

Cooperative Extension

Reasonable Resolutions for the New Year



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It's that "Resolution Season" time of year again. Everyone is making their New Year's Resolutions, pledging to stick to unrealistic goals for the sake of becoming the new, healthier version of themselves. Don't fall into the resolution trap!

Attempting to make healthy lifestyle changes for the New Year is a great idea, but don't let an unreasonable New Year's resolution ruin the chances of attaining a healthy and happy life in 2015. Here are some resolution tips to help you make sure that 2015 is your best year ever!

Make a SMART resolution. SMART is an acronym that stands for **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**easonable, and **t**imely. Giving your goals all of these characteristics will ensure that you know exactly what it is you want to do. It also will help you to set up the steps to achieve your resolution and will allow you to fulfill your goals. Using the SMART process will help you to know if you have achieved your goal or not, and how long it should take you to achieve it.

Make positive resolutions. All too often resolutions are made with a negative connotation such as, "I won't" do this or "I can't" have that. Instead, develop a resolution that is positive and makes you feel good. If your resolution is to "eat healthier", then plan to eat more fruits and vegetables each day. Start to follow the guidelines found on the ChooseMyPlate website (www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) to help you plan healthier meals and snacks. Giving yourself positive tasks and using reliable resources to follow will help you meet your goals!

Get support. Support systems are key for reasonable resolutions. Let your family and friends know how they can help you stick to your resolutions. They can help to support you by serving more fruit and vegetables at home and at work to help you achieve your goals. They may even want to initiate their own goals to parallel yours to help you achieve your goals. If they know about your resolution to eat more fruits and vegetables, they will encourage you when you go for the veggie tray over the higher calorie foods. They will be on the "same page" with you at the next big family or work function.

Celebrate successes. Finally, make sure to remember to celebrate your success, no matter how big or small it is. Celebrate by giving yourself non-food rewards that are special to you. Food may make you feel good, but choose more physical activity or healthier meals and snacks to celebrate success. Reinforce healthier habits and you will feel better about yourself and will have achieved a goal that helps you feel successful. Remember, being healthy requires one to take small steps on a daily basis to reinforce healthy habits. Success happens when realistic goals are set and met with SMART resolutions. For more information go to: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/resolution.aspx>



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A View from the Mediterranean

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The Mediterranean diet has been in the news recently as a dietary pattern that may be linked to positive health benefits. Let's take a closer look.

What is the Mediterranean diet? The Mediterranean diet is not a diet in the sense that it is restrictive or geared towards losing weight. Rather, the term "diet" means an eating style or pattern. This way of eating is commonly followed by the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Each of the countries brings their own culture into the food patterns, however, the diet has many similarities that make it what we know today, as the Mediterranean diet. The different components include the consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, healthy fats from olive oil and canola oil, seafood and low fat dairy. There are potential health benefits to all components of this diet.



What are some health benefits of the Mediterranean diet?

Fruits and vegetables contain a range of vitamins and minerals that are beneficial for health including vitamins A, C and E, as well as, minerals such as potassium, iron, magnesium and calcium. Fruits and vegetables also contain fiber, which can help with lowering cholesterol and provide a feeling of fullness that may prevent overeating at the next meal. "Healthy fats" such as nuts, olive oil and canola oil all contain monounsaturated fat, which helps lower



the amount of LDL cholesterol, the so-called "bad" cholesterol, in the body. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in seafood, are a different type of "healthy fat" that has been shown to be beneficial in lowering triglycerides. Whole grains and legumes contain protein and fiber that are valuable for overall heart health. The Mediterranean diet also includes small amounts of low-fat dairy foods, which contain calcium and vitamin D, and play a role in maintaining healthy teeth and bones.

Incorporating the Mediterranean Diet in a Variety of Ways

- Saute vegetables for a stir fry dinner in olive or canola oil to incorporate healthy fats and vegetables in your diet.
- Include bread and pasta that are 100% whole grain or whole wheat. Experiment with other whole grains such as quinoa or buckwheat.
- Try sprinkling cinnamon over sliced apples. You may even want to heat it up!
- Mix things up by grilling some peaches or pineapples.
- Snack on raw vegetables with a low fat salad dressing.
- Put Greek yogurt in the freezer as a tasty treat and top with fruit.

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Clean Hands Saves Lives!

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Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. CDC recommends cleaning hands in a specific way to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

The guidance for effective hand washing and use of hand sanitizer was developed based on data from a number of studies. Hand washing with soap is a “do-it-yourself vaccine” that prevents infections and saves lives. Worldwide, proper hand washing could protect about 1 out of every 3 young children who get sick with diarrhea. This could also protect 1 out of 6 children with respiratory infections.

Proper washing of hands helps prevent diseases because people frequently touch their eyes, nose and mouth which are all portals for germs to get into the body. Germs (harmful bacteria and viruses) are microorganisms which can be transferred between people and things like handrails, table tops or toys. So, how do we properly wash our hands and teach young children to prevent these germs from spreading and making others sick?

Follow these steps to proper hand washing:

1. **Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.**
2. **Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.**
3. **Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.**
4. **Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.**
5. **Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.**

These simple steps can reduce the number of people who get sick with respiratory illnesses, like colds.

Remember to wash hands:

- ✓ **Before, during, and after preparing food**
- ✓ **Before eating food**
- ✓ **Before and after caring for someone who is sick**
- ✓ **Before and after treating a cut or wound**
- ✓ **After using the toilet**
- ✓ **After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet**
- ✓ **After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing**
- ✓ **After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste**
- ✓ **After handling pet food or pet treats**
- ✓ **After touching garbage**



Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs but there is another way! Alcohol-based hand sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol can be used as well. Non-alcohol based sanitizers may not work equally as well for all classes of germs. They may cause germs to develop resistance to the sanitizing agent along with reduce the growth of some germs rather than completely killing them. They are also more likely to irritate a person’s skin as compared to alcohol-based skin sanitizers. Therefore, alcohol-based sanitizers are always a better choice.



Hand sanitizers do help to reduce the number of germs on hands but they do not eliminate all types. They also are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy. To properly use hand sanitizers, apply the product to the palm of one hand, rub your hands together and rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. When used correctly, alcohol-based hand sanitizers and proper hand washing can effectively kill many types of germs. Be sure to follow these steps to kill germs and keep everyone healthy during the cold winter months and all yearlong!

For more information: <http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

Strategies to Take Positive Action

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**ACTIONS
SPEAK
LOUDER
THAN
WORDS**

Want to improve your health and/or personal finances or encourage others to do so? Successful outcomes will probably require a behavior change, which is never easy. This article presents strategies to motivate yourself or others to take small, positive actions. Many of these ideas are related to the 25 behavior change strategies found in the Small Steps to Health and Wealth™ workbook (see <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/sshw/>). Positive action requires setting small-step goals, identifying good choices, and providing information, rewards, and support when needed. Consider the following ideas:



- ▶ **Make the Time** - Develop effective strategies to overcome “lack of time” as an excuse for not taking action to improve your health and/or personal finances. An example is identifying three 15-minute “time chunks” per day for physical activity or setting aside one hour every weekend for various financial management tasks such as budgeting.
- ▶ **“Weight Watchers Model”** - Consider combining individual activity with peer support provided by members of organizations such as weight loss support groups, investment clubs, and community non-profit agencies.
- ▶ **Take Small Steps** - Adopt small steps, such as reducing 100 calories per day and saving a dollar a day plus pocket change, to start making progress and increase your confidence. People often “fail and bail” when they get ahead of themselves and attempt to tick off a long “to do” list with lofty and unattainable goals.
- ▶ **Celebrate Progress** - Mark the achievement of small mini-goals as you make progress toward a larger goal. For example, treat yourself to a \$50 gift card for every 5 pounds of weight loss or \$1,000 of savings.
- ▶ **Be Generous with Praise** - Positive strokes are very motivating. Tell other people who are trying to adopt positive behaviors when they are doing a good job and are on the right track to reaching their health and/or financial goals.
- ▶ **“A Christmas Carol” Approach** - “Fast forward” someone’s life (i.e., describe a bad future outcome if no change is made to improve their current health or financial practices). Seeing our “future self” can prompt positive action. You can also send e-mail reminders and motivational messages to your future self via www.futureme.org.
- ▶ **Put “Regulation” Around Your Life** - Consider implementing regulated or automated practices such as automatic investment plan deposits, payroll deductions, and portion-controlled meal entrees with calorie counts.
- ▶ **Experiment with Alternative Behaviors** - Avoid getting stuck in a health or financial “rut” by considering alternatives to current thoughts and/or actions. An example is using a meal planning or budgeting phone app to make decisions about what to eat or purchase.
- ▶ **Decide to Decide** - Deadlines make actions urgent and important. Set a deadline to make a decision to improve your health and/or finances. You do not necessarily have to start taking action at this point, but just decide what to do.
- ▶ **Identify Three Good Choices** - Identify three viable action strategies, any of which would be effective. A health example is “cold turkey,” a patch, or a smoking cessation drug to quit smoking. A financial example is identifying one of three acceptable growth mutual funds to include in a retirement savings account.
- ▶ **Address Obstacles** - Identify and develop work-arounds for barriers such as lack of time for exercise and poor spending habits that make it hard to save money. For example, some people build physical activity into their lunch hour and freeze their credit cards to reduce impulse spending.
- ▶ **Commit Now to Change Later** - Take action today to make a change in the future. An example is “auto-escalation” in employer retirement savings plans where workers authorize a future savings increase when they receive a raise.
- ▶ **Use “Self-Control” Devices** - Limit spending and over-eating with tools such as debit cards and calorie-controlled meals. Other helpful tools are online credit card interest calculators and calorie counts on restaurant menus.

Gluten Free for Health: Fact or Fad?

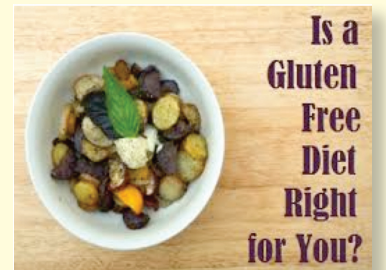
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Have you heard that gluten causes weight gain? Or that eating gluten can lead to fatigue, infertility, and chronic disease? With all the nutrition information (and misinformation) available on the internet, it can be hard to separate truth from fiction. Let's start from the beginning - what is gluten, anyway? Gluten is a protein found in the grains wheat, barley and rye, and the foods made from those grains, like bread, pasta, crackers, beer, and even some condiments, like salad dressing. Some people, about 1% of the American population, have an autoimmune digestive condition called celiac disease. When people with celiac disease eat foods containing gluten, their immune system responds by damaging the small intestine, which can lead to symptoms like abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea, fatigue, joint-pain, skin rashes, and headaches. According to the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness, an additional 5.7% of Americans have gluten-sensitivity, meaning they do not have celiac disease, but they experience some of the same symptoms after eating gluten. So, for the other 93.3% of Americans, eating gluten is perfectly fine and can absolutely be part of a healthy diet.

Why is a gluten-free diet in the news? Celebrity endorsements for weight loss play a big role in any fad diet. Food manufacturers follow suit and try to cash in by making gluten-free versions of their products. In 2010, the demand for gluten-free foods and beverages was worth 2.6 billion dollars, and by 2015 it is expected to exceed 5 billion dollars. Is a gluten-free diet really healthier than a regular diet? Foods that are naturally gluten-free, like fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meats, eggs, rice, and dairy foods are great for everyone to eat. However, foods that have been processed to remove the gluten require replacing the missing ingredient with something else to improve texture and taste. Some gluten-free products like gluten-free pasta, crackers, and cookies may add more sugar, fat, and sodium to improve taste, rendering the product even less healthy than its gluten-containing counterpart. Remember, just because it's gluten-free does not suddenly make a cookie a health food. Gluten-free does not mean calorie-free. It is important to follow serving sizes on food labels and eat sensible portions. Research has also shown that a gluten-free diet may result in a diet that is low in carbohydrates, iron, folate, niacin, zinc, and fiber.



For people with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity, a gluten-free diet is a medical treatment strategy. For the rest of the population, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics reports that there is nothing special about a gluten-free diet. In fact, cutting out gluten means eliminating many healthy whole grains from the diet. The best advice for good health is to remember that there is no magic bullet for weight loss. A balanced diet composed of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy foods is one diet trend that will never go out of style.

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Positive thoughts generate positive feelings and attract positive life experiences.

- **Emulate Role Models** - Learn and be inspired from the personal stories of people who have successfully achieved their health and wealth goals. Success stories are inspirational and put a "face" on positive behaviors. Examples of success stories about people saving money can be found at <http://americasaves.org/for-savers/saver-stories/656-saving-early-key-to-successful-future>. Inspirational weight loss stories can be found at <http://www.shape.com/weight-loss/success-stories/most-inspiring-weight-loss-success-stories-2013>.

Exploring Phosphorus and Kidney Disease

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Phosphorus is a mineral present in all cells of the body, particularly those of the bones and teeth. Phosphorus is important for many cellular functions, making up components of the cell membrane, in nucleotides like DNA and RNA which are involved in cell division, and in energy production as ATP. Adequate phosphorus is important for the proper functioning of the kidneys, muscles, nerves, and the heart. Food sources of phosphorus include dairy products and protein foods like meats and beans. While an adequate amount of phosphorus is essential for good health, people with kidney (renal) disease often must control the amount of phosphorus in their diets.



The kidneys in our body maintain fluid levels, electrolytes, and organic salts. They also function to make red blood cells, make hormones that regulate blood pressure (for example renin and angiotensin), and ensure bone and skeletal strength. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of 2014 more than 10% or 20 million adults in the United States have some type of kidney disease. Risk factors for kidney disease include diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and family history of kidney failure.

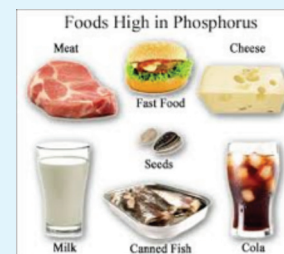
Kidney disease causes the kidneys to reduce their functioning. When kidneys stop working there may be reduced urine output and fluid retention in the body. Kidney disease symptoms may include fatigue, taste changes, nausea, vomiting, and high blood levels of potassium, calcium, sodium, and phosphorus.

People with impaired kidney function may have difficulty controlling the levels of phosphorus (and other substances) in their body. Often people with kidney disease will work with a Registered Dietitian or other health professional to develop a personalized meal plan to help guide healthy food and beverage choices. Foods containing high amounts of phosphorus may need to be limited in the diet.

Since the total phosphorus content of a food is not listed on the Nutrition Facts Label, people with kidney disease are often provided a list of high and low phosphorus foods to help them in meal planning. Phosphorus can occur naturally in foods or be added into a food during processing. In addition to referring to high phosphorus food lists, reading the ingredients list on a food label and looking for the word “phosphorus” or “PHOS” in an ingredient’s name can provide a clue to a source of added phosphorus.

In general, high phosphorus foods include:

- Processed foods such as dark colas, ale, beer, canned ice teas, cereals and flavored waters.
- Dairy products such as cheese, milk, cream soups, cottage cheese, custard, pudding, ice cream and yogurt.
- Animal protein products such as deli meats, organ meats, meat tenderizers, oysters, sardines, carp, crayfish, beef and chicken liver, fish, fish eggs (roe), nuts and seeds (including peanut butter and other nut butters).
- Vegetables such as dried beans, lentils, split peas, soy beans, baked beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, chick peas, kidney beans, lima beans, pork and beans, soy milk.
- Other products such as cocoa (including chocolate-based drinks and puddings), bran cereals, brewer’s yeast, caramels, nuts, seeds, wheat germ, whole grain products.



People with kidney disease can continue to live productive lives by making changes to their diets and lifestyles, and by working with medical professionals to optimize their health.

For more information about kidney disease, please visit the website of the National Kidney Disease Education Program: <http://nkdep.nih.gov/living/diet-lifestyle-changes.shtml>

Two Important Vaccinations You Need to Know About

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With all the different information out there, it is important to know the facts about vaccines in order to make educated decisions when choosing whether or not to get vaccinated. This article will discuss two common vaccines, how each vaccine is administered, their potential benefits and risks, as well as frequent questions and concerns.

Influenza Vaccine

About the flu

The influenza virus, also known as the flu, is a virus that affects the throat, nose, and lungs. Severity of the flu varies, and can range from mild cases to very severe cases. Complications of the flu include dehydration, pneumonia, and worsening of preexisting medical conditions such as diabetes and asthma. Flu symptoms include fever, chills, sore throat, cough, muscle aches, fatigue, and headaches. Symptoms often appear within 2 days after an individual is exposed to the virus. The flu is spread very easily. When infected individuals cough, sneeze, or simply talk, particles containing the virus are released into the air which can transmit the virus to other people. People can also be exposed to the flu if they touch objects that were previously contaminated such as doorknobs, computer keyboards, and pens. The vaccine helps to protect individuals against the flu. Individuals who are most affected by the flu include younger children and the elderly.



Important Facts about the Vaccine

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone older than 6 months of age be vaccinated annually, and states that it is the most important thing people can do to protect themselves against the virus. The vaccine is available as an injection as well as a nasal spray. There are contraindications to the vaccine. People who are allergic to eggs or have previously had an allergic reaction to the flu vaccine may not be able to be vaccinated. People with a suppressed immune system, as well as pregnant women, are recommended to not become vaccinated. Also, individuals with asthma are only able to receive the vaccine as an injection.

DTaP and Tdap Vaccine "About Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis"

The Tdap vaccine protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Tetanus causes muscles of the head and neck to tighten resulting in the inability to open your mouth, swallow, and in some cases breathe. Tetanus is transmitted through cuts, scraps, and wounds. One out of five cases of tetanus results in death. Diphtheria causes the formation of a thick coating in the back of the throat, which can result in paralysis, difficulty breathing, heart failure and even death. Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, causes intense coughing spells which can cause vomiting, as well as, make it difficult to breathe and sleep. According to the CDC, 2 in 100 adolescents and 5 in 100 adults with pertussis are hospitalized. Both diphtheria and pertussis are spread by airborne contaminants released by coughing and sneezing.

What's the Difference Between DTaP and Tdap?

Both vaccines contain inactivated forms of the toxin produced by the bacteria that cause the three diseases. Inactivated means the substance no longer produces disease, but does trigger the body to create antibodies that give it immunity against the toxins. DTaP is approved for children under age 7. Tdap, which has a reduced dose of the diphtheria and pertussis vaccines, is approved for adolescents starting at age 11 and adults ages 19 to 64. It is often called a booster dose because it boosts the immunity that wanes from vaccines given at ages 4 to 6.



DTaP is a vaccine that helps children younger than age 7 develop immunity to three deadly diseases caused by bacteria: diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough (pertussis). Tdap is a booster immunization given at age 11 that offers continued protection from those diseases for adolescents and adults.

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Two Important Vaccinations You Need to Know About

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Important Facts about the Vaccine

The Tdap vaccine is given as an injection. At age 11 or 12, adolescents receive the Tdap vaccine; however individuals who have not been vaccinated should do so as soon as possible. Individuals should be given a booster every 10 years for continual protection. It is crucial for healthcare workers and individuals who have contact with infants younger than 12 months old to be vaccinated in order to prevent the potential spread of infection. Individuals who have previously had an allergic reaction to the Tdap vaccine should not be given the vaccine again. As with the use of any medication, there are potential side effects of the Tdap vaccine. They include fainting spells, pain or swelling/redness of the injection site, mild fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or stomach ache. People should consult their doctor if they experience any of these symptoms.

For more information about vaccines visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/default.htm>