



# CONSORTIUM CONNECTION

\* "HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH LIFESTYLES, HEALTHY COMMUNITY" \* [HEALTHYMIAMIDADE.ORG](https://HEALTHYMIAMIDADE.ORG)



## September at a Glance

- ✓ HEALTHY AGING MONTH
- ✓ NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH
- ✓ NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH
- ✓ COMMUNITY HEALTH CORNER



## Attention!

We are proud to support our community organizations, community partners, and residents working to improve health across Miami-Dade County.

Have a program, event, or resource you'd like to share with the community? Please send in your submissions no later than the 15th of each month to

[Natouchka.Murray@flhealth.gov](mailto:Natouchka.Murray@flhealth.gov)

Stay connected and help spread awareness of local health initiatives.

Visit: [HealthyMiamiDade.org](https://HealthyMiamiDade.org)



SEPTEMBER IS...

## HEALTHY AGING MONTH

Healthy Aging Month promotes healthy lifestyle choices that support well-being, independence, and quality of life throughout every stage of aging. Regular physical activity, nutritious eating, preventive health screenings, quality sleep, social connections, and lifelong learning can all contribute to healthier aging. This year's theme, "Curiosity Has No Age Limit," encourages individuals to stay mentally engaged, physically active, and open to new experiences while challenging outdated stereotypes about growing older.



### Lifelong Learning

- **Learn something new:** Explore a class, skill, hobby, or new topic.
- **Stay curious:** Read, ask questions, and discover new interests.
- **Try something new:** Step outside your usual routine, explore new interests, and embrace experiences that bring joy, curiosity, and personal growth.



### Physical Activity

- **Keep moving:** Make enjoyable physical activity part of your routine.
- **Try a new activity:** Explore walking, yoga, swimming, dancing, or tai chi.
- **Get outdoors:** Visit a park, trail, or community space.



### Social Connection:

- **Stay connected:** Make time for family, friends, and meaningful conversations.
- **Connect across generations:** Share experiences and gain new perspectives.
- **Get involved:** Join community events, classes, or local activities.

Sources: [Healthy Aging](https://HealthyAging.org)



## NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH



National Preparedness Month encourages individuals, families, and communities to take steps to prepare for emergencies and disasters. Creating an emergency plan, building an emergency supply kit, and staying informed can help keep you and your loved ones safe when the unexpected occurs. The 2026 theme, "Americans Stand Ready," emphasizes preparedness, self-reliance, and the importance of working together to help protect and strengthen our communities.

### PREPAREDNESS TIPS:

- **Know your risks:** Learn about the types of emergencies that could affect your community and how to respond.
- **Make a plan:** Develop a family emergency and communication plan, including where to meet and how to contact one another.
- **Build an emergency kit:** Include essentials such as water, nonperishable food, medications, flashlights, batteries, first-aid supplies, and phone chargers.
- **Stay informed:** Sign up for local emergency alerts and follow instructions from local officials.
- **Plan for everyone:** Consider the needs of children, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and pets when preparing.

Sources: [Ready](#)



## NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month encourages families, schools, and communities to help children develop lifelong healthy habits. Small changes, such as eating more fruits and vegetables, limiting sugary beverages, staying physically active, and getting enough sleep, can have a lasting impact on children's health.

### Preventing Childhood Obesity: 6 Things Families Can Do

Healthy habits developed during childhood can support lifelong health and well-being. The CDC's "Preventing Childhood Obesity: 6 Things Families Can Do" offers practical ways parents and caregivers can support healthy growth, including healthy eating, physical activity, healthy sleep routines, and reduced screen time. Explore the CDC resource to learn more about simple steps families can take to build healthier habits together.

**Learn more:** [CDC – Preventing Childhood Obesity: 6 Things Families Can Do](#)

**Source:** [CDC](#)





## Community Health Corner

### TINY TEETH, BIG IMPACT



Parents often hear that baby teeth eventually fall out, but that doesn't mean they're any less important. Healthy primary teeth help children eat nutritious foods, learn to speak clearly, smile with confidence and create space for their permanent teeth to grow properly.

Establishing healthy habits early can make a lifelong difference. Brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, choosing water over sugary drinks and scheduling regular dental visits all help prevent cavities before they start. Just as importantly, these routines teach children taking care of their health is a normal part of everyday life.

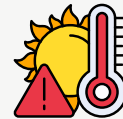
Dental visits aren't just about treating problems, they're about preventing them. Early checkups allow dental teams to monitor growth, provide guidance tailored to each child's needs and help children feel comfortable in the dental office from an early age.

Every healthy smile begins with education, prevention, and partnership with families. While baby teeth may be temporary, the healthy habits established early in life can help support strong, confident smiles for years to come.

**Written by:** Mariella Gomez | Dental Care Alliance



### HEAT SAFETY FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES



Extreme heat can affect every child, but some children with disabilities may face additional challenges that increase their risk of heat-related illness. Children with certain disabilities may have underlying medical conditions, take medications that affect the body's ability to regulate temperature, rely on mobility devices or medical equipment, or need support from caregivers during emergencies. For example, children with Down syndrome often have co-occurring health conditions, such as congenital heart disease or hypothyroidism, that may reduce heat tolerance. Some children with autism may have difficulty recognizing or communicating that they are thirsty or overheated or may experience sensory differences that make it harder to respond to rising temperatures.

Families and caregivers can help reduce these risks by encouraging frequent hydration, limiting outdoor activities during the hottest hours of the day, planning regular breaks in cool or shaded areas, and learning to recognize early signs of heat-related illness, including fatigue, dizziness, nausea, confusion, or unusual changes in behavior.

Heat safety should be inclusive. Accessible emergency information, cooling centers, transportation, and community outreach can help ensure that children with disabilities and their families remain safe during periods of extreme heat.

**Written by:** Lorena Zenteno Villa, LL.M, S.J.D Candidate University of Miami | Advocacy Network on Disabilities





## Community Health Corner

### SWIM SAFETY AND AUTISM



Drowning is the leading cause of death in children ages 1-4 according to the CDC; however, drowning is the leading cause of death for children of all ages with autism. Children with autism are 160 times more likely to drown than their neurotypical peers, according to Columbia University. Children with autism face a higher risk of drowning due to "elopement" a tendency to wander off, according to the National Library of Medicine. One reason for elopement is the attraction to how light shines off the water, said Katie Williams, director of clinical operations at Florida Autism Center.

According to Zero Drownings Miami-Dade, incorporating multiple layers of protection including; swim lessons, barriers, alarms, life jackets, CPR and rescue procedures are critical. Swimsuit visibility also saves lives; a swimsuit is more than aesthetics as some colors vanish under the water.

There is no substitute for 1:1 supervision; incorporate "tag, you're it" designating a water watcher during water activities. Children can drown in as little time as it takes to go inside and get a towel or put a load of laundry in the washer. Having someone designated constantly to supervise any children near the water or in the water is crucial. For additional information visit: <https://www.zerodrowningsmiamidade.org/>

**Written by:** Donna Wade | Advocacy Network on Disabilities

