



THE GREAT AMERICAN MEATOUT

Guide to Planning a Meatout Walk

Initial Planning

Timing: Begin planning as early as possible, preferably 2-3 months in advance. The sooner you get started, the more time you'll have to decide on a good location, cultivate supporters, collect pledges, and work out the details.

Choosing a Location: Look for a visible walk route that will draw public attention – check out public city parks and/or wide sidewalks or walkways. If this is your first time coordinating a walk, you should visit a number of places and walk a few different routes before making the final decision. You may also want to do internet searches to find out where other walk-a-thons are held in your city. The best walk route should have the following specifications:

- Good visibility – the route should provide exposure to the public and a nice background for positive press and media activities.
- The area should be a welcoming environment for walkers (a part of town with health conscious or food-related shops is a plus).
- Be sure it has easy access to parking and public transportation.
- The route (1-3 miles recommended) should have a wide, flat (no large hills) sidewalk or pathway with access to shady areas; an easy route will allow for a fun, relaxing, and enjoyable time for everyone.
- Walk the route at least once before making a final decision.
- Locate an easy-to-find spot for the registration table.
- Check with local authorities to see if a permit is needed for the route you have chosen; if you're not sure who to call, try your local police department or sheriff's office and ask for the officer assigned to community relations.

Promoting Your Walk

Flyers/Posters: Use our announcement form* or create your own. Place flyers anywhere you think animal-friendly or health conscious people might see them. Stores, health food markets, health clubs and gyms, doctors offices, veterinarian offices, libraries, schools, video or music stores, or any bulletin board with a good traffic pattern. Key locations are any vegetarian or vegan friendly restaurants. You may wish to consider asking some of these to sponsor your event with a donation or perhaps coupons/discounts for goods or services. Don't forget your local college campus or even high schools, especially if you know a student that attends who can be a liaison.

E-mail: Use our sample e-mail* to solicit walkers. Post it to local internet groups, animal or environmentally friendly groups, runners & walkers groups, senior citizen groups, or any public interest group you think might be sympathetic.

Local Papers: Use the calendar sections of local newspapers to post the details of your event and to advertise for walkers. Don't forget that many papers now have online versions you can utilize. A week before your walk, send a press release to your local and regional newspapers. Repeat daily until the day of the walk.

Personal Contacts: Ask your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers to help spread the word. Always have flyers with you so you can ask friends to hang on any bulletin boards they may have access to at work, school, church, or clubhouse. Family and friends often enjoy being able to support a cause that you believe in so strongly.

Continued on back...

Host a Sign-up Party: You can offer interested participants light refreshments and the opportunity to learn more about Meatout and the Meatout Walk. This also promotes good camaraderie and you can share ideas, distribute flyers, and have a chance to develop a good working relationship with your team. Some may also be interested in helping you plan and organize your walk.

Team Building: Encourage walkers to form teams that will walk together. Teams can have some fun by dressing in a team color, representing a particular farm animal, challenging each other on fundraising goals, or planning a team dinner after the walk. Use your imagination. If each walker you recruit in turn recruits 3 friends to form a team, you will have a very successful walk... not to mention a great time!

Tabling: Consider hosting a table at a local health food store or vegetarian-friendly restaurant for a few weekends before the event. This is a wonderful way to spread the word and promote vegetarianism, veganism, and compassion for animals... not to mention a super way to meet potential walkers. When tabling, always be friendly, warm, and inviting. Make sure to keep sign-up sheets and blank registration forms to enroll walkers. If someone wants to argue with you, politely agree to disagree.

*Downloadable from www.meatout.org/action/walk.htm

Preparing for Your Walk

Volunteers: Recruit volunteers to arrive early to help post signs, set up the registration table, and register last-minute walkers. Helpers are also needed to distribute water or drinks to walkers. Don't forget to have some dog bowls or plastic containers in case some walkers bring a companion animal.

Signs: Encourage walkers to make their own signs or banners. Try to have some extra on hand in case anyone forgets to bring a poster.

Pledge Sheets: Collect Registration Forms & Pledge Sheets at least two weeks prior to the Walk. The registration fee is \$10 (to be collected in advance), which entitles each participant to a Meatout T-shirt. Walk participants can then collect pledges to bring the day of the walk. After collecting Registration Forms, contact us to tell us how many T-shirts are needed, along with the sizes; we'll then get them out to you before the walk date. Walkers who do not register in advance will receive their Meatout T-shirt by mail after the Walk.

Walkers: Encourage walkers to dress comfortably (preferable to wear their Meatout T-shirts) and to wear comfortable shoes.

Group Photos: Don't forget to take photos or recruit a photographer for group/event photos. Send them over to us after the event and we'll post them in our reports and on the Meatout website!

Food/Entertainment:: Providing something extra for participants is a great way to encourage more walkers and a nice touch to celebrate the end of a successful Meatout Walk.

Relax: Small or large, we encourage all interested parties to host a Meatout Walk. Walks generally increase in size with time, and have the potential to become an annual event. Don't be shy... Walks are an excellent way to spread the Meatout message and build alliances in your area.

Questions? Contact Jen at **800-MEATOUT** (632-8688) or info@meatout.org for additional guidance.

Thank you for your efforts!