

HAPPY NEW YEAR

WEST WINDSOR HEALTH DEPARTMENT
serving the communities of West Windsor ■ Robbinsville ■ Hightstown

You research, choose and maintain in good working order the possessions you purchase. In the same way, you are a consumer of health care. You choose a health care provider AND maintain a productive working relationship with that person.

BE AN INFORMED HEALTH CARE CONSUMER

- **CHOOSE A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER** that is a good “match” to your needs. Ask for referrals from friends and family members, or call your local hospital’s Physician Referral Line and check that the provider participates in your insurance plan.

Ask Me

3

WHAT IS MY PROBLEM?

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO ABOUT IT?

AND, WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ME TO DO THIS?

- **ASK QUESTIONS** if you have any doubts or concerns. Make sure you understand the answers. Take a friend or relative with you for support and to remember details you may forget.
- **KEEP AN UP-TO-DATE LIST** of *all* the medicines you take. Include prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins and herbal supplements on the list. Give a copy to each health care provider, and keep a copy in your purse or wallet. Fill *all* prescriptions at the same pharmacy so they have a complete record of all your medications.



- Having prescriptions filled online can be more convenient and economical. Purchase medication prescribed only by your own

health care provider from a VIPPS certified site, never from a cyber-pharmacist who may prescribe potentially dangerous drugs without ever seeing you or consulting with your health care provider.

- **GET THE RESULTS** of all procedures and tests. Ask when and how you will get the reports that are sent to your health care provider. Don’t assume the results are fine if you don’t get them in person, by phone or mail. Call your health care provider and ask for your results and what they mean for your care.
- **PREVENT MEDICAL ERRORS.** Ask questions and voice your concerns. Triple-check your prescriptions. Keep track of your test results. Understand any course of treatment that you are prescribed.
- **USE THE INTERNET WISELY.** If you have been diagnosed with an illness and want more information, the internet is a good place to start. Look for sites from government agencies, educational institutions or nonprofit and professional organizations that serve the public interest. Use your findings as a basis for a discussion with your health care.



- **IF YOU MUST BE TREATED IN A HOSPITAL,** choose a facility that has experience in your procedure. Be sure you understand any instructions you are given about follow-up care before you leave the hospital.
- **PARTICIPATE** in your own health ... and health care. Leading a healthy lifestyle reduces your risk for the leading causes of preventable illness and death. Being a wise health care consumer is an important part of leading a long and healthy life!

10 TIPS FOR A HEALTHY NEW YEAR



Each year, Americans make countless New Year's Resolutions ... only to abandon them within a month or two. While resolutions are a great way to jump start a new year, the only ones that lead to good health are small, realistic changes that you can maintain throughout the year. The Health Department offers these 10 tips for good health:

1 MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT. You don't need to read statistics to know too many Americans are overweight! Too much body fat is a known risk factor for hypertension, coronary heart disease and stroke, lipid disorders, diabetes, gallbladder disease, sleep apnea and other breathing

problems, osteoarthritis and certain cancers. Everyone's healthy weight is different, but BMI (Body Mass Index) is an easy way to get an idea of where you are. **To calculate your BMI, visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/BMI/bmicalc.htm.**

2 IMPROVE YOUR DIET. We are a nation of supersized fast food lovers. Try slowly changing to a "whole food" diet that includes more fruits and vegetables, low fat meats and dairy products, and whole grains ... and fewer processed foods that are higher in fat, salt and empty calories. **Visit www.nutrition.gov for easy access to nutrition information resources.**

3 EXERCISE. Moderate daily physical activity (a 20 minute walk) or exercising more intensively on most days of the week can reduce the risk of chronic disease (diabetes, heart disease and diabetes), help control weight, increase your energy level and reduce stress. Talk with your health care provider before starting any new exercise program. **Visit www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity for ideas on how to incorporate more movement into your life.**



It takes about **3 WEEKS** to establish a new habit. Old habits are like an *EZ Pass* in the brain: you will automatically choose to do (or not do) something in a way that is familiar. Give yourself time to create new pathways in your brain ... start small and stick with it!

4 DON'T USE ANY TOBACCO PRODUCTS. Everyone knows that smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer. But smoking also increases the risk of many other diseases including adult leukemia, pancreatic and cervical cancers, heart disease and diabetes. **Visit www.nj.quitnet.com or call toll-free (866) NJSTOPS for smoking cessation information.**



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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Jill Swanson
Health Officer

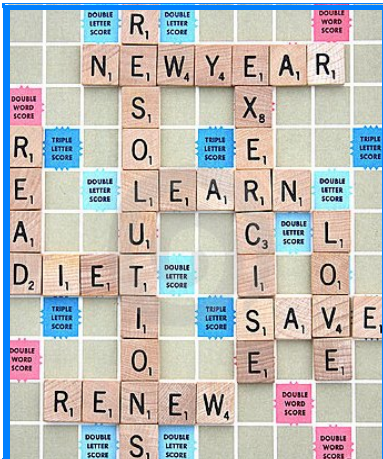
Our vision is thriving and healthy communities. To achieve our vision, the Health Department is committed to providing public health services to protect, promote, assess and assure the health and safety of our residents.

5 CONTROL YOUR CHOLESTEROL AND BLOOD PRESSURE. Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of both men and women in the United States. Know your blood pressure and cholesterol values and keep them under control with diet, moderate exercise, weight control and medication when prescribed by your health care provider. **Visit www.americanheart.org or call (800) 242-8721 for “heart healthy” tips.**



6 PERFORM MONTHLY CANCER SCREENINGS - breast self exams for women and testicular self exams for men. Detection of early changes and prompt treatment greatly increase the “cure rate” of many cancers. **Visit www.cancer.org or call (800) 227-2345 for more cancer prevention, detection and treatment information.**

7 DRINK IN MODERATION ... OR NOT AT ALL. Evidence is mixed as to whether it is healthier to drink small amounts of alcohol (no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men) or to abstain completely. But it is clear that more than moderate drinking is associated with liver and heart disease, some cancers, pancreatitis, alcohol related birth defects, and driving accidents. **Visit www.rethingingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov or call (800) 238-2333 if you, or someone you know, has a substance abuse problem.**



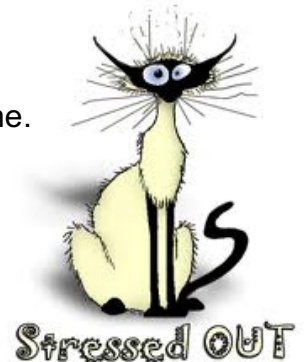
CHANGE IS DIFFICULT! We live in a “quick fix” society - long lasting change requires commitment, time and practice. Let’s get started:

- Be realistic by choosing an obtainable goal.
- Even if it seems obvious, write down a detailed game plan.
- Break your one big resolution into smaller, less intimidating steps that will help you reach your ultimate goal. Even if you aren’t able to reach your final goal, you will still have many smaller achievements along the way.
- Ask friends and family members for support. Be specific about the type of support you want.

8 FIND A GOOD PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER. Your doctor, physician assistant or nurse practitioner should allow enough time for you to comfortably ask questions. Ask about recommended routine screenings, nutritional supplements and any preventive therapies such as daily aspirin or cholesterol lowering medication for your age, gender and medical history. **Visit www.healthfinder.gov for comprehensive health care resources.**

9 BE SEXUALLY RESPONSIBLE. The only sure way to avoid sexually transmitted infections is to not to engage in any sexual behavior (abstinence) or be in a mutually monogamous relationship with a person known to be disease-free. Any other kind of sexual encounter exposes you to risk. **Visit www.ashastd.org for more information.**

10 GET A GRIP ON STRESS. Everyone feels “stressed out” from time to time. But chronic stress can suppress your immune system, making you more likely to catch a cold, contract a more serious disease, even take longer to heal. Practice stress management techniques, get enough sleep and remember to laugh a little ... humor is nature’s most efficient stress reducer! **Contact the NJ Self Help Clearinghouse at (800) 367-6274 or visit www.njgroups.org for support groups in your community.**



BE A SUPER “POOPER SCOOPER”!

Whether walking in the neighborhood or in your own backyard, cleaning up after your dog is probably the least appealing aspect of being a pet owner. As unpleasant a task as being a “pooper scooper” is, un-scooped dog feces creates environmental and health hazards to you and your community.

The best way for pet owners to keep the environment, people and other pets safe and healthy is **to clean up and dispose of pet waste**. Since dogs can't clean up after themselves, this is a people-issue rather than a dog-issue.



SCOOP THE POOP, BAG IT AND PUT IT IN THE TRASH.

- Wear plastic gloves to protect your hands. Carry hand sanitizer with you, and wash your hands when you get home.
- Make it a habit to keep a few plastic bags tied to your dog's leash. You can purchase special disposal bags or you can re-use newspaper delivery or plastic grocery bags. You can use a plastic “pooper scooper” with a long handle if you don't want to use a bag.
- Using the bag like a glove, pick up the pet waste, turn the bag inside out around the waste and seal or knot the bag.
- Put pet waste in the trash. Landfills are designed to safely handle substances like dog waste, used cat litter and dirty diapers.
- If your dog poops on your property, try to clean up your yard every day or two to avoid an accumulation of feces. For large yard cleanups, use several smaller bags rather than one large trash bag to avoid leakage.

- If you are too busy to clean up after your dog on your property, there are private services available that can do the clean up for you.
- Being a “pooper scooper” is part of having a dog. It may sound silly at first, but be proud to be seen cleaning up your dog's poop! Cleaning up shows pride in your community, in yourself and in your dog.

RABIES ALERT!

RABIES is found in the saliva of infected warm blooded animals. Common wild carriers are the raccoon, skunk, fox and bat.

- Leave wildlife alone. Never touch a wild animal, even if it is dead or injured.
- Wild animals are not pets. Do not try to “save” baby animals even if they seem abandoned.
- Keep garbage cans covered with tight lids. Cap chimneys, and keep sheds, garages and other possible den sites in good repair.
- If you are bitten by an animal - pet or wild - immediately wash the bite thoroughly with soap and water. Call your doctor or go to the nearest emergency room.
- If the biting animal is a pet, get information about the owner to follow up on its rabies vaccination status. If it is a stray or wild animal, try to confine the animal **WITHOUT** taking any risk of additional bites.
- **PROTECT YOUR PETS!** Domestic pets can get rabies - vaccinate your dogs and cats. Keep them indoors at night to avoid contact with nocturnal “high risk” wild animals.
- **PROTECT YOURSELF!** Report all animal bites to humans **and** pets to the Health Department at (609) 936-8400. Report bites to your local Police Department after hours and on weekends/holidays.

