. A rural county with priority goals of addressing obesity and diabetes, these projects have provided us the opportunity to learn how to implement this initiative in a rural setting.

Healthy Monday Syracuse will continue to work with partners to plan and install Monday Mile routes in the community and can provide technical assistance with the development of new routes.

Monday Mile Madison County

In late 2015, Healthy Monday Syracuse was approached by the Madison County Rural Health Council, a consortium of health and social services agencies across the county, to explore ways to develop a countywide Monday Mile initiative. The Health Council
was working to identify strategies to address obesity across the lifespan and adult type II diabetes. Rates for these conditions in Madison County are higher than the New York State averages. The Health Council was interested in creating a network of Monday Mile routes as a way to encourage families to be active in the communities where they live, work and play. The county ranked lower than the New York State average on access to opportunities for physical activity, a measure that identifies proximity of parks and public recreation spaces. Because Madison is a rural county, creatively identifying spaces across the community to develop a Monday Mile could improve people’s ability to access opportunities for recreation.

The Health Council’s LiveWell committee identified communities across the county with the highest rates of obesity and diabetes and began connecting with stakeholders in those communities to gauge interest in the Monday Mile. During the summer of 2016, five routes were installed in the communities of Stockbridge, Canastota, Oneida, Morrisville and Brookfield. These routes are located on a school campus, business district, a former railway converted to a multi-use trail, through the heart of a small town and in a town park. Ribbon cutting events were held at each of these new routes to introduce the Monday Mile to the community and the LiveWell committee has ongoing efforts to create programming and encourage use of the routes, including a countywide day of physical activity in the fall of 2018 to highlight all the routes.

Additional Monday Mile routes are planned and are being installed in Hamilton, NY with a route beginning at the public library and around the town’s hospital. An additional route is in development in New Woodstock, beginning at the public library.
Encouraging Communities to Create a Monday Mile

There are many ways you can get your community moving! The Monday Mile initiative can easily be incorporated into new or existing wellness programs, and does not require a lot of resources.

Establishing partnerships with organizations in your community with an interest in the health and wellbeing of their constituents is a great place to start. Partnerships are essential to the work that we do at Healthy Monday Syracuse. Collaborative efforts allow us to target our resources where they are most needed and strengthen relationships with our partners. Combining our efforts helps maximize program reach to most effectively serve the community.

Employees from St. Joseph’s Hospital and neighboring organizations join the Hospital President and CEO Kathy Ruscitto in dedicating and walking the new Monday Mile route in the spring of 2014.

It is essential to consider the motivation of potential partners when developing a Monday Mile in your community. Hospitals and public health departments may be motivated to identify strategies that will help them achieve the goals set forth in their community health improvement plans. Parks will have an interest in encouraging visitors to come to the parks. Business owners may be motivated by the potential for additional foot traffic near their business. Even organizations not explicitly focused on health can be great supporters of the Monday Mile. Consider partnering with art museums to encourage people to walk near public art spaces, or a community historical society to offer a local history tour along a Monday Mile route. Schools are a great venue for a Monday Mile, providing students and teachers a space to be active.

Look for routes that are accessible, safe and places where people already go to be physically active. Consider the quality of sidewalks, availability of crosswalks, traffic patterns and presence of safety elements like street lights. Consider reaching out to organizations who serve people with disabilities to determine how to create routes that are inclusive and accessible for people of all abilities. Some locations are better suited for indoor walking routes, identify what your options are.
Plan to Use Your Monday Mile

Once your Monday Mile route has been installed, plan for its use. It is simply not enough to put up signs and expect that people will come. To keep this initiative fresh and exciting, consider creative uses of the Monday Mile route. Here are a few ways to get people interested and keep them coming back:

- **Dedicate your Monday Mile.** Bring together the community supporters who made this route possible and show your commitment to a healthy and active community by hosting a community walk with key influencers and residents.

- **Organize a walking club.** Use Monday Mile passports to highlight one mile walking routes across the community. Encourage walkers to kick off their week with a group walk on Monday and to track their physical activity throughout the week. Walking events can attract new participants and keep walkers engaged.

- **Adopt fitness breaks at your organization.** Encourage participants to incorporate fitness into their day by taking stretching or walking breaks, using the stairs rather than the elevator, parking further from the building and by holding walking meetings.

- **Utilize social media to promote programs, generate awareness about the campaign and disseminate fitness tips.** Weekly newsletters or e-newsletters are a good way to connect with participants and share Move it Monday fitness tips.
Monday Mile Templates

Healthy Monday Syracuse has templates for Monday Mile routes that have been installed across our community. We work closely with our partners to customize signage that aligns with their Monday Mile program goals and matches the aesthetic of the environment. All templates are free and available for anyone interested in developing a Monday Mile in their community.

The standard template signage measures 12" wide X 18" high and is digitally printed on weather-proof aluminum with a UV protective overlay. Monday Mile signage requires mounting material which can include metal posts, washers, and nuts and bolts.

Another type of signage that has been created is a pavement marker, which is installed directly onto an asphalt paved trail.

The resources needed to install a Monday Mile route are specific to the location where the route is to be installed and costs will vary. Across Onondaga County, Healthy Monday Syracuse has coordinated with parks maintenance and facilities staff who have facilitated installation of the signs and the Department of Public Works in Syracuse has installed signage on routes that extend through the city’s neighborhoods.

Signage requires little maintenance and stands up well to most weather conditions. Our first signs were installed in 2012 and despite harsh northeast winters still look as they did when they were installed. However, consideration must be made to the long term sustainability of signage. Organizations with limited financial resources may wish to partner with organizations who can sponsor the route and commit the resources to the trail’s long term usage.
Learn More About the Monday Mile

The Post Standard
Syracuse University launches program to encourage people to walk a mile to get healthy http://bit.ly/216Qzxm

SU News
St. Joseph’s Monday Mile
http://bit.ly/1LrPp6r

WRVO Public Media
Encouraging Walking in Central NY – One Mile at a Time
http://bit.ly/1PCSgxj

NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
How to Create an Inclusive Walking Club http://bit.ly/1KnKRmS