

Mecklenburg County Health Department

Health Fair Planning Guide

If you are coordinating a health fair, these ideas can get you started. Approximately 2-3 months is appropriate to plan a health fair, depending on the size and type of fair. The following steps are necessary:

Set Up a Planning Committee

Two or more people should be designated to do the planning in conjunction with others that will be involved during the fair. It is necessary to clearly establish the responsibilities of people within the committee.

> [See Sample Planning Timeline](#)

Decide on the Theme

Your health fair needs to have a theme or focus. This may be to promote Public Health, or it may be more specific theme on Heart Health.

Set Date, Time and Location

You need to decide when you want to hold your fair. Specifically, what time of year, what day of the week and what time of day. You need to consider your "target group" or who you feel would be most interested in attending your fair. It is necessary to consider dates and times which make your fair easy for people to plan to attend. For instance, daytime hours are not always good for working people, but possibly great for seniors, or school-aged children. Evenings are often good for families and people who work during the day. It is also important to decide on the location early, since places such as recreation facilities are often booked well in advance. Attempt to locate space free of charge, since it may be available in most communities. You should also consider your target group when deciding on location, since some places are not easily accessible for people of all ages and those with physical disabilities. The location needs to be large enough to accommodate all the displays. Tables must be available for the displays, as well as appropriate lighting and enough electrical outlets at the site. Ensure that there is enough parking at the location and it is helpful to find out if there is anyone like a custodian who will be available at the site.

Arrange Displays and Topics

Once you have done everything to this point, the next step is to decide what type of displays you will have and the topics for each display. If you are having a Heart Health Fair, then you will want to have displays on all the different risk factors for heart disease such as smoking, high blood pressure, weight, and inactivity. You may wish to have a display explaining the heart and heart disease and give specific statistics on the incidence of heart disease in that area if available or in the province.

You will need to decide how many displays and how much space each one needs. It is wise to book any equipment you may need in advance, It is also beneficial to create displays that are very eye-catching and colorful, as well as easy to understand. Reading level is an important consideration when preparing a display for a particular group of people. One or two messages should be the focus for a display, instead of overwhelming the audience with an abundance of information. It is often helpful if a display allows the participant to be actively involved, instead of simply reading information. For example, a quiz board allows people to answer questions where the correct answer will light up if it is chosen.

Finally, it is helpful to have different resource people available to answer any questions related to specific areas of prevention or treatment.

Invite Resource People

Invite different resource people to attend or possibly set up a display from their own organization. These resource people can be available to answer questions on prevention, treatment, education, as related to their area of expertise as it relates to the theme of the fair. For example, for a Heart Health Fair you may like to invite the Heart and Stroke Foundation or the Newfoundland Lung Association.

It is wise to contact these people as early as possible. Once you have decided on theme, displays, topics and resource people, then record the number of displays for the fair and make sure you have a contact person for each display if you are not planning all of them. If there are different resource people and

organizations setting up displays, be sure to correctly inform them, in writing, of the date, time, location and theme or focus for the fair. Be sure to indicate when they can set up their display(s). Send a letter 1-2 weeks in advance, to confirm their involvement.

Arrange for Donations, Prizes and Food

Some organizations may donate some of their products for a worthwhile event. For example, Central Dairies may donate some milk for a Heart Health Fair. If there are any funds available, it may be worthwhile to purchase a few door prizes for participants. For example, at a Heart Health Fair, heart healthy cookbooks are a good prize and/or gift certificate at a local athletic shop. As well, if there is money available, it is an added touch to have healthy snacks available for people throughout the fair. These snacks can be prepared by a local women's group in consultation with a Nutritionist from Community Health.

Promotion of Fair

The publicity of your health fair is very important. It is necessary to consider the most likely way that your target audience could hear about the fair. The media is a great way for a large number of people to become informed about an upcoming event. Advertising, through the media can be bought or in kind, which is free of charge. It is important to inform the media as much as you can about your event, but to be concise with details. Remember to indicate that there is no fee for the fair. The following ways to advertise are most effective:

Radio

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
(Contact 3-5 days in advance)
Interviews

Cable TV

Local station printout
(contact 1-2 weeks in advance)

Newspaper

Local paper advertising
(contact 2-3 weeks in advance)
Reporter on-site to do story
(contact 2 weeks in advance and follow-up)

It is often necessary to make follow-up phone calls to these individuals a day or two before your event.

As well, posters and flyers can be made and put up in many local establishments within a week of the event. Sometimes flyers can be sent in the mail to residents if it is free of charge. Church bulletins are also a good way to reach families and community people. It is wise to put an announcement in the bulletin two Sundays prior to your event. It is important to contact your church bulletin well in advance, since some churches put their bulletins together weeks in advance.

It is always wise to send specific invitations to particular groups or individuals who you would like to see in attendance at the fair.

Day of Fair

There are many things you should remember to bring or to send in advance by courier. This includes all the display panels, posters, logos and banners that you may need. As well, equipment such as VCRs, slide projectors or overhead projectors must be taken with you. For a Heart Health Fair, you may need glucometers, blood pressure cuffs and a scale in order to check blood glucose (sugar), blood pressure and Body Mass Index (BMI), respectively. Ensure that there are a sufficient number of tables available at your site in advance. Be sure to have available all the pamphlets and information that you may need, however, do not leave large quantities on display. This encourages people to take one even though it may be thrown away. It is better to stimulate conversation and determine whether a participant would like this information. Finally, a few last items that are necessary to bring along: scissors, tape, markers, extension cords, rolls of paper to cover tables and possibly some decorative items like streamers. Finally, the day of the fair:

- allow enough time for set up
- designate a committee person to be host
- set up a registration type desk and record names
- meet with custodian early
- continue to coordinate throughout the event

Evaluation

You want to determine whether your fair was a success or not. It may be helpful to record any comments or suggestions of people at the fair. As well, it may be a good idea to have a brief questionnaire for every tenth person, or so, as they are leaving to find out their opinions. It is necessary for the people involved in planning the fair to give their feedback as to the organization as well as the implementation of the event. A short report could be written to summarize the event. This would be very helpful when it comes to planning another fair or similar event.

> [See Sample Evaluation Form](#)

Health Fair Planning Guide

- SAMPLE -

Time Table Checklist for the Health Fair



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Time Table Checklist for the Health Fair

6 Months Before the Health Fair:

- Establish goals and objectives for the Health Fair.
- Select a co-chair and planning committee members.
- Form and meet with subcommittees.
- Identify target audiences.
- Select a theme.
- Select a date and time.
- Select and reserve the location.
- Identify possible services, information, exhibits, activities.
- Prepare a budget.

3 Months Before the Health Fair:

- Establish timelines.
- Secure commitments from health care providers, exhibitors, etc.
- Ask exhibitors, clinicians, and other people working in the Health Fair to reserve the selected date.
- Secure volunteers, including someone who can take pictures the day of the fair and someone to welcome and direct participants.
- Select health screenings and services to be offered.
- Decide on exhibits, activities, demonstrations, etc.
- Reserve rental equipment.
- Reserve tables and chairs.

3 Months Before the Health Fair:

- Order educational and promotional materials from agencies (ex. the American Heart Association, Red Cross, American Diabetes Association, etc.)
- Plan and begin securing prizes, decorations, goodie bags, giveaways, films, etc.
- Secure cash box; plan for change needs at the fair.
- Reserve handtrucks, carts, etc.
- Reserve trash receptacles.
- Plan to secure trash bags.
- Plan to secure tablecloths.
- Make posters, flyers, etc. to publicize the event.
- Duplicate printed materials, such as registration and evaluation forms.
- Locate and line up needed equipment (chairs, tables, and other necessary supplies).
- Receive written commitments from exhibitors, providers, volunteers, etc.
- Provide written confirmation to exhibitors, including the following:
 - date of event, time (to set up booth and hours open to public), location (include a map), general guidelines, title for their booth signs (provided by either committee or exhibitor), ask exhibitors to bring special equipment (such as extension cords, three-prong adaptors), ask exhibitors about space and electrical requirements.
- Receive written requests from exhibitors for special arrangements

1 Month Before the Health Fair:

- Meet with committee chairs to review progress towards implementation of plans.
- Publicize the event with flyers, posters, etc.
- Contact television, radio, and newspapers to publicize.
- Plan booth, exhibits, and classroom locations.
- Make booth signs.
- Make map for exhibitors and participants.
- Make the program, acknowledging exhibitors, volunteers, donors, etc.
- Make a list of items still needed to be purchased.

Make a “be prepared for anything kit” by gather the following:

- Pens and pencils
- Felt-tipped markers—large, small, different colors
- Extension cords
- Paper clips, rubber bands, tacks, pins
- Stapler and extra staples
- Scotch, masking, and duct tape
- Hammer, nails, pliers, and screwdriver
- Posterboard
- Paper
- Batteries
- Emergency kit with first aid supplies
- Trash bags
- Paper towels
- Kleenex
- Camera and film for the volunteer photographer
- Phone book, exhibitor and volunteer lists with phone numbers, etc.

1 Week Before the Health Fair:

- Confirm with all participants.
- Print map and program.
- Make exhibitor, volunteer, chairman, etc. nametags.
- Purchase perishable items, safely store, etc.
- Make list of where volunteers will be assigned the day of the health fair.
- Finalize plan for the registration table and registration process.
- Finalize plan for staffing, including command center table.
- Finalize plan for evaluation, including distribution and collection.

Day Before the Health Fair:

- Set up tables, booths, exhibits, chairs, classrooms, etc.
 - Bring the “be prepared for anything kit.”
 - Label the command center table and equip it with the “be prepared for anything kit.”
- Set up the registration table, including:
- Sign-in/registration sheets, including addresses and phone numbers
 - Plenty of pens and pencils for participants
 - Maps of exhibits and programs
 - “Goody bags” for giveaways
 - Assignment list for volunteers
- Set up the evaluation area, including forms for exhibitors and participants.
 - Set up the food area.
 - Make sure there are enough electrical cords, outlets, audiovisual equipment, etc.

Day of the Health Fair:

- Set up as needed.
- Be ready one hour before opening.
- Direct and instruct volunteers.
- Collect registrations.
- Collect evaluations.
- Clean up.
- Estimate attendance.

Follow-up After the Health Fair:

- Send thank you letters to exhibitors, volunteers, etc.
- Check with health agencies doing screenings to make sure follow-up is done for all lab results.
- Tabulate evaluation results.
- Determine and document possible improvements for next time.
- Report results to the Committee, exhibitors, media, etc., as appropriate.

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- SAMPLE -

Evaluation Form



Health Fair Evaluation

Your name _____ Date _____

Your organization or affiliation _____

Thank you for participating in the Health Fair. In order to plan for future events, we would appreciate answers to the following questions:

1. How would you rate the Health Fair in general? Excellent Fair Poor
 Comments _____

2. Do you plan any changes in the things you normally do as a result of anything you learned or participated in at the Health Fair, such as taking a class or stopping smoking?

 Yes No
 Comments _____

3. How do you plan on using any of the Health Fair information received today? Please check all the ways you plan to use the information you received today.
 - I do not plan to use the information.
 - I plan to read pamphlets for my own benefit.
 - I plan to share information with friends, relatives, or neighbors.
 If so, how many? _____
 - I plan to see a doctor.
 - I found that I had a health problem I did not know about before.
 - I found that someone in my family had a health problem we did not know about before.
 - I learned about one or more health agencies and their services that I did not know about before.

4. List your favorite exhibitors/booths/activities and speakers.

My favorite exhibitors/booths/speakers	My favorite speakers

5. Why did you come to the Health Fair? Check all that apply.
 - Free Convenient Curious about health Felt badly recently
 - My school came My family came I was at the fair
 - Other

6. How did you hear about the Health Fair?
 - TV (specify station) _____
 - Radio (specify station) _____
 - Newspaper (which one?) _____
 - Poster (specify where) _____
 - Word of mouth _____
 - Do not remember
 - Other

7. Screenings, etc., I had today:

- Blood Pressure
- Blood Sugar
- Cholesterol
- Diabetes Education
- Healthy Heart Evaluation

8. If you had an abnormality detected through screening, do you plan on getting a follow-up examination? Yes _____ No _____

9. I would attend a Health Fair next year. Yes _____ No _____

10. Topics I would like to see at the next Health Fair:

11. General comments and suggestions (bad and good equally welcome).

12. *Optional* (so we can get further information from you about the above, if needed):

Name: _____

Home Phone #: _____

Office Phone # _____

Thank you for your help!