

Introduction of our organisation – Medobčinsko društvo prijateljev mladine Ajdovščina

Association of Friends of Youth Ajdovscina is a voluntary, non-profit and non-governmental organization, which endeavours for the wellbeing of children, youth and families. Programmes are going on through the whole year and are focused on target groups from the wide public. The emphasis is on the equal possibilities for all participants and free participation as a rule.

Among constant activities there are the following projects: cultural and art projects, physical activities for children, youth and adults, children's parliament, readership club, entertainments at the day of the family, excursions, holiday programmes, study circles, week of the child, meeting of families, merry December, theatre shows, projects with volunteers, promotion of voluntary service in the local community, cooperation with organizations and associations with similar programmes. Through various projects, educational programs and community initiatives, the organization works to improve the quality of life for all residents and strengthen local connections.

The programmes for participants are free, their basic characteristic is non profit. We try to cover all the expenses with donations and gained funds. Our mission is that all children, youth and families can freely join our activities, courses, summer camps, and we focus also on children and parents from socially handicapped families.

Our target group is children who attend primary school (age from 7 to 14), pupils of secondary schools and young people (with their families included) and our opinion is that working with children and youth in their spare time is crucial for their growth and development of healthy, active lifestyle with quality spare time patterns.

We want to create a supportive and forward-thinking environment where every individual has the opportunity to participate, grow and contribute to the social and cultural vitality of the region.

Background of the event

World Lung Day is dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of lung health and the prevention of respiratory diseases, which are among the most common health problems of our time. Through its program, MDPM Ajdovščina aimed to help young people understand the importance of caring for their own health, encourage physical activity, and highlight the effects of environment, lifestyle, and habits on the respiratory system.

The goal was not only to inform but also to actively involve young people—to inspire them to test their abilities, talk with professionals, and discover how small everyday changes can make a big difference to their health.

The goals and objectives

Overall Goal

To promote lung health, raise awareness about respiratory diseases, and encourage healthy lifestyle habits among young people and the wider local community through educational, interactive, and inclusive activities.

Specific objectives:

- **Raise Awareness and Education**
 - o Increase understanding of the importance of healthy lungs and the prevention of respiratory diseases.
 - o Educate young people about how breathing, physical activity, and environmental factors affect lung health.
 - o Provide reliable information about the risks of smoking, air pollution, and allergies.
- **Promote Healthy Lifestyles**
 - o Encourage daily physical activity and conscious breathing as simple ways to strengthen lung and heart function.
 - o Motivate participants to adopt healthier habits, such as spending more time outdoors and reducing smoking or exposure to pollutants.
- **Foster Youth Participation and Engagement**
 - o Actively involve students and young adults in experiential learning through workshops and challenges.
- **Encourage Preventive Health Practices**
 - o Facilitate access to practical health checks (e.g., lung capacity tests, VO₂ measurements).
 - o Promote the role of prevention, early detection, and vaccination in maintaining respiratory health.
- **Expand the Initiative**
 - o Develop new partnerships and innovative formats for future editions, including outdoor activities, public awareness campaigns, and broader regional participation.

Program overview and structure

World Lung Day 2025 in Ajdovščina - A Week of Breathing, Movement, and Connection - A Week When We Breathed Deeper.

Between September 22 and 26, 2025, Ajdovščina truly took a deeper breath. The Intermunicipal Friends of Youth Association Ajdovščina (MDPM Ajdovščina), together with its partners, prepared an extensive program to mark World Lung Day, celebrated globally on September 25.

The week featured numerous workshops, lectures, health measurements, and gatherings—aimed primarily at young people, but also open to the wider local community.

Events took place in several locations: Danilo Lokar Primary School Ajdovščina, Veno Pilon Secondary School Ajdovščina, the PUM-O+ program, and the Youth Cultural Center Hiša mladih. At the heart of all activities was *breathing* - something so natural, yet the very foundation of our health.

Public Introduction - Presentation at InCastra

The celebration of World Lung Day actually began a few days earlier. On Friday, September 19, MDPM Ajdovščina took part in InCastra, a local event dedicated to Ajdovščina's economy and entrepreneurship, which over two days welcomed thousands of visitors, families, and young people. At our stand, we raised awareness about the importance of healthy lungs and invited visitors to join the upcoming activities scheduled for the week of September 22–26.

We also prepared a quiz on lung health and prevention, where participants tested their knowledge about the respiratory system, the impact of exercise, the importance of clean air, and the dangers of smoking. Younger visitors took part in a creative workshop called "*Stones of Health*," where they painted small stones with motifs of breathing and movement. These stones were later gifted to preschool children—often absent due to illness—as symbols of health, care, and community connection.

The InCastra event served as a wonderful introduction to the coming week's activities and helped spread strong awareness of the program throughout Ajdovščina.

A week full of activities and workshops

The week combined a variety of topics, blending scientific knowledge with practical experience. Young participants joined breathing technique workshops and learned how proper breathing affects lung capacity and overall wellbeing. They practiced diaphragmatic breathing, 1:1:1 ratio breathing, and exercises to improve lung performance.

One of the most popular activities was the balloon lung capacity test, where participants measured their breathing strength before and after physical activity—visibly experiencing how movement impacts breathing.

A special workshop offered VO₂ measurements, demonstrating individual fitness levels. Health professionals explained how physical activity strengthens the lungs and heart and how regular exercise helps prevent many diseases.

Lung Health Through Knowledge and Experience

Special attention was devoted to prevention and awareness of the dangers of smoking, air pollution and the importance of clean air. Healthcare workers from the Health Promotion Center - Ajdovščina Health Center delivered engaging presentations on vaccination, early recognition of respiratory issues, and the role of nutrition in respiratory health.

Educators and youth workers, together with teachers, prepared interactive and creative activities. Young participants solved lung-themed quizzes and joined movement challenges that combined learning with fun. Through sports and exercise, they discovered that breathing truly fuels every step we take.

Experts Who Bridged Knowledge and Youth

The program was further enriched by the participation of experts from various fields:

- A respiratory physiotherapist demonstrated breathing exercises and techniques for improving lung function and emphasized the role of physical activity in maintaining health.
- A registered nurse discussed disease prevention, the importance of vaccination, and early detection of symptoms.
- An educator led creative learning activities focusing on air quality and the impact of climate change.
- Youth workers and sports coaches showed the importance of movement for healthy lungs and demonstrated simple daily exercises for better breathing.

Organizers and technical staff also deserve recognition for ensuring the smooth coordination of events and maintaining a positive atmosphere across all locations.

Collaboration of Schools and Youth

The initiative had a educational and community character. Participants included students from both Ajdovščina schools - primary and secondary - as well as members of the PUM-O+ program and young people from the Hiša mladih Youth Center.

Young participants had the opportunity to meet health professionals, ask questions, and engage in open discussions, creating valuable intergenerational exchange.

This collaborative approach strengthened ties among schools, healthcare institutions, and youth organizations, showing that caring for one's health can also be a social, motivating, and enjoyable experience.

Media outreach

The local community covered the events extensively, with activities also featured on the MDPM Ajdovščina website and social media. Posts reached a wide audience of parents, teachers, and young people.

Photos, workshop highlights, and participant reflections showed enthusiasm, curiosity, and a shared understanding that lung health should never be taken for granted.

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Outcomes

- Increased awareness of lung health (Over 500 participants (students, teachers, and local residents gained practical knowledge about lung function, respiratory diseases, and prevention).
- Active youth engagement (young people participated enthusiastically in interactive workshops, quizzes, and physical activities promoting healthy breathing, students learned breathing techniques and exercises they can continue to use independently, youth involvement fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility for their own health and well-being).
- Strengthened community collaboration (the initiative brought together schools, healthcare institutions, and youth organizations, strengthening cooperation across sectors,

professionals and young participants shared experiences and knowledge, creating intergenerational dialogue).

- Promotion of preventive health practices (participants had access to on-site health measurements, such as lung capacity and VO₂ tests, increasing interest in regular health monitoring, the project encouraged preventive thinking and early action—recognizing symptoms and avoiding harmful habits like smoking).
- Behavioral and attitudinal change (many participants reported making small but meaningful lifestyle changes, such as increasing daily movement, spending more time outdoors, and reducing smoking will be their goal).
- Positive public response (social media posts, photos, and testimonials reached a large audience, spreading the message of healthy living beyond event participants, feedback from teachers, parents, and community members highlighted the event's educational value and inspiring approach).
- Plans for future collaborations, expanded measurement activities, and intergenerational initiatives were established.

The way forward

Building on the success of World Lung Day 2025 MDPM Ajdovščina and its partners aim to further develop and expand the initiative in the coming years. The strong participation, positive feedback, and meaningful impact have confirmed that community-based health promotion is both needed and appreciated.

We aim for:

- Institutionalizing World Lung Day as an annual event (continue organizing *World Lung Day in Ajdovščina* every September as a regular part of the community's health calendar and strengthen partnerships with schools, health institutions, and local authorities to ensure long-term sustainability).
- Expanding educational and preventive activities (introduce year-round workshops on breathing techniques, physical activity, and environmental health for youth and families).

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- Enhancing health monitoring and collaboration (strengthen cooperation with the Health Promotion Center – ZD Ajdovščina and other professional partners to provide expert support and data-based feedback, organize mobile lung health screenings and expand access to VO₂ and spirometry tests in schools and youth centers.
- Promoting environmental responsibility (connect lung health awareness with clean air and environmental protection initiatives)
- Securing support (seek funding opportunities through local, national, and EU programs focused on public health, youth, and environmental education.
- Strengthen MDPM Ajdovščina's role as a regional coordinator for youth-centered health initiatives.

The path ahead is clear - continuing to connect knowledge, movement, and community spirit, Ajdovščina can remain a role model for how small local actions can make a big difference to public health.

Each deeper breath taken during this initiative is a reminder that awareness, collaboration, and care are the true foundations of a healthier future.

Conclusion and closing thoughts

The five-day program ended with the realization that small steps - deeper breaths, short walks, fewer cigarettes, more movement make a big difference over time. Organizers expressed great satisfaction with the participation and announced that World Lung Day should remain a permanent feature in the association's annual calendar.

For the coming year, MDPM Ajdovščina plans to include more field measurements, broader collaboration with schools, and more intergenerational activities connecting children, parents, and seniors - because breathing truly unites and is important for us all.

World Lung Day 2025 in Ajdovščina demonstrated that awareness-raising can be engaging, and educational at the same time. Young people learned that healthy lungs are not something to take for granted. They should be protected every day, through mindful breathing, physical activity, and care for ourselves and our environment.

During this week, Ajdovščina quite literally breathed with renewed energy. And as one participant beautifully summarized:

"Once you understand how important breathing really is, you start living more consciously. And that is the most beautiful message of this week."



HEALTHY LUNGS FOR LIFE
ERS ELF



Svetovni dan pljuč

25. september 2025

Pridružite se nam ob svetovnem dnevu pljuč!

Društvo MDPM v tednu, ko obeležujemo svetovni dan pljuč, pripravlja niz zanimivih predavanj in interaktivnih delavnic o:

- zdravju pljuč in preventivi
- dihalnih vajah in pomenu gibanja za zdravje pljuč
- vplivu kajenja ter drugih dejavnikov tveganja
- pomenu čistega zraka, prehrane in cepljenja

Lokacije:

- Srednja šola Veno Pilon Ajdovščina
- Osnovna šola Danila Lokarja Ajdovščina
- Mladinski kulturni center Hiša mladih Ajdovščina

Natančen program in urnik je objavljeni na naši spletni strani.
Spremljajte nas na www.mdpm-ajdovscina.si za vse podrobnosti.

Dobrodošli so mladi in vsi zainteresirani, ki želijo izvedeti več o tem, kako ohraniti zdrava pljuča in izboljšati dihalno zdravje.

Skupaj poskrbimo, da bo naše dihanje lažje in življenje bolj zdravo!

Veselimo se vašega obiska!



ZP Medobčinsko
MS Društvo prijateljev
Mladine Ajdovščina







