



small steps *for*
better health

T O O L K I T



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U tahns value strong families, hard work, and time outdoors, all of which require good health. But we struggle to take the small steps to be more healthy.

Rushed for time, lacking all the information to make good decisions, and faced with convenient but less healthy alternatives, we often sacrifice long-term health benefits for short-term ease.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

Get Healthy Utah, a nonprofit dedicated to creating a statewide culture of health, conducted a survey (the Utah Health Values Study) of more than 1,000 Utah residents to find out how they think and feel about their own health and what matters most to them.

The good news is that Utahns want to be healthy and are motivated to achieve a high quality of life. They want to avoid chronic diseases while feeling productive, physically fit, and mentally positive. The bad news is that Utahns underestimate their own weight while overestimating their ability to make good choices about healthy eating, physical activity, and their overall health.

**LIVING A QUALITY LIFE =
absence of chronic disease.**

- + More Productivity**
- + Better Physical Wellness**
- + Good Mental Outlook**

The Utah Health Values Study reveals how key decision makers can influence health outcomes for Utahns. This *Small Steps for Better Health Toolkit* is designed to enable you to help build a healthier Utah.

HOW DO PEOPLE CHANGE BEHAVIOR?

Changing behavior is hard. Understanding these steps can make it easier:

- » First, people have to understand that there is a problem.
- » Next, they have to find a solution and believe they can make a change.
- » Then, barriers to taking action must be removed.
- » Finally, people need social support, positive reinforcement, and an understanding of long-term benefits in order to make permanent changes in their lives.

see the problem

» believe in a solution

» remove barriers

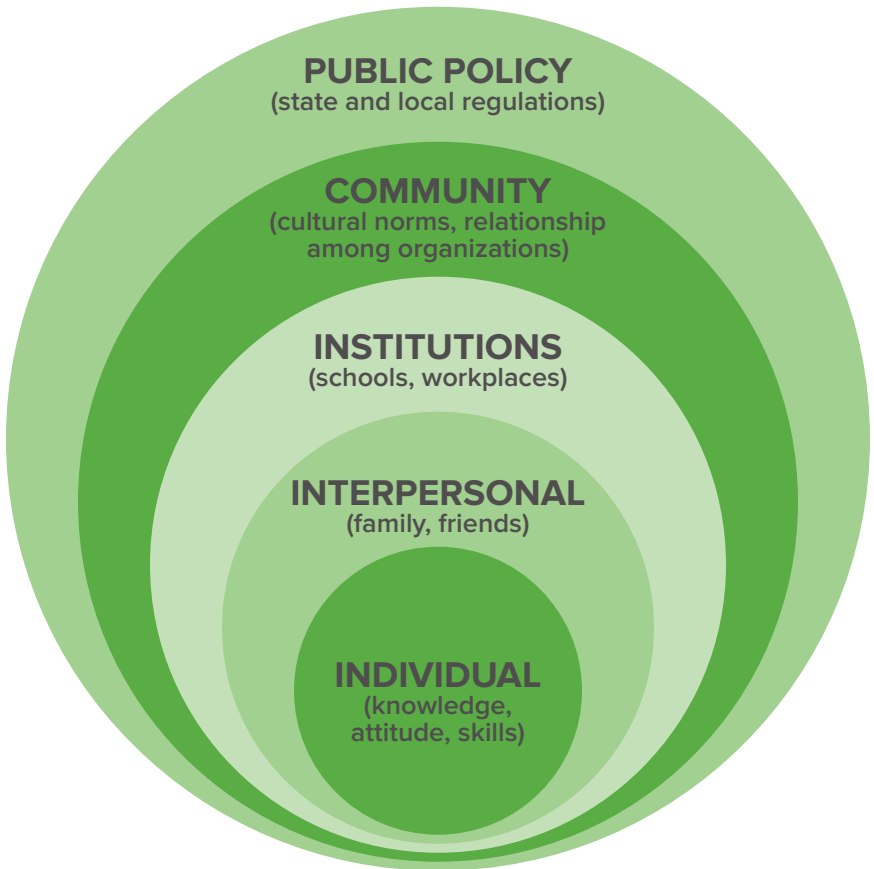
» support & reinforcement

THE ROLE OF KEY DECISION MAKERS.

As a community leader, you have the unique ability to transform the lives of people around you. Many Utahns want to be healthy but most also spend the majority of their time at school, work, or in their community. How these places impact Utahns' health is determined by the decisions you make, the policies you enact, and the values and culture you promote.

WORKING TOGETHER.

Changes in health behavior are influenced not only by individual factors, but also by interactions with the surrounding environment. Of course individuals must choose what they eat and whether to be physically active, but those choices are much easier when they have access to healthy foods and opportunities for activity.









Digging Deeper Into the Values Study

While the risks associated with widespread obesity are well known, the rate of obesity continues to rise. By 2050, over 46% of adults in Utah — nearly 1.7 million people — will be obese, an 81% increase since 1990. The rise in obesity will contribute to increased incidences of diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Currently, obesity and its health consequences cost Utah \$14.1 billion per year. This number will rise to a fiscally devastating level if the trend continues.

1.7 million

The projected number of obese adults in Utah by 2050.

THE PROBLEM: UTAHNS ARE IN DENIAL.

- » Utahns believe they are in good health and well informed about health issues.
- » As a priority, Utahns rank obesity behind education, air quality, and transportation/roads.
- » Utahns underestimate the weight problem in the state as well as their own weight situation.
- » Many Utahns think they are in good health while also identifying themselves as very overweight (so there seems to be a disconnect between health and weight).
- » Utahns believe they eat better and are more physically active than their neighbors.

SOME POSITIVES.

Still, the survey reveals that Utahns do recognize and understand some important realities. Utahns . . .

- » Believe obesity and chronic illness are of concern.
- » Believe that the most important reason to eat right and be physically active is to avoid chronic disease.
- » Overwhelmingly believe individuals have the most responsibility for their health.
- » Acknowledge that lack of time, energy, and convenience are the most significant reasons why they do not eat right and are not physically active.
- » Connect eating well and physical activity to having greater physical ability, feeling sick less often, and having a better mood and outlook.

OBESITY IN UTAH

perception vs. reality

45% vs. 60%

Survey respondents guessed that 45% of adults in Utah were overweight or obese.

In reality, the number of overweight or obese adults in Utah is over 60%.

11% vs. 25%

Just 11% of Utah adults consider themselves to be obese.

The actual adult obesity percentage in the state is roughly 25%.

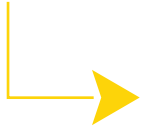


The Key to Motivating Change

To motivate people to change behavior, it is important to communicate both the reasons for the change as well as the emotional motivators that are tied to their personal values.

In other words, persuade with reason and motivate with emotion.

emotional motivators



CHANGE

LIVE LIFE FULLY.

Utahns are motivated to eat right and be physically active because they want to:

Feel joy, happiness, and peace of mind.

Enjoy a high quality of life and live life to the fullest.

Have better health.

Be more productive and get more done.

These motivations particularly resonate with younger adults and older adults.

emotional motivators



BE THERE FOR THE ONES YOU LOVE.

Utahns are motivated to eat right and be physically active because they want to:

Feel joy, happiness, and peace of mind.

Take care of and spend more time with family and friends.

Strengthen bonds with family and friends.

Have better health.

These motivations particularly resonate with middle-aged adults.

ANOTHER CLEAR MOTIVATOR.

Avoiding chronic disease is viewed as the most important motivator to eat well and be physically active (23% say it is the most important). Having greater physical ability and feeling better are also top motivators.





What You Say Matters

The Utah Health Values Study can help you to communicate with Utahns about healthy living in ways that are most likely to resonate with them and motivate them to change their behavior.

Verbalize these immediate or tangible benefits:

- » feel healthier
- » get sick less often
- » have more energy
- » improved physical abilities
- » sleep better
- » have a better mood
- » get sharper focus
- » avoid chronic diseases

Emphasize these emotional benefits (which matter more and are shared more universally):

- » be more productive
- » take care of myself better
- » have less stress and anxiety
- » spend more time with those I love
- » enjoy a high quality of life
- » live life to the fullest
- » take care of and provide for children/family/friends better

WORDS THAT MOTIVATE:

FEELING FIT

EATING RIGHT

physical activity

Energy

healthy food choices

fresh foods HEALTHY EATING

active lifestyles

WORDS THAT DISCOURAGE:

EXERCISE

DIET

get moving

obesity



What We Learned

From the Utah Health Values Study

» **Utahns overwhelmingly believe individuals bear most of the responsibility for their own health.**

» **What this means in practice:**

With good information and the right opportunities, Utahns will likely respond to interventions.

» **Utahns believe physical activity is the best way to prevent obesity and other long-term illnesses.**

» **What this means in practice:**

Investing in recreation, walkable and bikeable communities, worksite wellness programs, and physical activity in the schools may yield the greatest return.

» **Schools are seen as the key to reducing obesity.**

» **What this means in practice:**

Since obese children are much more likely to grow up to be obese adults, making practical improvements for physical activity and healthy eating in schools is the best investment.





Case Study: Schools

Strategies:

- » Require daily physical activity during school for all students.
- » **Encourage school districts to promote physical activity programs before, during, and after school.**
- » Encourage parents and teachers to use non-food rewards in the classroom and offer nutritious foods for all extracurricular activities and fundraisers.
- » Increase participation in school breakfast and lunch programs.

HEALTHY BODIES, HEALTHY MINDS.

Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds is an innovative and successful program designed to increase physical activity. Students and teachers start the day with a 10 minute activity break and take an additional break in the afternoon to get kids moving and stimulate their brains. Evaluations show that students who participate in the program have increased test scores and better performance in class. Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds provides schools with the tools they need to improve the health, well-being, and academic achievement of Utah students.



“

Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds engages the students and helps them to get an active start to the day. Because students are more focused and get more out of their lessons we are not losing the time it takes to do the activity breaks, we are gaining time. Schools should give Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds a try and see the results for themselves.”

— **ROBERT KINGHORN**
PRINCIPAL, WASATCH ELEMENTARY
DAVIS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kids in my class love Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds and look forward to it every day. We spend the first 10 minutes of the day doing physical activity and then the kids are ready to go! I find I spend less time giving instructions, the kids wiggle less, and have fewer behavior problems. In the long run, Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds saves me time.”

— **JAYLENE REDFORD**
6TH GRADE TEACHER, PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY
DAVIS SCHOOL DISTRICT



Case Study: Workplaces

Strategies:

- » Promote physical activity for employees.
- » **Adopt policies that ensure healthy food options are available on-site such as cafeteria and vending machine options as well as for all on-site meetings.**
- » Establish or maintain a worksite wellness council to improve the health and well-being of employees.



“

If a **worksite** is interested in starting a wellness program, start small and figure out what your employees want and need. A successful wellness program improves employee satisfaction and helps you recruit and retain employees. As an employer, you have the opportunity to take away some of the excuses and difficulty for people to be active and eat right.”

BEKAH COFFEY

WELLNESS & SAFETY MANAGER, 1-800-CONTACTS

BD & 1-800-CONTACTS.

On average, Americans working full-time spend more than one-third of their day, five days per week at work. Workplaces have the opportunity to foster a healthy environment and promote healthy behaviors for employees. A culture that supports the health and wellness of employees not only positively impacts indirect costs such as absenteeism and worker productivity, but it can also lower direct costs such as insurance premiums.

BD, which employs over 1,000 Utahns, has worksite wellness policies to support healthy eating for employees. Healthy options are clearly marked in vending machines, fresh and healthy foods are available in employee breakrooms, and a daily salad bar is in the center of the on-site cafeteria.

At **1-800-Contacts**, the worksite wellness program aims to improve employee satisfaction and provide easy access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity. Employees are encouraged to bike to work and have access to a secure bike room with a fully stocked tune-up station. While all meals at the on-site cafeteria are subsidized, employees who choose healthy or fitness inspired meals get wellness points which add up to prizes.



Case Study: Communities

Strategies:

- » Provide affordable or free recreation activities.
- » Promote safe walking and biking in neighborhoods and communities.
- » Increase the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- » **Support land use development policies that preserve and promote open spaces for recreation, physical activity, and community gardens.**



COMMUNITY GARDENS.

Community gardens have been shown to improve access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables. Working in a community garden can also increase physical activity for the gardener. A recent study in Salt Lake City showed that both women and men who participated in community gardens had significantly lower body mass indexes than did their neighbors who were not in the community gardening program.





“

There's a lot of reasons I like gardening, it makes me feel good . . . Sometimes you feel overwhelmed and you can go out to your garden and see your plants, and it help[s] you feel like you can forget the things that worry you. I save money [and it] makes me get healthy food.”

— **BEL**

**A GARDENER WITH NEW ROOTS
AND WASATCH COMMUNITY GARDENS**

“My parents can exercise. We can grow fresh vegetables. We can eat healthy.

”

— **PRABINA**

**A GARDENER WITH NEW ROOTS
AND WASATCH COMMUNITY GARDENS**





Small Steps Checklist

Figuring out how to improve health in your area is achievable if you make a plan.

- What is my Small Step opportunity to improve health in my school/workplace/community?**

- Who will it help (ages/demographics/etc.)?**

- Whose buy-in do I need to get this done?**

- How much will this effort cost?**

- Where will I need to promote it and how will I do that?**



About Get Healthy Utah

The mission of Get Healthy Utah is to create a culture of health through encouraging and facilitating active lifestyles and healthy eating. This is achieved by partnering with private and public entities; engaging with Utahns at the community level and working to align community initiatives; collecting, developing, and sharing best practices of encouraging individuals, families, and communities to live active, healthy lives; and working with state and local governments to promote and fund meaningful population health initiatives.



Find out more about our work at gethealthyutah.org.

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The Utah Health Values Study was conducted in partnership with Envision Utah and Heart & Mind Strategies through an online survey in early 2017 with 1,012 respondents.



gethealthyutah.org

