



Health Promotion Programme FAQs

With all Special Olympics Clubs being back to training following the summer break we thought now would be a good time to refresh us all on the Special Olympics Health Promotion Programme. Some frequently asked questions from clubs have been included below.

What's involved in the Special Olympics Ireland Health Promotion Programme?

The programme contains 15 short health workshops (up to 20 minutes) designed with our athletes in mind. The Health Promotion Programme is delivered during club training sessions, normally in groups of 5-10 athletes, a minimum of once per month.

Do I need to be qualified in health or nutrition?

No, Special Olympics Ireland provide all training and resources (toolkit and athlete packs); all we need from you is motivation, passion and the enthusiasm to promote health to the athletes in your local club.

Do we need a volunteer from our club to take on the Health Promotion Programme?

Ideally it works well to have a volunteer from within the club trained to deliver the Health Promotion Programme. There may be a family member who is interested in becoming more involved and this could be a perfect opportunity by becoming a Health Promotion Facilitator. However, if there is no one who wishes to take on the role of Health Promotion Facilitator within the club please let us know and we will do our best to source a volunteer. All Health Promotion Facilitators need to be registered volunteers with Special Olympics Ireland.

Do we need a spare room available at our training location?

No, often the workshops can be delivered in one corner of the training venue e.g. a sports hall with groups of athletes, some venues do have a separate room which can work well if the main area isn't suitable e.g. bowling alleys can be too loud and swimming pools don't work too well either!

Do all the athletes in our club need to be involved in the Health Promotion Programme?

No, to have a functioning Health Promotion Programme not all athletes need to attend the health workshops. For example the sessions might be more beneficial for certain groups of athletes depending on their ability or interests. In other cases the venue on one training night may be more suitable while another venue may not work as well.





What if we have no time to run our health sessions?

The sessions don't need to be very long and can run in 15 minutes at the beginning or the end of training, alternatively small groups of athletes can attend the sessions throughout the allocated time, e.g. in a group of 20 athletes, 5 could attend a 15 minute session and rotate throughout the allocated hour.

We have a specific issue in our club that we would like guidance on but there is nothing in the toolkit.

Sometimes a club may have a particular health related issue such as alcohol intake, personal hygiene or relationships. We could run a one off educational session with the athletes to cover this instead of or in addition to training or suggest other training for volunteers such as the Intellectual Disability modules.

Is there anything else available that is health related outside of the Health Promotion Programme?

Yes, the Healthy Athlete Programme (HAP) runs several times a year at larger events, here athletes receive clinical screenings and health education by dentists, hygienists and podiatrists. Health advisors will also provide information on a range of topics including nutrition, hydration, smoking cessation and disease prevention.

The Athlete Leadership programme also contains several health promoting workshops for example the 'Cook and Eat to Train' sessions which provide our athletes with practical ways to improve their nutrition at home.

If you would like any more information on the Special Olympics Health and Wellbeing initiatives please use the contact details below.

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