

Tips To Being A Healthier Person

Acknowledgements: Staff at Student Health Services
Webmd Health, www.webmd.com
American Lung Association, www.lungusa.org

Nothing is more important than your health and well being. As we move into the New Year, consider these simple tips for being a healthier person:

1. **Resolve To Eat Better**
 - Let's face it – most of us could stand to lose a few pounds. But equally important is to consider the types of foods we eat.
 - Try to incorporate at least 2-4 servings of fruits and 3-5 servings of vegetables in your diet each day.
 - Using the Food Guide Pyramid, which can be accessed at www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome, will tell you how many servings you need from each food group daily.
 - Eat foods that are high in fiber to maintain good digestive health.

2. **Don't Fall Prey To Diets**
 - Experts agree that the key to losing weight is to change your lifestyle – eat less and/or burn more calories.
 - Fad diets are short term at best; rapid cycling of your body weight can be unhealthy over a long term.
 - To lose weight and burn body fat, eat 500 fewer calories per day than your body currently needs. Never eat fewer than 1,200 calories per day without talking with your doctor.

3. **Get Some Regular Physical Exercise**
 - This is invaluable to your heart and respiratory health.
 - Exercise may be easier than you think.
 - Try walking to the post office instead of driving.
 - Take the stairs to your office instead of the elevator.
 - Park your vehicle intentionally at the very rear of the parking lot and walk to your office.
 - Walk a couple of laps at Girard Park during your lunch hour.

4. **Try To Quit Smoking**
 - Many medical and health experts agree that smoking is the most preventable source of morbidity worldwide.
 - If you are a non-smoker – don't start.
 - If you smoke, try to quit.
 - If you can't quit, try to cut back one cigarette per day every week.
 - Consult your physician about ways to help you quit smoking more easily and reduce withdrawal.

5. **Everything In Moderation, Nothing In Excess**
 - All of us crave junk food at one time or another.
 - When the craving hits you hard, satisfy it without guilt. No one ever died from eating french fries twice a month.
 - Use this same principle with alcoholic beverages – treat them as a treat or a celebration.

6. **Get Enough Rest**
 - Studies are showing that Americans are getting less quality sleep.
 - The reasons for this are varied and usually include a stressful lifestyle.
 - Regular exercise can ensure that you are tired when you go to sleep. A 15-minute “Powernap” during the lunch hour can also be very beneficial.
 - Be sure to get eight hours of sleep every night. Be very consistent with this. **Too little** and **too much** sleep can cause the body to become fatigued.

7. **See A Physician Regularly**
 - Early detection of any chronic condition is the key to successful treatment.
 - Women should get an annual Pap and regular general screening visit each year.
 - Women over 40 should get a yearly mammogram.
 - Men ages 50 and older without an increased risk for prostate cancer should have regular prostate exams.
 - Men at risk of developing prostate cancer (African American men and men who have a father or brother who has had prostate cancer) should start having regular prostate exams at age 40.
 - Adults at high risk for heart disease should have regular checkups with their primary care provider so that they can monitor your numbers: blood pressure, weight, BMI, blood sugar, cholesterol, etc.
 - Adults over 65 should get a flu shot in the Fall every year.
 - Everyone should see his or her doctor at least once a year for a thorough check-up, which can include baseline lab work.

Hopefully, you have found these suggestions useful. Consider taking control of **your health** this year. You and your family will reap the benefits for a lifetime.