

Creating a health checklist for 2018



The start of the year is a good time to make a pledge to put your wellbeing first. Use this handy checklist to make 2018 healthier and less stressful when health challenges arise. With a little foresight and a commitment to wellness, 2018 is sure to be a healthy year for yourself and your family.

Make a list of your medications, allergies, and health conditions.

Keep a copy in your wallet or purse or store the information digitally in a smart phone app, such as Evernote, to access in case of emergencies.

Schedule needed checkups and specialist appointments.

Making all necessary appointments for the year now ensures that visits with your primary care physician, dentist, dermatologist, gynecologist, eye doctor, and other specialists you see regularly are on the books before your calendar gets full.

Schedule screenings.

The American Cancer Society recommends women ages 45 to 54 get a mammogram each year. Women 55 and older can get by with one every two years. Younger women at high risk for breast cancer should discuss the benefits of the screening with their health care provider. Women should receive a bone density scan at age 65. Men should discuss the pros and cons of prostate cancer screening with their doctors. Men and women should get a colonoscopy at age 50 and at recommended intervals thereafter.

Resolve to exercise regularly.

The CDC recommends moderately intense physical activity 30 minutes a day, five days a week. You can run, swim, cycle, or walk briskly to meet these requirements. Just pick something you will enjoy over the long term. To stay motivated, ask a friend or family member to exercise with you.

Aim to eat well.

Follow a diet that emphasizes fruits and vegetables, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and includes nuts, seeds and legumes. Limit salt, sugar, and saturated and trans fats (found in processed and fried foods).

Give your medicine chest a makeover.

Safely dispose of expired medications and make sure you are stocked with frequently used items like over-the-counter pain relievers, as well as first-aid supplies, including bandages and gauze.

Review your health insurance plan.

Whether you have switched plans or stayed in the same one, offerings can change. Take advantage of wellness programs and other benefits that can help keep you healthy. Also, have any new ID cards ready to show when you visit the doctor.