

Healthy Focus



January 19-25 is Healthy Weight Week

Why Is a Healthy Weight Important?

Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight is important for overall health and can help you prevent and control many diseases and conditions. If you are overweight or obese, you are at higher risk of developing serious health problems including heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, gallstones, breathing problems, and certain cancers. Maintaining a healthy weight helps you lower your risk for developing these problems.

What Contributes to a Healthy Weight?

Many factors such as environment, family history and genetics, metabolism (the way your body changes food and oxygen into energy). Your behavior and physical activity level can also contribute to your ability to maintain a healthy weight. You can reach and maintain a healthy weight if you follow a healthy diet, reduce your daily calories, and become physically active if you are not already.

Source: National Institutes of Health

Make Your New Year's Resolution Stick

Maybe you plan to ring in 2014 with a new resolve to quit smoking, lose weight, exercise more, and not sweat the small stuff. Maybe these resolutions sound familiar, maybe just like the ones you made a year ago! Try the following seven tips to help you create long-lasting change.

1. **Dream big.** Audacious goals are compelling. Want to compete in a marathon or triathlon? Lose 50 pounds or just enough to fit into clothes you once loved? With encouragement and support you can do it. An ambitious aim often inspires others around you. Many will cheer you on. Some will be happy to help in practical ways in order to free up your time.
2. **Break big dreams into small steps.** Now think tiny. Small steps move you forward to your ultimate goal. Look for surefire bets. Just getting to first base can build your confidence to tackle and succeed at more difficult tasks. So break hard jobs down into smaller line items, and enjoy breezing through the easy tasks first.
3. **Understand why you shouldn't make a change.** Until you grasp why you're sticking like a burr to old habits and routines, it may be hard to muster enough energy and will to take a hard left toward change. So when you're considering a change, take time to think it through. You boost your chance of success when the balance of pluses and minuses tips enough to make adopting a new behavior more attractive than standing in place.
4. **Commit yourself.** Make yourself accountable through a written or verbal promise to people you don't want to let down. This encourages you to push through tough spots.
5. **Give yourself a medal.** Don't wait to call yourself a winner until you've pounded through the last mile of your big dream marathon or lost every unwanted ounce. Changes are incremental so encourage yourself as you reach small goals.
6. **Learn from the past.** Any time you fail to make a change, consider it a step toward your goal. Each sincere attempt represents a lesson learned.
7. **Give thanks for what you do.** Forget perfection. Set your sights on finishing that marathon, not on running it. If you compete to complete, you'll be a winner even if you wind up walking as much as you run.

Source: Harvard Health Publications, Harvard Medical School



Did You Know?

Only 8% of people achieve their New Year's Resolution goals each year.

+ January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month

A woman can increase her own chances of having a healthy baby by managing health conditions and adopting healthy behaviors before becoming pregnant. This is important because many birth defects happen very early during pregnancy. Here are some steps a woman can take to get ready for a healthy pregnancy:

Take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.

Folic acid is a B vitamin. If a woman has enough folic acid in her body at least 1 month before and during pregnancy, it can help prevent major birth defects of the baby's brain and spine.

Don't drink alcohol at any time during pregnancy.

When a woman drinks alcohol, so does her unborn baby. Alcohol in the woman's blood passes through the placenta to her baby through the umbilical cord. There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink while pregnant.

Don't smoke.

The dangers of smoking during pregnancy include premature birth, certain birth defects, and infant death. Even being around cigarette smoke puts a woman and her unborn baby at risk for problems.

Talk to a health care provider about taking any medications.

Taking certain medications during pregnancy can cause serious birth defects, but the safety of many medications taken by pregnant women has been difficult to determine. If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, you should not stop taking medications you need or begin

taking new medications without first talking with your doctor. This includes over-the-counter medications.

Talk to your doctor about vaccinations (shots).

Many vaccinations are safe and recommended during pregnancy, but some are not. Having the right vaccinations at the right time can help keep a woman and her baby healthy.

Keep diabetes under control.

Poor control of diabetes during pregnancy increases the chances for birth defects and other problems for the baby. Proper healthcare before and during pregnancy can help prevent birth defects and other poor outcomes.

Reach and maintain a healthy weight.

A woman who is obese (a body mass index of 30 or higher) before pregnancy is at a higher risk for complications during pregnancy. Obesity in the woman also increases the risk of several serious birth defects for the baby.

See a health care professional regularly.

A woman should be sure to see her doctor when planning a pregnancy and start prenatal care as soon as she thinks that she is pregnant. It is important to see the doctor regularly throughout pregnancy.

Source: Harvard Health Publications, Harvard Medical School

Safety Corner: Personal Self Defense

What would you do if you suddenly came face-to-face with a criminal? Crime can happen to anyone, anyplace and at any time. Are you prepared with the knowledge and tools to protect yourself? January is national self defense awareness month, which focuses on being prepared with self defense tactics to reduce your risk of being a victim.

Here are a few statistics from the FBI Uniform Crime Report to be aware of:

- Every two minutes someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted.
- Every six minutes someone in the U.S. is raped.
- Every 34 minutes someone in the U.S. is the victim of murder.



How do you protect yourself from becoming a statistic? Preventing crime from happening requires an active mind and body. It means paying attention to your instincts, to other people, and to your surroundings. To fine-tune your personal alarm, crime experts make the following suggestions:

- **Trust yourself.** Many times your intuition, or sixth sense, can hint at danger. Learn to trust your instincts and react as needed.
- **Pay attention to the people around you.** You can often sense peoples' intentions just by the way they look at you.
- **Act confident and focused.** Just as you can sense people's feelings, others can sense yours as well. Predators look for people who are meek, mild, weak, unfocused, and distracted.
- **Have street smarts.** Don't open your car door or roll down your window for a stranger and be sure to park in well-lit areas.
- **Be careful with your money.** Don't carry a lot of cash and carry your purse close to your body with the strap over your shoulder.

For more information about how to defend yourself and avoid crime, check out classes that are often available at schools, local community centers, local martial arts facilities, and hospitals.

Source: nsdi.org