

January 2012

Healthy New Year's Resolutions: Lose Weight & Quit Smoking



The #1 New Year's resolution is to lose weight and for good reason: 65% of American adults are overweight. Excess weight can play a role in high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, strokes, and certain types of cancer and osteoarthritis. To lose weight, you have to consume fewer calories or burn more than your body needs through exercise. Your body burns fat and you will lose pounds. Traditional diets are often about sacrificing short-term, but the key to losing weight and keeping it off is healthy eating and becoming more active. Most over-the-counter (otc) diet aids do not work long-term and can be dangerous. Those containing large quantities of caffeine can cause serious cardiovascular side effects and possibly death. OTC diuretics or "water pills" contain large amounts of potassium or caffeine, which removes water weight but not fat weight. In addition, they can cause dehydration. The use of herbal remedies to lose weight is not generally recommended by the medical community due to the high risk of toxicities and lack of effectiveness. Alli (orlistat) is formulated to only work in your digestive system. It works by preventing 25% of the fat you eat from being absorbed. This extra fat is passed through your bowels and can result in unwanted bowel changes, especially if you eat more than 15 grams of fat.

- Don't let yourself go hungry. Healthy snacks are a good way to stay satisfied between meals. Eating fresh fruit and vegetables every 4 hours can keep you from getting too hungry and grabbing the first thing you see.
- Eat slowly. There is about a 15 minute lag between when your stomach is full and when your brain realizes that you are full. Eating more slowly can help you avoid overeating.
- Increase your activity. Every little bit helps, so start taking the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator at work. When you are out, park farther away from the entrance of the building and walk.

Over 13 million smokers try to quit each year, yet less than 5% of those who attempt to quit unaided are cigarette free after 6 to 12 months. The smoking habit has 2 different components: the physical craving for nicotine and the psychological craving to repeat the routine. Nicotine from smoking causes a release of dopamine into the brain. If the brain stops getting the nicotine, you begin to feel withdrawal cravings. Stop smoking products, such as Nicorette, provide a controlled amount of nicotine without the harmful toxins in cigarettes (tar, carbon monoxide). You use it for a short period and gradually reduce the level of nicotine until you no longer need it.

- Know why you want to quit (a motivation)
- Exercise
- Eat fruits and vegetables
- Choose a reward
- * Manage stress
- * Avoid alcohol
- * Remove triggers
- * Try nicotine replacement products

Compliments of Stauffers
of Kissel Hill.
Pharmacy