



DOG-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY WALKING GROUP TOOLKIT



Produced and distributed by:
The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Veterinary Public Health Program

Table of Contents

Walking Group Rules	4
Group Leader Checklist	5
Weekly Health Messages	6
Physical Activity Guidelines	7
Before You Take One Step	8
Benefits of Being Active	9
Staying Safe During Walks	10
Goal Setting	11
Preventing Obesity	12
Disaster Preparedness	13
Dangers of Secondhand Smoke	14
Preventing Bites	15
Fitting Walking Into Your Schedule	16
Spaying and Neutering	17
Parasites and Zoonotic Diseases	18
Vaccinations	19
Building Strong Communities	20
Tools & Resources	22
Waiver of Participation	23
Sign-in Form	24
Walking Log	25
Pledges	26
Tips to Recruit for the Walking Group	28
Sample Flyer	29

Acknowledgements

This toolkit was produced and distributed by: The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Veterinary Public Health Program.

This toolkit was initially inspired by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Area Health Office 5/6 *Walking Club Toolkit* and Health Education Administration: DPH *Walk for Wellness*.

The following groups contributed to the development of this toolkit:

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Area Health Office 5/6

Veterinary Public Health Program Staff:

Karen Ehnert, DVM, MPVM, DACPVM
Director

Mayra Morales, MPH

Tamerin Scott, DVM, MPH, DACVPM

Gael Lamielle, DVM, MPH, DACVPM

Danielle Tack, DVM, MPVM, DACVPM

Carl Bolano, BA

Stacy Christianson, BS

The Healthy Pets, Healthy Families Coalition contributed to the development of health messages in our electronic library. To learn more about the Healthy Pets, Healthy Families initiative and coalition, please visit:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/HealthyPetsHealthyFamilies.htm>

Program Overview

Did you know walking benefits the health of humans and dogs as well as your community? Not only is walking your dog a great way for you to meet the national recommendations of 150 minutes of physical activity per week, but it helps keep your pets healthy, too. In addition to many health benefits, walking can help you and fellow community residents learn about the neighborhood and get to know each other. When people know each other in a community, it creates a sense of unity and a safe environment for everyone. It can also be helpful in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. Although it may seem difficult, creating a walking group in your community can be simple!

The Dog-Friendly Community Walking Group Toolkit is designed to provide individuals, organizations, and community groups information on the health benefits of walking for humans and pets, and to promote the incorporation of physical activity into your daily routine.

The Toolkit offers walk leaders everything you need to host a successful 12-week walking group, including sign-in sheets, waivers, weekly conversation guides, and more.

One of the most important responsibilities of every walk leader is to lead a conversation related to walking, pet health, and human health each week. The following pages include 13 health promotion tips to discuss during the course of your 12-week walking group.

A library of additional health messages is available online (see below). Feel free to choose the topics you would like to present to your walk participants.

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/HPHF/walkingGroup.htm>

If you choose to participate in any group activities, you will be asked to sign a waiver of liability.

Dog-Friendly Walking Group Rules



Review these rules with the group before every walk.

It is strongly recommended that **ALL participants fill out a liability form **PRIOR** to starting the walking group, including adults who bring a child(ren)**

1. All dogs must have a current rabies vaccination.
2. All dogs must remain on a 6-foot long leash throughout the entire walk.
3. Participants should wear safe walking shoes (no open-toed shoes, or high-heels).
6. Dogs must be at least 4 months of age or older to participate.
7. Dogs must be controlled and not purposely confronted with other dogs.
8. All participants with dogs must bring waste bags to clean up after their pet.
9. Participants must stay with the group and on the sidewalks during the walk and always looks both ways before crossing the street.
10. Participants must always stop at intersections before crossing and be sure to walk within the designated crosswalks.
11. Owners should not bring dogs to the group if they are known to be aggressive.
12. Dogs that are aggressive or disruptive may be excluded from walking group.

Walking Group Leader Checklist



This checklist will help remind you of what to do before, during, and after your walk.

BEFORE the Walk:

- Ask participants to sign-in on the **Sign-in Form** when they arrive; it is highly recommended that participants sign a **Waiver of Participation** BEFORE starting to walk.
- Ensure dogs are on a leash (no retractable leashes).
- Ensure participants have appropriate walking shoes (no open-toed shoes or high-heels) and waste bags to pick-up after their pets.
- Ask participants to complete a **Pre-Survey** and put completed surveys into a large envelope.
- Review **Dog-Friendly Walking Group Rules** with all participants.
- Deliver the Weekly Health Message to walking group participants.

DURING the Walk:

- Keep participants on the sidewalk/on the side of the road
- Observe if participants are keeping up with the pace of the group; ensure that people are not walking more than 100 feet behind the last person in the group.
- Ensure dogs in the group are controlled, and not fighting with other dogs.
- Ensure participants are picking up after their dog(s).
- For walks that are 45 minutes or longer, take short breaks and,
 - Encourage owners to give their pets water.
 - Ask the group how they are doing. Example: "*By a show of hands, who thinks our walking pace is good?*" Ask participants to check if their dog is doing okay. Consider, are they panting excessively or stopping constantly?
- As you approach the final 5 minutes of the walk, begin to **cool down** by slowing the walking pace.

AFTER the Walk:

- Take attendance to ensure that all participants are accounted for.
- Ask participants, "How do you feel after your walk?"

After 12 Weeks:

- Ask participants who are NOT new to the Dog-Friendly Walking Group to complete a **Post-Survey**.

Weekly Health Promotion Messages



Physical Activity



Guidelines

According to the physical activity guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), all adults should avoid inactivity. Some physical activity is better than none, and adults who participate in any amount can gain health benefits. For greater benefits, adults should aim for:

**At least 2 hours and 30 minutes
of moderate-intensity or physical activity a week***

-Or-

**1 hour and 15 minutes
of vigorous-intensity physical activity a week****

-Or-

**An equal combination
of moderate-intensity and vigorous-intensity physical activity**

Two and a half hours each week sounds like a lot, but you don't have to do it all at once, or by yourself! Walking the dog for 30 minutes each day is a great way for you and your pet to get active together and meet the recommended two and a half hours of weekly physical activity at the same time. The key is doing your activity at a moderate* or vigorous** effort for at least 10 minutes at a time.

***Moderate-intensity physical activity** means you're working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat

****Vigorous-intensity physical activity** means you're breathing hard and fast, and your heart rate has gone up quite a bit

Week 1



Before You Take One Step

The good news about walking is that it is a low risk activity and generally safe for most people. However, it is still possible for you to suffer from injury or overexertion if you have high health risks. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, you could be at risk if you:

- Have a family history of heart disease
- Smoke
- Have high blood pressure—equal to or greater than 140/90 mmHg (read: 140 over 90)
- Have high cholesterol—a total cholesterol greater than 200 mg/dl
- Are diabetic or obese
- Are a male 45 or older, or a female 55 or older

If any of these apply to you, or if you're not sure about becoming active or boosting your level of physical activity because you're afraid of getting hurt, be sure to check with your health care provider before beginning any form of physical activity.

Ice Breaker: What is your name and why did you decide to join the walking group?

Week 1

Benefits of Being Active



If you are inactive, even becoming moderately active on a regular basis can help to improve your health and well-being. Walking the dog is great exercise that allows for you and your pet to get healthy *together*. The following are benefits related to walking for humans and for dogs:

For You	For Your Dog	For Both
<p>Reduces the risk of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dying prematurely • Dying from heart disease • Developing diabetes • Developing high blood pressure • Developing colon cancer • Feeling depressed • Reduces blood pressure in people who already have high blood pressure • Promotes psychological well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases social interaction • Improves behavior • Reduces the risk for arthritis, obesity, diabetes • Allows them to explore the outdoors • Allows them to feel more relaxed and sleepy rather than restless at bedtime • Reduces behaviors such as jumping on people and knocking furniture over • Helps build their confidence and trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the risk for obesity-related diseases • Improves mood • Promotes psychological well-being • Helps to maintain healthy bones, joints, and muscles • Reduces the risk for arthritis, diabetes, and heart disease • Improves sleep patterns • It strengthens the bond between you and your pet, leading to a strong and trusting relationship

For more information on the benefits of being active, check out:
<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/health/index.html>

Week 2



Staying Safe During Your Walks

When done safely, going for a walk in your community can be an enjoyable experience. Knowing what you can do to stay safe will help ensure that you and your pet can have a great time together.

ASK the group: What does walking safely mean?

ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add: Walking safely means that you take precautions to reduce the risks of getting hurt before, during, and after your walk.

Here are a few Do’s and Don’ts of walking that can help keep you and your pet healthy and safe during your walks.

For You		For Your Pet	
Do	Don't	Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take short, quick steps • Bend your arms at 90 degrees • Swing your arms back and forth as you walk • Look up, have your chin parallel to the ground • Focus on the street and be aware of your surroundings • Stand up straight with relaxed shoulders • Carry a flashlight • Make eye contact with drivers at intersections • Report any animal bites to the group leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over stride • Have stiff arms-this can throw off your balance • Put your head down-this can cause shoulder, neck, and back pain • Use earphones, cell phones, etc. • Wear dark colored clothing if walking at night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a standard 6' nylon leash • Carry waste bags to pick up after your dog • Notice signs of exhaustion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Panting loudly -Stopping frequently -Walking slowly • Stop, hold leash tightly if a stray, wild, or owned animal approaches the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a retractable leash to walk your dog • Leave your pet's waste on the ground as you walk • Force your dog to walk

Ice Breaker: Which of these tips are you going to work on during the walk today?

Week 3



Goal Setting

Scenario: Martha is the maid of honor in her sister's wedding, which is 4 weeks away. After her doctor told her that she was overweight, Martha decided she would begin to make healthier eating choices and exercise more to lose 30 pounds before the wedding.

ASK the group:

Is it a good idea for Martha to try to lose 30 pounds in 4 weeks?

ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add:

30 pounds is a lot of weight to try to lose in such a short time. Although lifestyle changes such as eating healthier and being physically active more can help someone lose weight, the changes should not be expected immediately. These should be positive habits that one can adopt in their lifestyle and expect healthy, gradual results. Losing 30 pounds in 4 weeks is not a realistic goal since it is extremely difficult to lose that much weight in such little time.

Your Ultimate Goal

What is your ultimate goal? Is it to reach 150 minutes or more of physical activity every week? Is it to walk 10,000 steps a day? Is it to walk your dog once a day? Setting a goal is a great strategy to stay motivated. Whatever your goal may be, it is important to remember to make them S.M.A.R.T.!

What are SMART Goals?

SMART stands for:

Specific—know what you have to do daily to reach your goal.

Measureable—do you want to lose 10 pounds, or safely lift 5 more pounds than you can now?

Achievable—it's your goal, so you have to be able to achieve it.

Realistic—your goal should make you push yourself, but it should also be attainable.

Time specific—have a specific start and end date.

Tip: Write your goal down and post it in a place where you will see it every day!

Week 4

Preventing Obesity

Choose less, weigh less!



Scenario: Charlie left his dog Bruno two bowls of dog food in the morning afraid that Bruno might get hungry throughout the day. When Charlie returned from work a few hours later, both of Bruno's bowls were empty. Although the little dog did not appear to look hungry, Charlie continued to refill the bowl with more food.

ASK the group: What is the correct amount of food that Bruno should be eating a day? Is there such thing as *too much*?

ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add:

Just like people, major causes of obesity in pets include lack of exercise and improper diet. Pets that are free-fed (meaning the food is left out all day for them to feed) will often eat more than they need.

- Obesity in both people and pets can put them at risk of: diabetes, arthritis or heart disease.
- Make sure you feed your pet an appropriate diet:
 - Consult your veterinarian first before you put your pet on a diet.
 - Feed the right amount. Read the pet food label to see how much your pet needs.

http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/HPHF/HPHF_Obesity.htm

The Furry Facts: Portion size matters. A simple way to start being healthier is to: **Choose Less. Weigh Less.** <http://www.choosehealthla.com/eat/portion-size/> Choose Health LA Restaurants is a partnership between the [LA County Department of Public Health](#) and local restaurants to promote healthier meal choices for customers across Los Angeles County. A Choose Health LA Restaurant offers customers:

- Smaller portion size options – these items are in addition to the existing items on the menu.
- Healthier children's meals that include fruits and vegetables, healthy beverages and non-fried foods.
- Chilled water, free of charge.

Ice Breaker: Do you remember the last time you had a physical? Did the physical include a lipid profile screening to check your cholesterol?

Week 5



Disaster Preparedness

'Winging it' is not a disaster plan!

Scenario: Mariela lives in California and is aware that earthquakes are common. However, she is not worried because she doesn't think one will happen soon. Mariela decides it is best to wait for an emergency to happen before she can decide what is best to do for her and her pets.

ASK the group: Is Mariela making the correct decision by waiting until an emergency happens before deciding what she should do for her and her pets?

ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add: Waiting until the emergency occurs to start preparing is neither a safe nor effective way of keeping you and your pets healthy in the event of an earthquake or other major disaster. The key is being ready BEFORE the emergency happens. Having a plan ready ahead of time will:

- Help ensure that you and your pet get to a safe place quicker and safer
- Lessen the risk of injury
- Help you feel less overwhelmed

What should you have ready before a disaster? A disaster kit.

A disaster kit should include:

For You	For Your Pet	For Both
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid kit • Flashlight • Extra batteries • Hand operated radio • Whistle to signal for help • Wrench or pliers • Dust mask • Manual can opener • Local maps • Cell phone with charger, inverter or solar charger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muzzle • Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and carriers • Litter box • Litter scoop • Beds and toys • Written information about your pet's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Medical conditions -Feeding schedule -Behavior issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and water for at least 3-14 days • Pictures of you, your pet, and both of you together • Garbage bags • Identification (ID's)- external (collar) AND internal (microchip) for your pet • Written information about medical conditions, dietary restrictions • Names of trusted neighbors and/or family emergency contact • List of dog friendly hotels, shelters

Week 6



Secondhand Smoke

Keep their fur shiny and clean without smoke in between!

Scenario: Richard is a smoker. His wife does not like him to smoke inside their home because the smoke hurts her eyes and makes her cough. As a result, Richard smokes in the backyard patio where their dog, Niko, plays. Being the loving pup that he is, Niko always chooses to sit next to Richard when he is smoking outside. Once he has finished smoking, Richard throws his cigarette butts on the floor and steps on them, leaving them there until he cleans his yard later in the week.

ASK the group: Can the smoke from Richard's cigarettes harm his dog, Niko?

ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add: Cigarette smoke can harm Niko's health, and everyone around Richard who comes in contact with the secondhand smoke. The cigarette butts on the floor can also be poisonous to Niko if he eats them, just like they can be poisonous for young children who can mistake it for candy.

The Furry Fact:

Children, adults, and pets exposed to cigarette smoke can develop cancer, asthma, and other serious health problems.

Cigarette smoke residue can:

- o Make your pet three times more likely to develop lung, nasal and mouth cancers.
- o Stay on their fur and poison them when grooming by licking the fur.
- o Cause pets to develop breathing problems, eye irritation and/or skin irritation.
- o Cigarette butts can also poison pets if eaten.

ASK the group: What can you do to keep your pet safe?

- o Don't smoke – especially around your pets. That includes on walks, or in the backyard.
- o If you must smoke, make sure your pet does not eat cigarette butts and clean up around your house or yard if you notice them.
- o Keep cigarette butts, nicotine gum, nicotine patches, and electronic cigarettes out of your pet's reach.
- o Smoke away from your pets.

Week 7

Bite Prevention

They won't bite if you don't give them a fright!



Scenario: Cindy who is 5, is playing in her front yard and sees her neighbor walking his dog down the street. Cindy runs excitedly to the dog jumping and laughing, startling the dog, and then begins to pet him. The dog cowers and shows his teeth, but Cindy does not notice. Suddenly, the dog bites Cindy on her leg. Cindy blames her neighbor's dog for biting her.

ASK the group: Why did the neighbor's dog bite Cindy?

ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add: Dogs can bite if they are startled or frightened, and if they think their owner is in danger. Young children like Cindy have high pitched voices, which can make dogs believe that their owner is in danger. In this scenario, Cindy was laughing, ran excitedly to the dog, startled him, and began to pet him without asking her neighbor for permission. Before children or adults pet a dog, it is important to always ask the owner if it is okay.

ASK the group: Do you know the signs of a dog who is ready to bite?

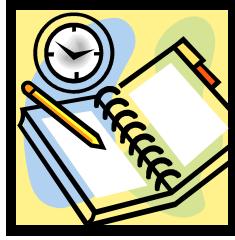
ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add: Dogs show different signs that mean that they are ready to bite. It is important for adults and children to learn to recognize the signs of a dog ready to bite:

- Growling
- Showing teeth
- Covering
- Turning head away
- Standing stiffly & staring
- Raised hair on the back of the neck

The Furry Fact: Nearly 4.5 million Americans are bitten by dogs each year, and half of them are children. In LA County, the age groups with the highest rate of bites are children under 9 years old.

Week 8

Fitting Walking into Your Schedule



Busy Bees

Work, school, family, errands...so many things to do! It is easy to convince ourselves that we do not have time to exercise, but finding time to be physically active is a lot easier than it seems. The key to managing a hectic schedule is to break down your day. You will be surprised at how much physical activity you can actually fit in! Everything counts—even if it is only 10 to 15 minutes of activity at a time. It is important to remember that even short bursts of activity count towards meeting the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity a week.

Tips for including more activity into your day:

1. **Look for small blocks of time.** Simple fitness routines can take as little as 15 minutes. Take full advantage of small periods of downtime, then make them count. Turn off your computer, cell phone, or anything that can prevent your downtime from becoming active time!
2. **Mark your calendars.** You write your dentist appointments and business meetings on your calendar, so why not schedule a time for your workout? Include it in your calendar and stick to it—it's a commitment to yourself!
3. **Be an early bird.** Set the alarm one hour earlier and go for a walk. It may take a while to become accustomed to the new schedule, but you may discover that early morning workouts complement your schedule the best.
4. **Always be ready.** Lunch breaks, trips to the supermarket, or to the local mall are all great opportunities to be physically active! Keep a pair of comfortable shoes in your office or car so you are prepared to walk any day, at any time. If you can, park your car farther from your destination. Remember, it all counts towards reaching the recommended 10,000 steps per day!
5. **Home is where the fun is.** Sometimes, the best time to be active is at home after work and on the weekends. Taking a walk around the neighborhood is convenient and free. So, gather friends, family and pets, and go on a walk!

Week 9

Spaying and Neutering



Neuter and spay, it's the healthiest way!

Scenario: Danny's Cocker Spaniel, Lola, had 4 puppies last week. Danny already has limited space in his home since his mother and brother came to live with him. The last thing Danny needed was more pets, and now he will have to leave the puppies at an animal shelter because he can't take care of them.

ASK the group: What could have Danny done to prevent having to leave the puppies at a shelter?

ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add: Danny could have prevented Lola from having more puppies by having her *spayed*, which is a surgery performed on female dogs that helps to prevent them from having more puppies.

ASK the group: Ok, so you know what spay in a female dog means. Do you know what *neuter* means? Acknowledge responses, then add:

- Neutering is a surgery performed on male dogs to prevent them from having unwanted puppies.
- Both spay and neuter surgeries are done by a vet while the animal is under anesthesia.

ASK the group: Why should you spay or neuter your pets? Acknowledge responses, then add:

It can help them live a longer, healthier life!

This is how spaying and neutering helps pets live longer:

- **Lowers** the chance of **breast cancer** & uterine infections in females.
- **Lowers** the chance for prostate problems & **testicular cancer** in males.
- **Reduces** behaviors such as roaming, urine-marking, and some aggression. Dogs that roam are more likely to get hit by cars.
- **Reduces** the amount of unwanted dogs that show up in animal shelters every year.

The Furry Fact: Pets that are spayed or neutered are 3 times less likely to bite. Also, some veterinary clinics and animal shelters offer low cost or free spay/neuter services to pets. Contact your local animal shelter to find out about these and other services.

Week 10

Parasites and Zoonotic Diseases



Share love, not germs.

Scenario: The first thing Francis loves to do when she comes home from work is give her dog, Zuma, a big hug. Zuma, a very loving pup, shows the love she has for her owner by licking and giving Francis many “doggy kisses” on her face.

ASK the group: Are “doggy kisses” the best way to allow our dogs to show their love?

ACKNOWLEDGE audience responses, then add: No. We should **not** allow our dogs to give us “doggy kisses.” As adorable as those doggie kisses may be, they are also a way that dogs can transmit diseases and bacteria to humans, known as “zoonoses.” Remember, dogs don’t use toilet paper. They lick themselves to clean themselves--another good reason to not allow for our faces to be licked.

The Furry Fact: Zoonoses are spread directly from infected animals to people through contact with:

- Skin
- Saliva
- Stool
- Bites
- Scratches

Internal worms, or parasites, of dogs and cats can also infect people – make sure your pet is regularly de-wormed under the guidance of your veterinarian, and that you wash your hands **immediately** after you clean up after them and when you handle any other animal.

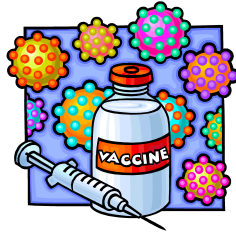
Other zoonotic diseases can be spread to people through flea or tick bites, including flea-borne Typhus, Rocky Mountain Spotted-Fever, and Lyme disease.

Tips to protect yourself from zoonoses:

- Wash your hands often when touching ANY animal
- Avoid “pet kisses,” especially on the face
- Keep your pet up-to-date on its vaccinations
- Pick up your pet’s stool right away
- Perform tick checks on your pet and yourself
- Have your pet checked regularly by your vet

Week 11

Vaccinations



The best wealth is good health!

Scenario: Robert does not think his dog, Pebbles, should be vaccinated since he is an indoor dog. Pebbles seems happy and so far shown no health problems. Similarly, Robert doesn't think his daughter Vanessa should be vaccinated again, since she already received a series of vaccines when she was a baby. Robert thinks that is enough. He believes vaccines can make pets and humans sick, so he thinks it is best to not allow Vanessa and Pebbles to get them as they age.

ASK the group: Is Robert's decision to not allow his loved ones to be vaccinated a good idea?

No. Vaccinations help save lives by preventing dangerous and deadly diseases. Vaccinating pets and humans can also help save a lot of money by reducing visits to the doctor or hospital due to being sick. These are the 5 most important reasons why children, adults, and pets should be vaccinated:

1. Immunizations can save your child and your pet's life
2. Vaccination is very safe and effective
3. Immunization protects others you care about
4. Immunizations can save your family time and money
5. Immunization protects future generations

ASK the group: How often should pets and people be vaccinated?

What many people do not realize is that vaccinating one time is not enough! Humans and pets require a series of vaccines in early age, and other vaccines including boosters throughout their lives. At the end of today's walking session, please look at the links below about vaccine schedules for children, adults, and pets so that you always know when it is time to get vaccinated against deadly diseases. Remember:

Don't wait. Vaccinate!

Vaccine schedule for people: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/IZschedule.htm>

Vaccine schedule for pets: http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/docs/7Tips-keepingPetHealthy_ENG.pdf

Week 12

Building Strong Communities



Do you know your neighbors?

Scenario: Ramon and his wife, Julie, just moved into their new home. Later that week, Julie and Ramon were outside watering the grass when their next-door neighbors, Steve and Adrianna, stopped by to introduce themselves and welcome them to the neighborhood. Steve and Adrianna were having a barbeque later that afternoon and invited Julie and Ramon to come over for dinner.

Friendly Interactions

Studies have found that diverse communities that are united and work together during emergency situations recover sooner than those less unified. These communities also have better overall health. How exactly do communities become united? Positive interactions between people from different backgrounds contribute to how a community runs. This helps people get to know one another and feel a sense of belonging in their community, creating a healthy environment for everyone who lives in it.

ASK the group: How many people do you know in your neighborhood?

ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add: Most of us fear having people intrude in our lives, but it is important to recognize the risk in not knowing the people around you. This doesn't mean you have to become the closest of friends with your neighbors. It's actually the loose ties that can make a community a happy place. By doing any of the following, you are helping to create a safer and friendlier neighborhood:

- Walking in your neighborhood
- Attending community events
- Making it a point to say hello, or simply waving
- Offering to collect your neighbors' newspaper when they are away
- Introducing yourself if you are new to the neighborhood, or when people move into your neighborhood

ASK audience: Has anyone in your neighborhood ever helped you when you needed something?

ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add: It's the little things that matter the most! Perhaps you are in the mood to bake your favorite whole wheat banana muffins. However, you do not have the one egg you need and you can't go to the store because your car is in the shop. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to ask your neighbor for the egg for your muffins? Or, perhaps you are leaving town for the weekend and need someone to water your plants. The smallest gestures go such a long way, and help establish a reliable network of people who are willing to help.

Week 13

Building Strong Communities

Being the Voice of your Community



Scenario: Joel loves taking walks in his neighborhood. For the last two weeks, he has noticed growing piles of trash left at a park near his home. After speaking with his neighbors, Joel discovered that they also noticed the trash and are starting to notice a foul smell. Joel and his neighbors thought about what they could do to fix this problem. They decided to contact the local trash collection agency to make them aware of the issue. The local trash agency said they stopped collecting the trash because the park gates have been closed in the early morning hours. This problem was out of their control since they do not have the key to the park gates. Joel, his neighbors, and the local trash agency attended the next city council meeting to inform their local representatives. Unaware of the issue, city council agreed to ensure park officials opened the gates to the park an hour before the trash trucks would arrive. Soon, all trash was picked up from the park and no longer left behind.

ASK the group: Have you ever been unhappy about something in your neighborhood?

ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add: If your answer is yes, there is a chance that other people have felt the same way, just like Joel and his neighbors in the scenario. It is common for people to think addressing a community problem is out of their reach. As a result, many decide that the best thing to do is to leave the issue alone, hoping it will disappear over time, or they rely on someone else to assume responsibility.

ASK the group: How did Joel and his neighbors take control of the issue at their local park?

ACKNOWLEDGE responses, then add: An important characteristic of a strong neighborhood is when its members come together to inform city leaders (e.g. the mayor, city council, city hall, etc.) about something they think is unsafe, unsightly, or is a nuisance in their community.

Be a voice for your community! Ask other members of the community to join you to speak up for what you want to see improve in your community. That voice can be even louder when others from your community join with their support and work together to reach a common goal.

Tools and Resources

Nutrition and Obesity

Choose Health LA!

<http://www.choosehealthla.com/>

Physical Activity

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Physical Activity for Everyone

<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/index.html>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

National Institutes of Health

National Heart Lung and Blood Institute

Body Mass Index (BMI)

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/BMI/bmicalc.htm>

Emergency Preparedness

<https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>

Vaccinations

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/default.htm>

Children 0-6 years old:

English: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs-sp.pdf>

Pre-Teens/Teens:

English: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/downloads/parent-version-schedule-7-18yrs.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/downloads/parent-version-schedule-7-18yrs-sp.pdf>

Adults:

English: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-schedule-easy-read.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4030-01.pdf>

Animal Health

Animal Control Agencies in LA County

<https://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/AnimalControlList.htm>

Animal Disease

<https://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/AnimalDiseaseList.htm>

Healthv Pets. Healthv Families

http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/HPHF/HPHF_Obesity.htm

Los Angeles County Veterinary Public Health Program

313 N. Figueroa St. #1127

Los Angeles, CA 90012

(213) 989-7060

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/index.htm>

Dog-Friendly Walking Group Waiver of Participation

I, _____, agree that as a participant of the Dog-Friendly Walking Group ("Group), I am aware that voluntarily participating in Group physical activities are potentially hazardous and could cause injury or death. With my signature, I certify that I am medically able to perform all activities associated with the Group and am in good health as determined by my healthcare provider. I agree to abide by all rules established by the Group. I assume all risks associated with being a member of this Group and participating in Group activities which may include: falls, contact with other participants, the effects of the weather (including high heat and/or humidity), traffic and the conditions of the roads or sidewalks, all such risks being known and appreciated by me.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent's Signature if under 18 years: _____ **Date:** _____

Dog Friendly Walking Group Sign-in

Site Name: _____ Date: _____

Last Name	First Name	Cell Phone	E-mail	Walking with your dog today? YES/NO
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				



**TAKE THE PLEDGE
TO BE ACTIVE!**



I, _____, will achieve **2 hours**
and 30 minutes of physical activity every week by
committing to walking _____ times a week, for a
total of _____ minutes each time.

Signature: _____



PLEDGE FOR YOUR PET!



I, _____, pledge to stay healthy by walking
with my owner, _____, times per week for
_____minutes each time.

Paw Print:

Quick Tips to Recruit Your Neighbors, Friends, and Family for the Dog-Friendly Walking Group

1. Talk to them.

Next time you are with your family or are walking down the street and see one of your neighbors, inform them about the walking group!

2. Post flyers in your neighborhood.

Posting flyers in places where people often pass by is a great way to let them know what you are doing and a great way to get them involved. (See flyer on Page 29)

3. Utilize social media sites (e.g. Nextdoor®, Meetup® or similar platforms).

Social media sites can be a great resource because they have information about existing walking groups and about people looking to participate in group exercise.

Stride with Paws

Dog-Friendly Walking Groups



Let's make a difference together!

We are looking for volunteers to lead dog-friendly walking groups.

Benefits:

- 🐾 Be a community leader
- 🐾 Educate your community about healthy behaviors
- 🐾 Meet your neighbors
- 🐾 Improve your health
- 🐾 Stay active with your dog

Requirements:

- 🐾 Host one 30-minute walk each week
- 🐾 12-week commitment
- 🐾 Use our toolkit to provide health messages during your walk

To get involved or for more information,
please contact vet@ph.lacounty.gov
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/HPHF/WalkingGroup.htm>

