



Health Promotion conducts health screenings in four key areas: body mass index based on height, weight, and age, waist-to-height ratio, blood pressure, and bone mineral density. Using interactive educational tools, trained volunteers work with athletes to enhance skills that improve wellness and self-care such as hand washing, sun safety, tobacco avoidance, nutrition education and physical activity. In this environment, athletes learn how small changes in behavior will impact their health and sports performance.

For health promotion and disease prevention strategies to succeed, policies, systems, and environments must support health. Health Promotion's efforts include influencing and supporting practices throughout Special Olympics, so the healthy choice is the easy choice for food and beverages at local, regional, and global events.

Importance and Impact

At Health Promotion events we learned that a large percentage of Special Olympics athletes have limited knowledge of proper health practices, and many suffer from potentially serious health issues. Below is a snapshot of our data from Health Promotion Screenings globally from 2024.

- **62%** of Special Olympics adult athletes are overweight or obese.
- **51%** of Special Olympics adult athletes have high blood pressure
- **26%** of Special Olympics adult athletes have low bone density and an increased risk for bone fracture.

Contact:

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Purpose and Goals:

The mission of Special Olympics Health Promotion is to improve the quality of life and long-term health of Special Olympics athletes and people with intellectual disabilities (ID) through healthy behaviors, screenings, and medical referrals when appropriate.

Objectives of Health Promotion are to:

- Improve the long term health of Athletes.
- Encourage and enhance healthy behaviors of athletes such as making healthy food and beverage choices, effective handwashing, tobacco avoidance, and enhancing fitness.
- Reduce risky behaviors, such as tobacco use and poor nutrition.
- Improve self-efficacy and self-advocacy.
- Deliver screening services and healthcare referrals.

