

America's doctors offer 10 health resolutions as you start a new year

January 2 2024, by Dennis Thompson



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Still weighing whether to make a New Year's resolution? Or perhaps regretting letting your healthy habits slide during the holidays?

Either way, the American Medical Association (AMA) has ten recommendations to help Americans improve their [health](#) in 2024.

"It is quite common after the holidays to think about all you've eaten or your reduced [physical activity](#) and get discouraged," said AMA President Dr. Jesse Ehrenfeld.

"But the good news is you don't have to make major health changes in one fell swoop. You can make small, positive health choices right now that can have long-lasting effects," Ehrenfeld added in an AMA news release.

The AMA's recommendations for a healthier new year include:

- **Increase physical activity.** Exercise is essential to physical and [mental health](#). Adults should get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week.
- **Eat healthier.** Reduce intake of sugary drinks and processed foods, instead drinking more water and eating more nutritious whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, low-fat dairy and lean meats.
- **Get up-to-date on vaccinations.** Vaccines are available to protect people against COVID, influenza and RSV during this winter's cold and flu season. Make sure all members of your family have all their recommended jabs.
- **Go to your scheduled health screenings.** Millions of screenings for breast, colorectal and [prostate cancers](#) might have been missed due to pandemic-related disruptions, researchers estimate. Check with your doctor to find out if you're due for a screening.
- **Know your blood pressure numbers.** Getting [high blood pressure](#) under control can reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke.
- **Learn your risk for type 2 diabetes.** A simple online two-minute self-screening test at [DoIHavePrediabetes.org](https://www.doihaveprediabetes.org) can flag your diabetes risk, giving you a chance to take steps to prevent developing the chronic condition.

- **Drink moderately.** Stick to guidelines recommending two drinks a day for men and one drink for women.
- **Quit smoking.** Tobacco and vaping can trigger a nicotine addiction and affect your health. Your doctor can offer resources and guidance for quitting.
- **Use prescription drugs safely.** Follow your doctor's instructions when taking prescription meds, especially antibiotics. Not finishing the full course of antibiotics can contribute to antibiotic-resistant germs. Also store prescribed opioids safely, take them as directed and properly dispose of any leftover pills.
- **Manage stress.** Get sufficient sleep—between seven and eight hours a night—and seek help from a mental health professional if necessary.

Another tip for a healthy New Year—make sure that you have [health insurance coverage](#).

The AMA encourages people to visit healthcare.gov to sign up for health coverage, given that recent changes have improved access and affordability. The deadline to enroll for 2024 coverage is Jan. 16.

More information: Harvard Medical School has more about [making New Year's resolutions stick](#).

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