

Health Bulletin:

Take Care New York



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#15 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers

10 steps to a longer and healthier life

Take Care New York calls on all New Yorkers – individuals and families, health care providers, community organizations, City agencies, and businesses – to take action.

- It offers 10 important steps to improve health.
- If every New Yorker took just some of these steps, we could prevent thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of illnesses and disabilities each year.



1. Have a Regular Doctor or Other Health Care Provider.

Get regular medical care to help stay healthy.

- If you don't have a regular doctor but are insured, get a doctor through your health plan.
- Many individuals and families qualify for free or low-cost health insurance. People without coverage can also get care at public and community health clinics.

2. Be Tobacco-Free.

Quit smoking and avoid second-hand smoke to prolong your life and protect those around you.

- Smoking kills 10,000 New Yorkers every year.
- Second-hand smoke causes cancer, heart disease, and many other illnesses.
- Quitting smoking greatly lowers your risk of heart disease, stroke, and cancer, and protects those around you. Medications and counseling double your chance of quitting.

3. Keep Your Heart Healthy.

Keep your blood pressure, cholesterol, and weight at healthy levels to prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and other diseases.

- "Know your numbers." Get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly. Ask your doctor about the levels that are right for you, and take medications your doctor may prescribe.
- Get at least 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (such as a brisk walk) at least 4 days a week.
- Maintain a healthy weight and eat a healthy diet, including at least 5 servings of fruits or vegetables a day.

4. Know Your HIV Status.

Get tested for HIV. Reduce risky behaviors and use condoms to protect yourself and others.

- Anyone who has ever been sexually active, or ever injected drugs (even if only once), should be tested for HIV.
- If you have HIV, it's important to know. If you're HIV-positive, you can get medical treatment to feel better and live longer.
- Use latex condoms to protect yourself and others against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

5. Get Help for Depression.

Depression can be treated. Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

- It's normal to feel "down" once in a while. But if you feel this way for 2 weeks or more, you may be depressed.
- Most people can be helped with medication and therapy.
- Abusing alcohol or drugs makes depression worse.

6. Live Free of Dependence on Alcohol and Drugs.

Get help to stop alcohol and drug abuse. Recovery is possible.

- Alcohol and drug abuse can be treated.
- Heavy drinking or drinking that worries you or your family, friends, or co-workers is a problem. Get help.
- If you have a problem with either prescription or illegal drugs, get help stopping.

7. Get Checked for Cancer.**Colonoscopy, Pap smears, and mammograms save lives.**

- Everyone 50 and older, and others at high risk, should get a colonoscopy to prevent colon cancer.
- All sexually active women 18 to 65 should get regular Pap smears to prevent cervical cancer.
- All women 40 and older need regular mammograms to detect breast cancer.

8. Get the Immunizations You Need.**Everyone needs to be vaccinated, regardless of age.**

- Children should be up-to-date on required immunizations.
- Everyone 50 and older and others at high risk should get a flu shot every year.
- Everyone 65 and older and others at high risk should get a one-time pneumonia vaccine.

9. Make Your Home Safe and Healthy.**Have a home that is free from violence and free of environmental hazards.****Help is available for domestic violence.**

- Domestic violence is a *crime*. Physical violence is against the law.
- Abuse can also be psychological, emotional, or sexual.
- If you or someone you know needs help, call the City's free, confidential Domestic Violence Hotline 24-hours-a-day.
- **CALL 911 IN AN EMERGENCY.**

Prevent childhood lead poisoning.

- Keep young children away from peeling paint and renovation work.
- If you have a child under age 6 and you live in a building with 3 or more apartments, we recommend that you ask your landlord to inspect and safely fix peeling paint. Landlords are required to do this at no cost to tenants.
- Every child must be tested for lead at ages 1 and 2 years.

10. Have a Healthy Baby.**Planning pregnancy helps ensure a healthy mother and a healthy baby.**

- Always use birth control until you're ready to get pregnant.
- If you are pregnant or may become pregnant, don't smoke, drink, or use drugs. Do take a daily multivitamin with folic acid to prevent birth defects.
- Get early and regular prenatal care.

MORE INFORMATION AND HELP

- Talk to your doctor, call 311 and ask for Take Care New York, or visit nyc.gov/health/tcny
- Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-621-HOPE (1-800-621-4673), or 311
- Free or low-cost health insurance: call 311 and ask for HealthStat or the Child/Teen Health Program
- LifeNet (help for emotional and substance abuse problems): 1-800-LifeNet (1-800-543-3638), or 311
- Smokers' Quitline (free help quitting): 311
- Women's Healthline: 311

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Health & Mental Hygiene
News

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