National Public Health Week
Pledge to Live a Healthy Life

This year for National Public Health Week, April 6 – 10, 2015, the focus is on creating the healthiest nation in one generation. In Santa Barbara County, we are asking residents to take a pledge to make one step towards a healthier life at www.sbcphd.org.

Personal behaviors such as a poor diet and being physically inactive are major contributing factors in chronic diseases (vascular disease, cancer, lung disease and type 2 diabetes) that affect the quality and longevity of life. As individuals and as a community, our health is highly dependent on the lifestyle choices we make every day. The small yet significant steps we take to eat nutritious foods, get physical activity, avoid tobacco products and get regular check-ups can make a real difference in our health.

In the past century, we have seen tremendous success working across all fields of public health. As we embrace the challenge to become the healthiest nation in one generation, it is helpful to remember how far we have come:

- Healthier mothers and babies – Infant and maternal mortality rates have decreased due to improvements in nutrition, advances in clinical medicine, improvements in access to health care.
- Immunizations – National efforts to promote vaccine use among all children has helped eradicate smallpox and dramatically decrease cases of polio, measles, and other diseases.
- Motor vehicle safety – A huge reduction in the rate of death attributable to motor vehicle crashes.
- Family Planning – Increased contraception use and public health education have resulted in fewer unplanned pregnancies, desired birth spacing, and intentional family size.
- Tobacco as a health hazard – During 1964-1992, approximately 1.6 million deaths caused by smoking were prevented thanks to substantial public health efforts.
- Decline in deaths from heart attack and stroke – There have been remarkable declines in deaths from both diseases; since 1950, cardiovascular deaths have declined 60% and stroke rates have declined 70%.

We invite each resident of Santa Barbara County to take the pledge with us to live a long, healthy life free from injury and diseases by making healthy choices. Please join us at www.sbcphd.org

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