

Working with Print Reporters
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What print reporters look for:

- An interesting issue, new information, a fresh angle or a compelling story
- "Real" people (with name disclosure)
- Experts
- Photo and graphics potential

Before you approach a print reporter, ask yourself:

- What is the message I'm trying to communicate? (The K.I.S.S. rule applies)
- Why should the reader care?
- What is the turnaround time for the story?
- Is it a print or broadcast story?
- Is it a local, regional or national story?
- Within broadcast: radio or TV? Within print: newspaper or magazine? Can it crossover into more than one medium?
- Within a newspaper: is it hard news or a soft feature? A letter to the editor? An op-ed article? Should it go to the Healthy & Fit section? The front page? Metro? There are multiple entry points. Each section has different needs.
- Who will be the primary contacts from my organization? Are they accessible? Do well do they know the subject matter?
- Do I know the health reporters/editor at my local newspaper?
- Do I read the paper regularly?
- Have I spent time brainstorming the idea? Have I figured out on my own what the obstacles might be and how they might be overcome?

Dos and don'ts:

- Find out deadline days/times in advance. Don't try to pitch a story idea when the reporter is preoccupied with meeting a deadline.
- Determine the best way to communicate. Some reporters like phone calls, others want to hear from you by e-mail first.
- Practice communication etiquette.
- Put your idea in writing. If you can't write about it in an interesting way, you're going to have a difficult time selling it. Use laymen's language, avoiding jargon at all costs.
- Proof your materials. Don't risk having the wrong number or fact published with your story.
- Build relationships. Ongoing dialogue is the best way to let reporters know what you're doing and why it's important. Some reporters might be willing to brainstorm with you.
- Follow through. If you promise something, come through with it.
- Once the story is published, provide constructive feedback to the reporter.
- Don't accept rejection as defeat. Ask why the idea was rejected. Also remember you can always take it to another media outlet. Don't give up.