10 Doctor-Recommended New Year's Resolutions

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(StatePoint) With the new year upon us, you may be looking for resolutions that will help to keep you and your loved ones healthy and happy in the year ahead.

"This is the perfect time of year to consider your personal goals, and how you can make positive health choices in the coming year," says American Medical Association (AMA) President Barbara L. McAneny, M.D. "Small lifestyle changes today can have a lasting effect in improving your health."

To help you start the year off on the right foot, Dr. McAneny and the experts at the AMA are offering 10 recommendations to help you determine where you can make the most impactful, long-lasting improvements to your health.

1. Learn your risk for type 2 diabetes by taking the self-screening test at DoIHavePrediabetes.org. Steps you take now can help prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.

2. Be more physically active. Adults should do at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity.

3. Know your blood pressure numbers. Visit LowerYourHBP.org to better understand your numbers and take necessary steps to get your high blood pressure -- also known as hypertension -- under control. Doing so will reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke.

4. Reduce your intake of processed foods, especially those with added sodium and sugar. Also reduce your consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and drink more water instead.

5. If your health care professional determines that you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed. Antibiotic resistance is a serious public health problem and antibiotics will not make you feel better if you have a virus, such as a cold or flu.

6. If consuming alcohol, do so in moderation as defined by the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans -- up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men, and only by adults of legal drinking age.

7. Talk with your doctor about tobacco and nicotine use and quit. Declare your home and car smoke-free to eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke.

8. Pain medication is personal. If you are taking prescription opioids, follow your doctor's instructions, store them safely to prevent diversion or misuse, and properly dispose of any leftover medication.

9. Make sure your family is up-to-date on their vaccines, including the annual influenza vaccine for everyone age six months or older.

10. Manage stress. A good diet and daily exercise are key ingredients to maintaining and improving your mental health, but don't hesitate to ask for help from a friend or mental health professional when you need it.

The lifestyle choices you make now will have long-lasting impacts. So, this new year, prioritize your long-term health by forming great habits.

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