



# My Life Check<sup>®</sup> **Communications Rollout Guide**

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## Welcome to the My Life Check<sup>®</sup> Communications Rollout Guide

Thank you for making the decision to integrate the American Heart Association's My Life Check<sup>®</sup> assessment tool into your employee health program. We are very excited to have companies like yours, which are committed to improving employee health, satisfaction and productivity, participating in the program. This communications rollout guide is intended to provide you with general recommendations for how to communicate about My Life Check with your employees/eligible population.



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## About My Life Check

My Life Check is an online assessment tool designed to help you better track the heart health of your workforce by monitoring and measuring their number one threat: heart disease. It provides personalized nutrition and activity recommendations using AHA's Life Simple 7, the seven most important predictors of heart health. My Life Check translates sophisticated research into a simple approach to guide users through small steps they can take to move toward ideal heart health. The tool provides an overall heart health score for employees, along with personalized nutrition and activity recommendations. My Life Check also standardizes and aggregates employee assessment data to provide employers with a real-time snapshot of their employees' heart health which can impact overall health.

## About This Guide

Evidence shows that an effective communications strategy is a fundamental component of any successful workplace health and well-being program. It ensures your employees are aware of a program and understand its benefits, which in turn can amplify leader commitment; increase program appeal, employee trust and participation; and help normalize and sustain desired behaviors<sup>1</sup>.

This guide includes a suggested four-phased approach—Preparation, Launch, Follow-Up and Maintenance—to structure communications about the assessment tool. Accompanying this guide is a communications toolkit with recommended tactics and tested messaging that, when used in conjunction with other template materials included in the communications toolkit, will help improve employee engagement and participation. Since every company is different, this document is designed to provide general guidance that can be integrated into your existing company communications and employee health strategy. The recommendations are meant to be flexible and should be adjusted to meet varying business needs.

While this guide focuses on basic communications strategies for My Life Check implementation, there are numerous activities your company can employ to enhance employee engagement with the tool. My Life Check presents numerous opportunities to tap into your employees' competitive spirit with competitions, challenges and contests, and acknowledge healthy behavior change with recognition and rewards. Consider promotional activities like these to create excitement and inspire action with My Life Check.



1. <http://static.smallworldlabs.com/ceort/content/documents/CEORT%20Survey%20Toplevels.pdf>



# Phase 1

Preparation

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# Preparation

The first phase—Preparation—requires the most effort. The objective of the Preparation phase is to establish a communications structure and plan to ensure communications go smoothly and efficiently once the assessment tool is launched. We recommend starting to prepare for the communications rollout at least a month before the tool is launched.

## Put together a My Life Check team

This team will be responsible for coordinating the rollout and communications, and encouraging participation. You should:

- Look for opportunities to integrate and coordinate with different departments within the company by bringing them into the planning process.
- Engage an employee champion at each site who will be responsible for promoting My Life Check participation.
- Consider recruiting key functional representation from your Human Resources, IT and Communications departments to become part of the My Life Check team. This will ensure communications about My Life Check are incorporated into existing communication channels and workplace health programs.

Potential roles on the team could include a **Project Lead** to oversee the rollout, a **My Life Check Administrator** to facilitate and communicate about any technical questions and a **Point of Contact** to answer employee questions.

## Appoint employee champions

You should also appoint employee champions who will be responsible for encouraging participation among their peers. Choose employee champions from different locations and departments within the company to maximize reach, and engage these champions to promote My Life Check-related activities. In addition, provide employee champions with the talking points included in the communications toolkit to inform and standardize their communications with their fellow employees.

## Engage leadership

The first step in building a culture of health is to involve and engage company leadership. When company leaders demonstrate support and proactively role model healthy behavior, employee health efforts have been found to be more effective. In fact, an AHA-Nielsen survey showed that employees who feel encouraged by senior management to participate in workplace health programs are nearly twice as likely to report improved health as a result of program participation. Once the communications plan and tools are ready, share them with company leaders so they understand how to help encourage engagement. For example, we highly recommend engaging the CEO to send the initial launch announcement and at least one follow-up email, for which templates are included in this toolkit. If possible, you should also find ways for the CEO to participate in My Life Check in a visible and enthusiastic way.

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## Familiarize your team with the assessment tool

Members of the My Life Check team and the employee champions should have the opportunity to sign up and try the assessment tool for themselves prior to the full company launch. This will help the team prepare to explain the tool and answer any questions that employees may have once they start using the tool.

## Develop a communications rollout plan and timeline

Communications about the tool should come early and often. These communications are critical to raising employee awareness and encouraging widespread use. Before launching the tool, develop a rollout communications strategy and timeline with identified key dates, including your launch date, and check-in points. Integration and widespread adoption of workplace health programs does not happen overnight. This is why it is important that your timeline include identified opportunities for frequent touch points so you can remain in regular communication with your employees about the tool. We recommend:

- That your communications plan includes details about when, how and from whom communications will be delivered.
- That you use the communications channels—email, intranet posts or physical handouts—that you know to be most effective in reaching your workforce, and get on the agenda of regularly scheduled meetings.

This is also the opportunity to identify any additional strategies you may use to increase employee participation, such as challenges, competitions or incentives. A sample checklist and timeline is included at the end of the guide for your use.

## Prepare communications tools

You will find template communications materials and talking points in the accompanying toolkit. These materials can be adjusted to fit your needs. We recommend:

- A series of emails to announce that the tool is live and to encourage employees to sign up,
- Initial communications and a few of the follow-up communications come directly from the CEO,
- Creation of additional internal communications materials, such as flyers and intranet posts, using the provided messages and templates. We have also provided a My Life Check slide presentation to use during a staff meeting or webinar.



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## Customize messages accordingly

Communications will be more effective if you are clear, concise and consistent in the way you talk about the tool. However, one set of messages is unlikely to effectively motivate all of your employees. Employees may seek different health and well-being resources at different stages of life or based on different values. The talking points provided in the communications toolkit are a sound starting point and will help create consistency, but your team should tailor this messaging based on additional insights you have into what your employees care about.

## Host employee town hall (live/virtual) to announce the upcoming launch

A few weeks prior to the launch date, we recommend hosting an employee town hall to let them know about the upcoming launch and provide an overview of the tool. This will provide a chance to raise awareness of the opportunity to use the tool and to start to address any questions/concerns your employees have. A presentation explaining My Life Check is included in the communications toolkit for your use.

## Top Tips to Support My Life Check Prescribed Behaviors

The My Life Check tool will suggest a series of simple behavior changes to improve users' health. Below are suggestions for how your company can support employees to make those changes:

1. Host biometric screenings to help participants get their numbers
2. Ensure sparkling water is available along with other beverages
3. Create a walking group to encourage physical activity
4. Partner with a local farmers market to bring fresh fruits and vegetables to the company parking lot or lobby once a week
5. Encourage healthy competition through intracompany challenges and offer rewards for the winning individual/team
6. Have the company cafeteria offer a heart healthy menu option from the AHA healthy recipes site



# Phase 2

Launch



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# Launch

During this phase, My Life Check will be live for your employees. The goal of this phase is to simply make employees aware that the assessment tool is available and to encourage initial sign up and profile creation.

## **Send launch announcement from the CEO**

As mentioned in the **Preparation** phase, an initial announcement from the CEO demonstrates a strong commitment from senior leadership. The announcement can be in the form of an email or intranet post, depending on how you typically communicate with your employees. The purpose is to announce that the assessment tool is live and inspire excitement in employees to sign up for the tool and participate. This is also an opportunity to announce any related challenges, competitions or incentives for participating. A template CEO email is included in the communications toolkit for your use.

## **Send logistical information**

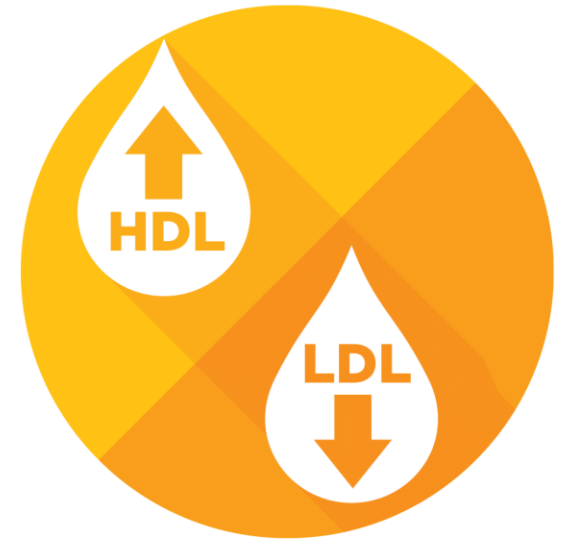
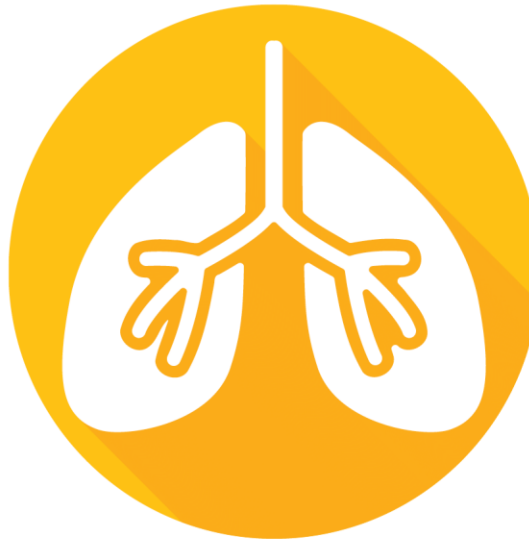
Immediately following the announcement from the CEO (or included as an attachment) you should send a second communication that includes details on how to sign up for the tool and who to contact with any questions—your identified point of contact. The same information should also be posted on the intranet for employees to reference. Employees should be given sign-up information as soon as possible so they register when the announcement is still top of mind.

## **Employ multiple delivery channels**

In addition to the initial announcements, you should also post communications to the company blog or newsletter, and flyers can be posted around the office. Capitalizing on multiple communications channels increases the likelihood of reaching all employees.

## **Host a My Life Check demonstration for employees**

While My Life Check is designed to be as user-friendly as possible, some employees may find it helpful to watch an individual sign up and navigate the tool. This can be done in person at a staff meeting or as a live webinar. We recommend recording the demonstration so people can access it at their convenience.



# Phase 3

Follow-Up

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## Follow-Up

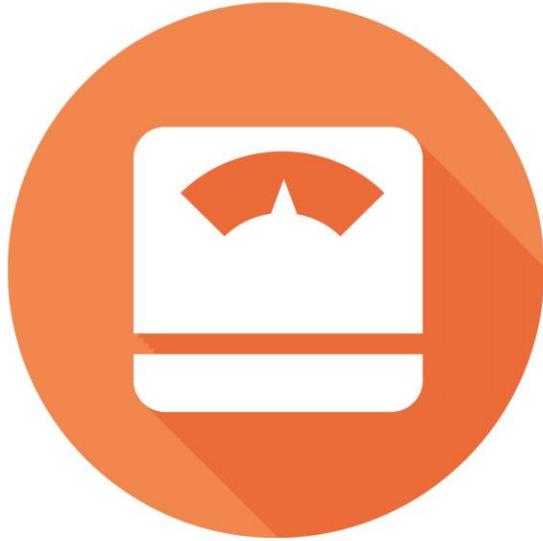
Once the assessment tool is live, additional follow-up will be necessary to remind people to sign up for My Life Check and to ensure your employees understand how to use it.

### Send participation reminders

While the initial launch will capture the attention of some employees, repeated communications and follow-up is key to maximizing participation. Once the assessment tool is live, send employees regular reminders to register and utilize the tool. The CEO could send the first reminder and another leader, such as a manager or employee champion, can send the follow-up reminders. While employees who have signed up for the tool will receive automatic reminder emails, supplementing those with communications from CEOs and managers is likely to increase engagement even further.

### Answer and collect employee frequently asked questions

Employees are likely to have questions as they start using the tool. We recommend that the identified point of contact record employee questions, create answers and save this information in an easily accessible location. An initial list of questions and answers is provided in the communications toolkit.



# Phase 4

Maintenance

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# Maintenance

Communications should be ongoing and consistent, even after the employees have had the opportunity to spend some time with the assessment tool and have started to make the recommended behavior changes.

## Keep in touch with participants

Behavior change can take 8-12 weeks or more, so we recommend sending regular communications to employees related to My Life Check and employee health to keep them interested and engaged. These communications could include tips for using the assessment tool and healthy behaviors, or announcements of new health programs or events, such as a health fair or onsite biometric screening opportunity.

## Monitor progress and send updates

As another form of reminder, the CEO should send progress update emails when the company has reached key milestones. For example, early on, the CEO could send an email when your company has reached a certain participation threshold; while later on the CEO could announce a significant improvement in employees' average Heart Score.

## Solicit feedback

Provide an opportunity for employees to share feedback and suggestions to ensure sustained alignment between employee needs and the tool and its behavior change recommendations. This information can be used to shape program or policy changes that better support healthy behaviors. See the 'Top Tips to Support My Life Check Prescribed Behaviors' section for more information on what these changes could look like.

## Share success stories

There may be opportunities to highlight an individual, team or department's success and share with the rest of the company as employees begin to make significant improvements to their health. This could serve as added incentive and motivation for people to participate in the program.



# Timing & Frequency

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## Timing & Frequency

When and how often you communicate with your employees affects engagement levels. Research has shown that

- Sending emails Monday through Thursday is better than sending emails on Friday<sup>2</sup>.
- Emails should be sent so the employees receive them between 10am-4pm in their own time zone. More than half of all emails are opened during this window<sup>3</sup>.

Of course, this is based on a typical 9am-5pm workday. Timing can be adjusted for employees who work varying shifts.

We recommend sending the reminder emails once a week to encourage participation during the Launch and Follow-up phases. Using the guidelines above, emails should be sent on different days and times to reach employees with varied schedules. We do not recommend sending reminders more than once a week since this could overwhelm or annoy employees who already have full inboxes and busy schedules. During Phase 4, you should send the following on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis:

- Healthy tips
- Progress reports
- Updates or
- Success stories

These will provide consistent encouragement and reminders to reinforce the automatic reminders employees will receive from the assessment tool itself once they are registered.

More information is available at: [www.heart.org/workplacehealth](http://www.heart.org/workplacehealth)



2. <https://www.campaignmonitor.com/blog/post/4207/best-time-to-send-email-campaigns-by-device>  
3. <https://blog.mailchimp.com/insights-from-mailchimps-send-time-optimization-system/>



# Tools & Timeline



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## Tools in the Communications Toolkit

The following resources and templates are provided in the accompanying communications toolkit to support your My Life Check communications strategy:

- Core messages
- Talking points
- Frequently asked questions
- Slide presentation
- Template CEO e-mails
- Template newsletter
- Shareable graphic



# Summary Checklist & Recommended Timeline

Phase	Timing	Activity
Phase 1: Preparation	Beginning 6 weeks before Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Put together My Life Check team</li> <li>■ Appoint employee champions</li> <li>■ Engage leadership</li> <li>■ Familiarize your team with the tool</li> <li>■ Develop communications plan and timeline</li> <li>■ Prepare communications tools</li> <li>■ Customize messages</li> </ul>
	2-3 weeks before Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Host employee town hall to announce launch</li> </ul>
Phase 2: Launch	Week 1: Monday (Launch Day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Send first email from CEO</li> <li>■ Send sign-up logistical information</li> <li>■ Post flyers around offices</li> </ul>
	Week 1: Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Make first post on company intranet, blog or newsletter</li> </ul>
	Week 1: Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Host My Life Check demonstration</li> </ul>
Phase 3: Follow-Up	Week 2: Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Send first reminder email from CEO</li> </ul>
	Week 2: Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Make second post on company intranet, blog or newsletter</li> </ul>
	Week 2: Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Host follow-up My Life Check demonstration</li> </ul>
	Week 3: Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Send second reminder email from managers</li> </ul>
	Week 3: Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Make third post on company intranet, blog or newsletter</li> </ul>
	Week 4: Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Send third reminder email from employee champions</li> </ul>
Phase 4: Maintenance	Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Monitor progress</li> <li>■ Solicit feedback from employees</li> </ul>
	Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Send participation reminders, related announcements and healthy tips</li> </ul>
	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Send progress updates from CEO</li> </ul>
	Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Share success stories</li> </ul>

