Your To-Do List for a Healthy 2019

The kick-off to a new year is a great time to take stock of your health and benefits to ensure that you get the care you need to stay healthy. Consider adding the following simple items to your to-do list this month:

- **Understand your healthcare coverage.** Knowing exactly what your health insurance plan covers and the costs you are responsible for can help you use your benefits wisely and make informed decisions.

- **Confirm your providers are still in-network:** With the start of a new plan year, it’s important to make sure your doctors are still in your health plan’s network before scheduling an appointment to avoid being charged higher out-of-network fees.

- **Choose a primary care provider (PCP):** Having a primary care provider is necessary for some health plans, but having an established relationship with a doctor is important to maintaining good health, regardless of your health plan. A PCP can care for the majority of non-emergency needs, understands your health history, and can help manage and treat injuries, illnesses or issues requiring immediate care.

- **Schedule preventive screenings:** Most health plans are required to cover preventive screenings and immunizations at no cost to you, providing an opportunity to make sure you are in good health and address any potential issues early.

- **Review your emergency contact information:** In the event of a health emergency, it’s critical that first responders know how to contact your friends or family members. Consider adding an “In Case of Emergency” (ICE) contact in your cell phone.

- **Take steps to stay healthy and possibly prevent health issues.** This includes eating right, exercising, visiting the doctor regularly, and practicing other healthy habits.

Taking these steps now can help ensure you have a happy and healthy 2019.

Start the New Year SMART

Looking to improve your health in 2019? Breaking down your goals into smaller SMART goals can be the difference between aspirations and realizations. SMART goals are **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.** Adopting behaviors in this manner helps to create lasting lifestyle changes! Think about the goals you have for your health and the positive results you hope to achieve in 2019. Integrate some of the SMART goals below that can help you reach those results.

- **Pack a healthy lunch** for work three days each week.
- **Walk for 15 minutes** of your lunch break five days each week.
- **Designate two evenings each week** to be screen-free time.
- **Meditate for 10 minutes** before work two days a week.
- **Drink a glass of water** before each meal, three days a week.
- **Include two days of resistance** or strength-building exercises each week.
- **Strive to avoid added sugars** in foods two days each week.
- **Choose two days a week to spend one hour doing something you love** such as reading, a hobby, journaling, or any other activity you do for personal enjoyment.
Make Time for What **Matters Most**

Many of us are so busy multitasking, keeping up with social obligations, and other details of daily life that we haven’t paused to determine if these activities actually have real meaning for us. Now’s the time to make small changes that will allow you to focus more on the things that truly matter—whether it’s spending more time with loved ones, pursuing a new hobby, getting fit or just enjoying more sunsets. **Try these tips:**

**Get out of the multitasking trap.** Checking your phone while chatting with a friend while streaming videos all at once, for example, can actually make you less productive and informed, while making you feel more isolated and even burned out! Instead, be mindfully present and focused on the task at hand—whether it’s a conversation, cooking a meal, or walking your dog.

**Begin combating distractions.** Being constantly connected to digital devices can rob you of the chance to enjoy your time off, savor a meal, or focus on your work. Try cutting down on the tabs and multiple windows open on your device. Remove the email app from your phone, or check it only at predefined periods.

**Cut back on nonessential things.** Before you buy another gadget, piece of clothing or other item you may not need, ask yourself this: “Am I choosing or living with material goods I don’t use, need or love?” Paring down the non-essentials can free you to enjoy what matters!

**Carve out time in your daily routine for important, meaningful activities.** Whether it’s yoga, walking with your partner, or creative writing, purposely slot these things into your schedule. Otherwise, your hours can easily fill up with meaningless activities like checking social media.

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**Cervical Health Awareness Month**

**Read:** Information about cervical cancer risks, how to lower them, and important screening tests from the Centers for Disease Control.

**Find out more:**


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