

HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES

Vision

Through local and statewide health opportunities, SOWI's vision is to create communities where Special Olympics athletes and others with intellectual disability have the same access to health and wellness resources – and can attain the same level of good health – as others in their community.

Healthy Athletes

How it works

SOWI offers free screenings for athletes attending various State competitions in Special Smiles®, Healthy Hearing, Lion's Club International Opening Eyes®, Fun Fitness, Fit Feet, Health Promotion and MedFest®. To be eligible to participate in these programs, athletes or their guardians sign *The Special Olympics Participant Release form*. The athlete must also have a current *Athlete Medical Form* on file at the Headquarters office. Athletes do not have to be participating at the Games in order to take advantage of Healthy Athletes. Any athlete with a current medical on file at the Headquarters office can participate.

The providers (physicians, physician assistant, nurse practitioners, dentists, dental hygienists, optometrists, opticians, physical therapists, audiologists, podiatrists, dieticians, registered nurses and more) see the athletes in an environment familiar to them and perform exams in a setting among the athlete's peers. The potentially nerve-wracking experience of seeing a doctor is well received by the majority of athletes in this setting.

Added Benefits

While athletes are certainly the focus of this program, medical professionals and students are given an opportunity to teach each other techniques for screening members of this population. Many of the volunteers have been deeply impacted by their experience.

Healthy Athletes Disciplines Offered

Fit Feet: Fit Feet was developed in collaboration with the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine to evaluate and screen foot and ankle deformities of athletes and to provide education in proper footwear and care of the feet and toenails.

FUNfitness: Physical therapy professionals provide screening and education on flexibility, functional strength, and balance and advise athletes on good fitness programs for risk prevention and for optimal function in sports training and competition.

Health Promotion: Professionals educate athletes about nutrition and exercise, as well as bone health, smoking cessation and sun safety using interactive activities and motivational information to encourage behavior change. Blood pressure and bone mineral density screenings are also available at Health Promotions.

Healthy Hearing: Audiologists assess athlete hearing and provide external ear canal inspection, evoked otoacoustic emissions screening, tympanometry and pure tone screening for those with identified need. Referrals may include further testing of middle ear problems or management of hearing loss or hearing aids, molded ear plugs or earwax removal.

Lions Club International Opening Eyes: Opening Eyes brings eye care professionals in to offer vision health tests and possible refraction, prescription eyeglasses, prescription protective sports eyewear, and referral for follow-up care.

Special Smiles: Dental professionals provide screenings, health education and prevention services, and refer athletes for follow-up care. Fitted mouth guards and fluoride varnish are offered to athletes. Funding for Special Smiles is provided by Delta Dental of Wisconsin, Inc.

MedFest: Conducts standard sports physicals required for participation in Special Olympics events. This physical permits new athletes to register and assures continued eligibility of existing athletes.

For more information on Healthy Athletes, visit SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org, or contact the Director of Health Programs.

2017-2018 Healthy Athlete dates and locations:

November 11, 2017 – MedFest and Special Smiles at Dales Weston Lanes in Schofield

March 4, 2018 – Fit Feet at Homestead High School in Mequon

April 8, 2018 – Fun Fitness, Healthy Hearing, Opening Eyes and Special Smiles offered at the State Indoor Sports Tournament at UW Oshkosh

June 8, 2018 – Health Promotion, Opening Eyes and Special Smiles offered at State Summer Games at UW Stevens Point

June 9, 2018 – Healthy Hearing offered on Saturday of State Summer Games at UW Stevens Point

August 4, 2018 – Fit Feet, Health Promotions and Special Smiles offered at the State Outdoor Sports Tournament at Carroll University in Waukesha

All athletes are welcome to visit Healthy Athletes! They do not have to be competing at the Games in order to take advantage of the services and give-a-ways at Healthy Athlete events. Any athlete with a current medical on file at the Headquarters office can participate.

SOFit

How it works

SOFit is a program designed to encourage athletes to participate in year-round wellness initiatives outside of traditional Special Olympics events. As a Unified program, *SOFit* strives to empower athletes and Unified Partners to challenge and change the way they look at diet, daily exercise and lifestyle choices.

Fit Clubs

SOFit Clubs promotes community-based training at recreation departments, community fitness centers, or even local group or family homes. Fit Clubs are designed with four pillars of wellness in mind: Physical, Emotional, Social and Nutritional. The goals of Fit Clubs are:

1. Guide individuals with and without intellectual disabilities to maintain healthier lifestyles through increased physical activity and improved daily nutrition
2. Increase participants' knowledge about physical exercise, nutrition, nutritious meal preparation and shopping for nutritious food from pre-program to post-program
3. Allow participants to experience heightened social engagement and better emotional wellbeing as a byproduct of the inclusive nature of the program

Fit Club Implementation

Club commitments

- Each club must commit to running an 8-12 week session meeting at least once/week
- Clubs will collect metrics at beginning and end of each 8-12 week session for each participant
- Clubs will collect *SOFit* specific paperwork that must be completed by each participant
- Clubs commit to abiding by Program Parameters outlined below

SOWI commitments

- Each club receives a Wellness Activity Guide
- Each participant receives a T-Shirt
- Participants receive various incentives for reaching pre-determined goals

Club Parameters

Each club meeting consists of two parts:

- Physical Activity: Choose physical activity topics from one of the Three Pillars of Physical Activity

Cardiovascular	Flexibility & Balance	Strength
Walking/Running Swimming Biking Elliptical/ Stair Climb Dance	Yoga Dynamic Movements Stretching Agility Equipment	Free Weights Fitness Equipment Bodyweight Routines Fitness Bands Medicine ball

- Educational Activity: Choose an educational topic from one of the Three Pillars of Wellness

Nutritional Wellness	Social Wellness	Emotional Wellness
Healthy Eating Nutrition Labels Portion Control Caffeine & Alcohol	Mindfulness Social Media Internet Safety Hygiene	Relationships Stress Management Bullying Self Esteem

For more information on *SOFit* or starting your own Fit Club, contact the Director of Training.