

STARTING THE NEW YEAR OUT HEALTHIER
BY: Melissa Jeremiah, RN
Director of Hoosier Uplands Home Health and Hospice

With the start of the each new year many people make resolutions that all too often they do not keep. The main reason that people do not keep their resolutions is they set their goals too high. I am sure that one resolution most of us would like to be able to keep is to live a healthier lifestyle in 2002. Good health is a gift not only to yourself but your family and friends. Although I am unsure of the origin, one of my favorite quotes is, "If you don't take control of your lifestyle, one day your lifestyle will take control of you!" That is sadly all too true and I hope this year we will all be able to take control of our lifestyles. Hopefully, after reading this article, those who need to will begin to find ways to regain control of their lifestyles and increase their health!

Let me start by saying that, if you try to change every single bad habit you have you are most likely setting yourself up for failure. You should concentrate on one to two bad habits at a time. Lets briefly take a look at things a person can do to live a healthier life:

- #1. Stop smoking. Smoking is a risk factor for many diseases: such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and lung cancer.**
- #2. Increase your physical activity. You should consult with your physician before starting any exercise program. Once you are given the go ahead, try to exercise at least 30 minutes 3 days a week. Exercise can take on many forms, from gardening to snow skiing. Be sure and select an activity that you enjoy, since that will increase the chances that you will continue to be active. Increased physical activity helps to decrease the risk of heart disease, stroke and certain forms of cancer.**
- #3. Eat a balanced diet. By balanced this means a diet with the correct servings from the major food groups. The USDA recommends the following daily guidelines:
6 - 11 servings of bread, cereal, rice or pasta
3 - 5 servings of vegetables
2 - 4 servings of fruit
2 - 3 servings of protein (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts or dry beans)
2 - 3 servings of milk, yogurt or cheese
Fats, oils and sweets should be used sparingly.
For additional information on what is considered a serving size refer to your food label. What you are given as a serving in a restaurant, is most generally actually two servings.
Remember that if your physician has you on a special diet, his guidelines should be the ones for you to follow!**
- #4. Limit your intake of caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant and can increase blood pressure. High blood pressure can lead to a stroke and heart disease.**
- #5. Limit your intake of alcohol. More than one drink a day may increase your blood pressure. There are also some medications that should never be mixed with alcohol, consult with your pharmacist if you are unsure of the medications that you are on.**
- #6. Get plenty of rest. Sometimes we forget how important sleep is to our bodies.**
- #7. Try to be more positive. Do you know that most centurions, those that live above the**

age of 100, contribute their longevity to positive attitude?

- #8. Take time out for yourself. If you don't take care of yourself nobody else will, is an adage that you must remember! Schedule time everyday to do something you enjoy.**
- #9. Have regular checkups and follow your physicians orders. Also, if you have symptoms of an illness, do not put off seeking treatment. Many people die unnecessarily due to fear of seeking treatment. Early treatment dramatically increases survival and recovery rates.**