

Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

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



10 STEPS to a LONGER and HEALTHIER LIFE



• Available in Spanish and Chinese: call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health
• Disponible en español: llame al 311 o visite nyc.gov/health
• 需要中文服務 - 可電 311 或造訪網址: nyc.gov/health





10 Steps to a Healthier City

- **Take Care New York** calls on all New Yorkers – individuals and families, health care providers, community organizations, businesses and city agencies – to take action.
- If every New Yorker took just *some* of these steps, we could all live longer and healthier lives.

Working together, New York City aims to ...

1 Promote Quality Health Care for All

- Don't wait until you're sick to make an appointment with your doctor. Regular medical care helps you stay healthy.
- If you don't have a regular doctor and are insured, get a doctor through your health plan.
- Many individuals and families qualify for free or low-cost health insurance. Call 311 for information.
- Even if you don't qualify for insurance, you can get excellent free or low-cost health care at public hospitals and community health centers, regardless of immigration status. Call 311 to find out where to go.

2 Be Tobacco Free

- Quitting GREATLY lowers your risk of heart disease, stroke and cancer and protects those around you from second-hand smoke.
- Second-hand smoke causes cancer, heart disease and many other illnesses.
- Make your home smoke-free! Children who live with a smoker are more likely to have asthma, bronchitis, ear infections and pneumonia. They are twice as likely to become smokers themselves.
- Medications and counseling make it much easier to quit smoking – and double your chance of success. For free help to quit, call 311 and ask for the Smokers' Quitline.

3 Promote Physical Activity and Healthy Eating

- Physical activity is vital to maintain a healthy body. Get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity (such as a brisk walk) at least 5 days a week.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables (at least 5 servings a day) and less fat, sugar and salt.
- Avoid regular soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages. Drink water instead. New York City tap water is delicious and free.

4 Be Heart Healthy

- Get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly, and get screened if you're at risk for diabetes. Ask your doctor about the levels that are right for you.
- Take all medication as your doctor prescribes. If your medication costs too much, ask your doctor if it comes in a lower-cost generic form or if you qualify for free medication (see More Information and Help).
- Maintain a healthy weight. If you are overweight, losing as little as 10 pounds can help lower your blood pressure and make your heart healthier.

5 Stop the Spread of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections

- Get tested! If you have ever had sex or ever injected drugs (even if only once), it is especially important to be tested for HIV. Get an HIV test from your doctor or call 311 to find out where to go.
- If you're HIV positive, medical treatment will help you feel better and live longer.
- Use latex condoms to protect yourself and others from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. (If you are allergic to latex, use polyurethane male or female condoms.)
- Get vaccinated against hepatitis A and hepatitis B. If you are a woman 25 or younger, get tested for chlamydia once a year.
- Limit the number of people you have sex with to reduce your risk of getting or spreading HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

6 Recognize and Treat Depression

- It's normal to feel down once in awhile. But feeling down for 2 weeks or more may be a sign that you are depressed.
- Using alcohol or drugs can trigger depression or make it worse.
- Counseling and medication can help most people. Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional or call LifeNet, a 24-hour confidential hotline (see More Information and Help).

7 Reduce Risky Alcohol Use and Drug Dependence

- Heavy drinking or drinking that worries you or your family, friends or co-workers is a problem.
- Any amount of illegal drug use or prescription drug abuse is a problem.
- Help is available! Talk to your doctor or a substance abuse counselor or call LifeNet, a 24-hour confidential hotline (see More Information and Help).

8 Prevent and Detect Cancer

- **To prevent colon cancer**, people 50 and older and others at high risk should get a colonoscopy. Colonoscopy is the only test that can *prevent* colon cancer. It is usually needed only *once every 10 years*.
- **To prevent cervical cancer**, Pap tests are recommended at least every 3 years, starting at age 21 (or within 3 years of beginning sexual activity, whichever comes first). Women 65 and older may no longer need Pap tests if recent tests have been normal.
- Girls ages 11 and 12 should get HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine against cervical cancer. The vaccine is available for girls as young as 9 and for girls and women 13 to 26 who have not been previously vaccinated.

9 Raise Healthy Children

- Many safe and effective birth control methods are available. Ask your health care provider what's right for you.
- Start regular prenatal care early in pregnancy. If you are or may become pregnant, take a daily multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid to prevent birth defects. Don't smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs not prescribed for you.
- Breastfeeding protects against allergies and infections and makes your baby stronger and healthier. Breastfeed exclusively for the first 6 months – the longer you breastfeed, the better.
- Children need regular check-ups, starting soon after birth, to make sure they are developing well and to get their vaccinations. Keep your child's vaccinations up-to-date!
- **Protect against influenza.** Children 6 months and older should get a flu shot every year.
- **Protect against lead poisoning.** Have your child tested for lead at 1 and 2 years of age.

10 Make All Neighborhoods Healthy Places

- **Protect against childhood lead poisoning.** If you have a child under age 6 and live in a building with 3 or more apartments, your landlord **MUST** inspect and safely fix peeling paint – at no cost to you. Keep young children away from peeling paint and renovation work.
- **Prevent window falls.** Owners of buildings with 3 or more apartments must supply, install and maintain window guards in any apartment where children 10 years or younger live.
- **Protect against pest infestations.** Insects and rodents damage homes and make allergies and asthma worse. Chemicals people use to get rid of them also cause problems. You can control pests safely! See More Information and Help to find out how.
- **Use smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.** Owners of buildings with 3 or more apartments and 1- or 2-family homes must properly install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors – at no cost to you.



More Information and Help

Visit **Take Care New York** at nyc.gov/health/tcny for links to the programs listed here as well as additional resources for each of the 10 steps.

1. Promote Quality Health Care for All

- Free or low-cost health insurance: **311** or nyc.gov/healthstat

2. Be Tobacco Free

- Smokers' Quitline (Free help to quit): **311** or nyc.gov/health/smokefree
- NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation (free or low-cost counseling and other services): **311**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/tobacco

3. Promote Physical Activity and Healthy Eating

- Free NYC fitness programs: **311** or nycgovparks.org
- Physical activity: cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/index.htm
- Healthy diet: mypyramid.gov

4. Be Heart Healthy

- American Heart Association: americanheart.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/heartdisease, cdc.gov/diabetes
- American Diabetes Association: diabetes.org
- NYCRRx: a non-profit organization that makes safe and effective medication available at the lowest possible cost to New Yorkers. nycrx.org or call **866-MY-NYCRX** (866-696-9272)
- Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) (for people 65 and older): health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/epic/faq.htm

5. Stop the Spread of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections

- Free Condoms: **311** or nyc.gov/condoms
- Confidential teen health services (NYC Health Department): nyc.gov/teenhealth
- Harm Reduction Coalition: harmreduction.org (syringe exchange programs): **212-213-6376**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/hiv, cdc.gov/hepatitis

6. Recognize and Treat Depression

- LifeNet (24-hour confidential help): **800-LifeNet** (800-543-3638) **Spanish LifeNet: 877-AYUDESE** (877-298-3373) **Asian LifeNet** (Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean): **877-990-8585**

7. Reduce Risky Alcohol Use and Drug Dependence

- LifeNet (24-hour confidential help): **800-LifeNet** (800-543-3638) **Spanish LifeNet: 877-AYUDESE** (877-298-3373) **Asian LifeNet** (Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean): **877-990-8585**
- Alcoholics Anonymous: nyintergroup.org or **212-941-0094**
- Al-Anon and Alateen: nycalanon.org or **212-941-0094**
- Narcotics Anonymous: na.org
- Cocaine Anonymous: ca.org

8. Prevent and Detect Cancer

- American Cancer Society: cancer.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/sfl/, cdc.gov/std/hpv

9. Raise Healthy Children

- Women's Healthline (ask about free or low-cost pregnancy care, birth control, emergency contraception, and breastfeeding information): **311**
- Nurse-Family Partnership (free services for first time mothers less than 28 weeks pregnant): **311**
- Confidential teen health services (NYC Health Department): nyc.gov/teenhealth
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/lead

10. Make All Neighborhoods Healthy Places

- NYC Health Department Rat Information Portal (anti-rat tools and information): <https://gis.nyc.gov/doh/rip>
- NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development: nyc.gov/hpd
- NYC Department of Environmental Protection: nyc.gov/dep
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: epa.gov/lead

**DIAL
311**

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and HEALTHIER LIFE**

**DIAL
311**

For Non-Emergency New York City Services
Telephone Interpretation in More Than 170 Languages