

# WELLNESSMONTHLY

Adopt Healthy Resolutions to Last a Lifetime | **January 2019**



*“Think in terms of the day’s resolutions, not the year’s.”*

*– Henry Moore*

## Welcome to 2019!

***Another year. Another chance to reset the start button.***

***If your physical and mental health is top of mind, here are some suggestions to inform your New Year’s resolutions.***

### Monitor Blood Pressure

High blood pressure that develops over time (primary hypertension) is called the “silent killer” because it often doesn’t cause symptoms while laying the table for heart disease and stroke. Certain lifestyle behaviors that help keep your blood pressure under control are also good for your overall health.

Related resolutions:

1. Get regular checkups, especially if you have a family history of hypertension.
2. Exercise daily. Aerobic activity improves cardiovascular fitness.
3. Manage stress. Quality sleep, exercise, mindfulness, hobbies, social interaction and spending time outdoors are recommended.
4. If you smoke cigarettes, get support to quit. Smoking raises blood pressure and increases heart disease risk.

### Eat Wisely

Weight gain during the holidays often triggers a desire to lose weight when the calendar page flips to January. A [British study published in the BMJ](#) found that a brief, pre-holiday behavioral intervention involving self-weighing, weight management advice and information about the amount of physical activity needed to burn calories contained in festive foods (e.g., 21 minutes of running to compensate for one mince pie) prevented weight gain in a comparison group of normal-weight adults.

Related resolutions:

1. Use weight-management interventions year-round. Learn about healthy choices and how to resist temptation. Frequently check your weight and adjust behaviors to counteract gains.
2. Eat a balanced diet rich in grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products and lean meat. Avoid processed foods and excessive amounts of sodium, sugar and alcohol.
3. Refer to [Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension \(DASH\)](#), a program promoted by Mayo Clinic. It features recommendations on foods that are high in potassium, magnesium and calcium (nutrients that help lower blood pressure) and low on sodium.

## Did You Know?

Salt in your diet causes your body to retain water, which in turn may cause your blood pressure to rise. The American Heart Association recommends limiting daily sodium intake to no more than 1,500 milligrams. A teaspoon of salt has about 2,400 milligrams of sodium.

## Time Management

Many people complain about feeling overwhelmed by the fast pace of life and information overload. This can cause fatigue and forgetfulness, affect resiliency, and make you more vulnerable to illness and injury.

Related resolutions:

1. Get rid of clutter at home and in your workspace. Dedicating some time to reorganization now saves time in the long run, minimizes distractions and makes it easier to keep surfaces clean and free of germs.
2. Consult a behavioral health professional if procrastination is an issue for you. About 20 percent of people are chronic procrastinators, psychologists say. Putting off what could be done today is associated with insomnia, immune system suppression, gastrointestinal problems and relationship conflicts.
3. Set manageable goals and priorities. Practice saying “no” to unrealistic demands and acknowledge yourself for what gets done. Don’t be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

4. Decrease screen time and redirect your attention to other things you enjoy. A recent [Nielsen study](#) found that American adults spend 10 and half hours a day watching, reading, listening to or simply interacting with media.

## Oral Health

It may not be high on your priority list, but a focus on oral care in 2019 is likely to improve your overall health. Dental and mouth problems can affect your ability to eat, sleep and socialize.

Related resolutions:

1. Schedule teeth cleaning as recommended by your dentist, even if you have no natural teeth or wear dentures. Clean dentures and dental appliances as directed.
2. Brush your teeth for two minutes twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. Replace your brush (manual, electric or sonic tip) every three to four months. Gently floss between your teeth to remove plaque.
3. If you grind, gnash or clench your teeth while sleeping, solutions may include wearing a mouth guard, re-shaping teeth, and in some cases, practicing stress management techniques.

When making resolutions, set achievable goals. Celebrate incremental change, and don’t put yourself down if at first you don’t succeed.



## Taking Your Blood Pressure

When you check your blood pressure, the upper number – systolic – measures pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. The bottom number – diastolic – measures pressure between beats.

Blood pressure is read in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg). A reading of 120 over 80 is considered normal. A reading of 140 to 159 over 90 to 99 is Stage 1 hypertension. As you age, the systolic reading can go up while diastolic pressure remains normal.

In general, for every 2 pounds of weight you lose, your blood pressure drops by about 1 millimeter of mercury (mm Hg). Regular exercise can reduce blood pressure by about 5 to 8 mm Hg.