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# LIFE & HEALTH<sup>®</sup>

WINTER 2008

## Healthy New Year!

IDEAS FOR RESOLUTIONS  
THAT YOU CAN KEEP ALL YEAR

**A**RE YOU LOOKING to make some positive changes in your life? The new year can be a great time to start.

When it comes to your health, the American Medical Association and other experts have some specific ideas that can help you eat better, stay active and keep illness away.

Consider taking on two or three that make sense for you. Just don't try to do too much too fast. Your chances of long-term success are better if you set clear, realistic and attainable goals. So let's get started.

**DO YOU WANT TO:  
EAT BETTER?**

**Go for more vegetables and fruits**—and not just at mealtime. Consider snacking on a piece of fruit or some carrot sticks instead of high-calorie vending machine fare. Tip: Fruits and veggies with the most color are often the most nutritious.

**Change your order.** In a restaurant, keep portion sizes sensible by ordering an appetizer and salad or



soup and skipping the entrée. Or split an entrée with your dinner date.

**Stash the salt shaker.** If you're getting more than a teaspoon of salt a day from all sources, your sodium intake is too high. In fact, if you're age 50 or older, the equivalent of half a teaspoon is enough.

**Drop the soda pop.** To help avoid weight gain, limit your consumption

of regular soda and other sugary drinks. Bonus: You will also be fighting tooth decay.

**DO YOU WANT TO:  
GET MOVING AND GET FIT?**

**Boost energy, beat stress, feel better!** Exercise can help with all three. Experts recommend a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity at least five days a week. Walking, gardening and golfing are among the many activities that qualify. More vigorous pursuits—like running, swimming and jumping rope—are great too, once you're ready.

**Take steps for health—literally.** When you can, use the stairs. Take a 10-minute walk on your break. Consider getting a pedometer so you can track all your steps.

**DO YOU WANT TO:  
TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH?**

**Know your numbers.** Have your doctor regularly check your blood pressure and cholesterol. Keeping these numbers under control can help reduce your risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

**Screen for problems.** Ask your doctor which screening tests are right for you. Tests can detect diabetes, cancer and heart disease in their early stages, when they are most easily treated. ♦

**INSIDE**

2 TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR HEART / 4 COLON CANCER PREVENTION



# Seize the day!

LIFE IS BUSY, BUT YOUR  
HEART NEEDS YOU TOO

**W**omen are notorious for taking care of family needs before their own.

But if you ask your family to list the things they want you to do, at the top would probably be this: Stay healthy.

Luckily, each day holds opportunities to protect your health, especially when it comes to your heart.

## KNOW YOUR RISKS

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women in the U.S., according to the American Heart Association (AHA). In fact, one in three adult women has some form of cardiovascular disease.

“There’s no such thing as zero risk,” says Nieca Goldberg, MD, speaking for the AHA. “All women need to do things in their daily lives to reduce their risks for heart disease.”

If that sounds like a long-term commitment, you’re

right. A woman's risk for heart disease is a lifetime issue, and controlling it starts early.

According to Dr. Goldberg, that means seeing your doctor to assess your risks. It's best to start as early as your 20s—but it's never too late. Make an appointment to talk about your personal risk, including these factors:

- Family history of heart disease.
- Cholesterol—aim for a total cholesterol level of under 200 mg/dL.
- Blood pressure—less than 120 over 80 mm Hg is best.
- Weight—try to keep your body mass index under 25.
- Blood sugar—high levels can indicate diabetes, which affects heart health.
- Smoking—it triples your risk for a heart attack.

Knowing your risks can help you make plans for reducing them.

Of course, life brings changes, and your heart disease risks can change throughout your life. Make heart health a regular topic of discussion with your doctor.

### DESIGN A HEALTHY DAY

Fitting heart-healthy choices into each day takes some planning.

Be sure to make one of your plans to get some exercise.

Whether going to the gym

or walking with a friend, exercise is the foundation of heart disease prevention, Dr. Goldberg says. Aim for at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise on five days each week.

Boost your fitness further by adding at least two sessions a week of strength training.

Along with exercise, a healthy diet can help you lose weight and lower other risks as well.

Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Choose nonfat or low-fat dairy products, and if you eat meat, stay with lean cuts. Replace saturated fat and trans fats

with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Cut back on salt.

For women, smoking is the single biggest risk factor for heart attack. Quitting is tough, but the payoff is worth it: One year after quitting, your heart disease risk will be cut in half.

### THUMBS UP OR DOWN?

Vitamins and other therapies may help, but with so much information out there, it's hard to know what really works.

Here is what experts from the heart association have to say:

■ Do get some omega-3 fatty acids. The best way is to eat fatty fish—such as salmon, herring or trout—twice a week.

■ Don't count on hormone therapy to prevent heart disease. Studies show it may reduce risks for some women but raise them for others.

■ If you're over 65, consider taking a daily low-dose aspirin (81 milligrams). Talk with your doctor first. If you have other risk factors for heart disease, you might benefit from taking aspirin earlier or taking a higher dose.

■ Folic acid has not been shown to prevent heart disease, though women who could become pregnant

still need it to prevent certain birth defects.

### PAY IT FORWARD

When women establish healthy habits, it does more than improve their own heart health.

"These important choices ultimately affect women's families as well," says Dr. Goldberg.

That means more young people headed for healthier lives.

Sounds like a plan. ♦

Learn about our community health programs by calling 773-484-4395.

Go  
Red For  
Women

Knowledge is power, and that's what the American Heart Association seeks to give women with its Go Red For Women movement. It's a national campaign that gives women tips and information about healthy eating, exercise, smoking cessation and other ways to reduce their risks of heart disease and stroke. To find out about Go Red For Women, visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org) or call 888-MY-HEART (888-694-3278).





## A health concern for men

### DON'T IGNORE THE SIGNS OF PROSTATE PROBLEMS

**T**HINGS CHANGE with age. We take that for granted.

But some age-related physical changes are more significant than

others. Sometimes they're clues to important health concerns.

If you're a man who notices a change in your urinary habits, pay attention. It could signal problems with your prostate—problems ranging from a simple infection to cancer.

The most common prostate problem among older men is an enlarged prostate—what doctors call benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). About half of men between the ages of 51 and 60 have

it, according to the American Urological Association, and the prevalence increases with age.

BPH can make urination difficult, but by itself, it's not a serious condition. Sometimes no treatment is needed. Other times, medicine or surgery is in order.

In younger men, the most common problem is prostatitis, an inflammation of the prostate, sometimes caused by infection.

Prostatitis is not a particularly serious condition; treatments range from antibiotics to diet changes.

### COMMON SYMPTOMS

BPH and prostatitis symptoms can mimic those of more serious disorders, including prostate cancer. You'll need your doctor's help to sort through the symptoms, to figure out what's wrong and to decide how to treat it.

See your doctor if you notice any of the following:

- A frequent urge to urinate.
- A full bladder feeling, even after urinating.
- A weak urine stream.
- Leaking or dribbling of urine.
- Pain or burning during urination.
- Difficulty urinating or not being able to urinate.
- Blood in your urine or semen.
- Painful ejaculation.
- Frequent pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips or upper thighs.

**See your doctor.** Even though these symptoms are much more likely to be caused by something other than prostate cancer, it's important to get them checked out. Treatment works best when started early. ❖

Prevention is important. Call us at **773-484-1010** to find a physician who can help you.

## Nearing 50?

### DO A WISE THING—TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT COLON CANCER SCREENING

**Y**OU WOULD STOP cancer from developing if you could, wouldn't you?

This isn't the hypothetical question you might suspect.

Colon cancer—which this year alone will be diagnosed in some 106,000 Americans—can be prevented in many cases, according to the American Cancer Society.

How, exactly? Typically, colon cancer begins as a polyp, a growth that is not yet cancerous. Colon cancer screening can help doctors find—and remove—polyps before cancer develops, thereby stopping a potentially deadly cancer in its tracks.

If cancer is already present, screening can find it early, when treatment is highly effective.

More than 90 percent of people diagnosed with colon cancer are 50 or older. So if you're nearing 50, talk to your doctor about being screened.

If you're at increased risk for colon cancer—for example, if this cancer runs in your family—you may need to begin screening earlier.

Several tests can help detect colorectal cancers; ask your doctor which is best for you. ❖

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