

CREATIVE IDEAS FOR YOUR HEART HEALTH PROGRAM

Below are some **creative things you can do in your heart health program**. These work well in combination with the NHLBI's heart health materials. Be sure to work with your team to come up with your own ideas, too!

- 1 Go on a field trip.** Find out about events and exhibits that relate to heart health and attend them as a group. This is a great way to reinforce the heart health information that you teach. It also helps people connect to resources in your community. If needed, plan ahead to get free passes for the people in your program. Take a group trip to fresh food markets that are located in the community where people in your program live. Together you can look at and talk about the foods that you see.
- 2** Do your participants have smartphones? If so, **share phone apps** that teach heart health or help reinforce key heart health messages. Make sure that any apps you select are science-based and approved by your organization. Try out the National Institute of Health's phone apps for:
 - [Smoking cessation](#),
 - [Dietary supplements](#), and
 - [Body mass index](#).
- 3 Find and show video clips** related to the NHLBI's heart health topics that people in your program would find interesting. For example, watch [Movimiento](#)—and maybe even dance along!
- 4 Create your own video** about the heart health topics you have covered. This could be done in many creative ways. For example, you can make a music video or a soap opera.
- 5 Do a puppet show.** Have the people in your program come up with their own way to explain heart health that they can then teach to children. They can do the puppet show at a local school, child care center, or community center.
- 6 Make a meal together.** Use fresh ingredients and follow local, popular recipes that are heart healthy or reinvent one of your favorite dishes to be more heart healthy.
- 7 Have participants bring in their favorite recipe.** As a group, talk about ways to do a heart healthy makeover, such as lowering fat, salt, and sugar. If you have time, have a cooking day where participants can try making their recipe with some substitutions.

8 Create a scrapbook. Have the people in your program take turns taking photos during each session. They can then create scrapbooks at the end of the program. They can include the photos as well as write down what they did in each session. This can be a great way for them to recall what they learned and share how they will use the information in their lives.

9 Develop role plays. A role play is where people act out a scenario about a certain topic. Share some heart health topics and have people in your program come up with their own scenarios. This is often more useful than writing the role play for them. For example, have people come up with a role play about ways to

- Use what they have learned in their lives and
- Overcome challenges to being heart healthy.

When people do role plays, they automatically review what they have been taught. They also get to take what is “on paper” and apply it to their lives. This is a great way to reinforce what you taught them.

10 Start a walking club. Start small. Walk around your neighborhood or nearby park. If the weather is bad, find an indoor location (e.g., mall).

11 Invite guest speakers that the people in your program would enjoy, such as

- A dietitian, nutritionist, or chef who does healthy cooking demonstrations;
- Someone from the community who is a survivor of a heart attack, stroke, or lung cancer who can inspire the people in your program to exercise, eat well, and not smoke; or
- A fitness instructor who can share different exercises.

12 Have a party! Have potlucks or graduation ceremonies where everyone can show off the heart healthy dishes that they have prepared. People can take turns presenting their dish and describing why it is heart healthy.



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