



MAKING RESOLUTIONS?

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Follow Our Top Five Tips for a Healthy 2016

Ready to get healthier? We're here to help you start your year off right. Check out the ideas below and let's go!

■ **If you smoke, make a plan now to quit.** When choosing a quit date, sooner is better. Many smokers choose a date within two weeks to quit smoking. This will give you time to prepare. For more tips, check out "Ready to Quit Smoking?" in this issue.

■ **Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.** Look for fruits and veggies that are red, orange and dark green. These are full of vitamins and minerals.

■ **Cook more meals at home.** Prepare in advance and choose recipes that are both delicious and good for you. Cooking at home lets you control portion sizes and sodium levels.

■ **Drink more water.** Keep a reusable water

bottle with you throughout the day as a reminder to stay hydrated. Try adding orange, lime or lemon slices to your water for fun and a little flavor.

■ **Try new activities.** Staying active doesn't have to cost a lot. Get creative and find activities that require little or no equipment. Make being active a priority by setting aside time for new activities you can enjoy with family or friends.

— Source: LetsMove.org; BeTobaccoFree.gov



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Women's Health Update

REDUCE YOUR CERVICAL CANCER RISK

Cervical cancer is cancer that starts in the cervix, which is the lower, narrow end of a woman's uterus. It is preventable. When cervical cancer is found early, it is highly treatable and is associated with long survival and good quality of life. There are ways you can help prevent cervical cancer:

- If you smoke, seek help in quitting.
- Use a condom before sex to help prevent some sexually transmitted diseases that are associated with a higher risk of cervical cancer.
- Make an appointment to get a Pap test and ask your doctor or nurse about whether the HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine is right for you.

— Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Healthy Weight Loss

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS COMMON MYTH?

Myth: I should avoid grain products such as bread, pasta and rice when trying to lose weight.

Fact: Unless you have a particular allergy or digestive issue, grains can be considered a healthy part of any diet, including a weight-loss diet. A grain product is any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain. Some are healthier than others, however. Grains are divided into two subgroups: whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel — the bran, germ and endosperm. Examples include brown rice and whole-wheat bread, and certain cereals and pasta. Refined grains have been

milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. This is done to give grains a finer texture and improve their shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron and many B vitamins. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy diet may lower their chances of developing some chronic diseases. To lose weight, reduce the number of calories you take in and increase the amount of physical activity you do each day. Follow an eating plan that replaces less-healthy options with a mix of fruits, veggies, whole grains, lean protein foods and low-fat dairy foods.

— Source: National Institutes of Health



Senior Health Update THERE'S HELP FOR CAREGIVER STRESS

There is little doubt that the stress of chronic caregiving for a spouse or family member has significant effects on one's health. Some signs of caregiver stress are:

- Feeling overwhelmed, lonely, guilty, sad or constantly worried
- Feeling fatigued most of the time
- Becoming easily irritated or angered
- Lack of interest in activities you previously enjoyed
- Significant change in weight or sleep habits
- Frequent headaches, neck or low back pain
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs

You can help reduce your stress as a caregiver:

- Identify what you can and cannot change. You may not be able to alter the way somebody else behaves but you can change how you react to it.
- Try to lighten your load by learning about local caregiving resources such as meal delivery, home healthcare services (nursing, physical therapy), non-medical assistance (housekeeping, cooking, companionship) or home-modification changes that make it easier for patients to bathe, use the toilet or move around.
- Don't hesitate to ask for and to accept assistance from friends and family.

— Source: The American Institute of Stress

Yeast Infection

WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW

Genital/vulvovaginal candidiasis (VVC) is often called a “yeast infection.” It occurs when there is overgrowth of the normal yeast in the vagina. Nearly 75% of all adult women have had at least one yeast infection. VVC occurs more frequently and more severely in people with weakened immune systems. Other conditions that may put a woman at risk for a yeast infection include pregnancy, diabetes, long-term use of broad-spectrum antibiotics and use of corticosteroid medications.

Wearing cotton underwear may help to reduce the risk of developing a yeast infection. Several antifungal medications are available to treat yeast infections. Vaginal suppositories or creams are commonly used. The duration of treatment can range from one to seven days. Mild or moderate infections can sometimes be treated with a single dose of oral antifungal medication. These types of medications usually have an 80 to 90% success rate, but some people may have recurrent or resistant infections.

Over-the-counter treatments are available. As a result, more women are diagnosing and treating themselves. However, it is important to see your healthcare provider to be sure of the diagnosis before treating a yeast infection with over-the-counter medications. Overuse of these medications can increase the chance that they will eventually not work because the yeast can become resistant to treatment.

— Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Did You Know?

HALT THE SALT FOR A HEALTHIER HEART

Most American adults (and children, too) are eating too much sodium. In fact, we are eating an average of about 3,400 mg of sodium per day. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, recommend reducing sodium intake to less than 2,300 mg per day. Eating too much sodium increases your risk for high blood pressure, a major contributor to heart disease and stroke. Processed foods account for most of the sodium in our diet, not the salt shaker at home. When shopping at the grocery store, look for the lowest-sodium versions of your favorite foods.

— Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Baby, It’s Cold Outside!

EXERCISE SAFELY IN WINTER WITH THESE TIPS

Almost everyone can exercise in a safe way during cold weather. But if you have certain conditions, such as asthma or heart problems, check with your doctor before you work out in cold weather. Your doctor can review any precautions you need to take based on your condition.

Check the forecast. Temperature, wind and moisture, along with the length of time that you’ll be outside, are key considerations. The combination of wind and cold make up the wind-chill index. Wind-chill extremes can make exercising outdoors unsafe even if you dress warmly. The wind can penetrate your clothes, making any exposed skin vulnerable to frostbite. Although the risk of frostbite is less than 5% when the air temperature is above 5 degrees Fahrenheit, the risk increases as the wind chill falls. At wind chill levels below -18° F, frostbite can occur on exposed skin in 30 minutes or less.

Dress in layers to trap warm air and use common sense when temperatures drop dangerously.

— Source: Mayo Clinic



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Ready to Quit Smoking? LET'S DO THIS!

You're more likely to quit smoking for good if you prepare for your last cigarette and for the cravings and feelings that come with quitting.

- 1. Set a Quit Date.** Tell family members and friends who are most likely to support your efforts.
- 2. Choose a method for quitting.** You can stop smoking all at once on your Quit Day. You can reduce the number of cigarettes per day until you stop completely. Or you can smoke only part of your cigarette. (Count how many puffs you take from each cigarette and reduce the number every two to three days.)
- 3. Decide if you need medicines or other help.** Talk to your doctor about which medicine is best for you. Options may include

nicotine replacements (gum, spray, patch or inhaler) or prescription medicines such as bupropion hydrochloride or varenicline. You may also ask about getting a referral to a smoking-cessation program.

- 4. Plan for your Quit Day.** Remove all cigarettes, matches, lighters and ashtrays from your house. Find healthy smoking substitutes. Go for walks. Carry sugarless gum or mints. Munch on carrots or celery sticks.
- 5. Stop smoking on your Quit Day.** Need more support? Talk with your doctor. Find a friend and quit at the same time. Ask family and friends for support. And call the American Heart Association at 800-242-8721 for more information.

— Source: American Heart Association

Concerned about Drug Interactions?

TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST

It's just plain smart to talk with your doctor and your pharmacist about the medications you take. When your doctor prescribes a new drug, discuss all over-the-counter and prescription drugs, dietary supplements, vitamins, botanicals, minerals and herbals you take, as well as the foods you eat. Bring that list with you to each appointment. Ask your pharmacist for the patient information for each prescription drug you take. Make sure you understand what the drug is used for, how to take it and how to reduce the risk of drug interactions and unwanted side effects.

— Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration

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