



California Area Indian Health Service

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Area Director's Message Ms. Margo Kerrigan, MPH



New Year's Resolutions

January is the month to reflect on the past year and make resolutions to change for the better. However, New Year's resolutions are often abandoned because of unrealistic or unattainable goals. Research shows that after one week more than 22% of adults fail, and at 3 months more than 50% of adults fail, to attain their New Year's resolutions. Some of the top resolutions are behavioral changes to improve one's health, such as to stop smoking and/or to decrease alcohol consumption.



The following tips will help you keep your New Year's resolutions for the entire year:

- Consider February 1st or your birthday as the starting date for behavior changes. This will allow time in January to think, plan, and prepare for new behaviors
- Define a specific small goal and make it achievable. One example: "I am going to lose 11 pounds this year, which is one pound monthly. I will weigh myself on the first Friday of each month." Purchase a calendar and highlight the specific day each month that you will record your own weight. Locate the calendar where you can see it daily

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New California Booster Seat Law for Children By Lisa Nakagawa, MPH

California's new law (SB 929, Evans) requires children under age 8 to be properly buckled into the backseat of a car in either a car seat or booster seat or until they are at least 4 feet 9 inches in height. This law became effective January 1, 2012 because the risk of injury is greater when children ride in the front seat. A child's injury risk is reduced 33% when removed from the front seat and placed in the back seat.

A booster seat raises the child up in order to make the adult-sized seat belt safely fit a child's body. Children age 8 or older may use the vehicle seatbelt if it fits properly with the lap belt low on the hips, touching the upper thighs, and the shoulder belt crossing the center of the chest. If children are not tall enough to properly fit the seatbelt, they should still ride in a booster or car seat.

Everyone in the car must be properly buckled. For each child under age 16 who is not properly secured, the driver can be fined \$475 and will also cost one point on their driving record with the California Department of Motor Vehicles.

For more information, visit:

California Highway Patrol
http://www.chp.ca.gov/community/child_safetyseat_faqs.html

State of California
http://www.ots.ca.gov/Child_Passenger_Safety.asp



KNOW THE SUDDEN SIGNS OF STROKE



For more information, visit:
www.stroke.ninds.nih.gov

Stroke Facts By Wendy Blocker, MSN

A stroke occurs when part of the brain does not receive the blood it needs. *Ischemic* stroke (most common type) happens when blood is blocked from travelling to the brain. This often happens because the artery is clogged with fatty deposits (atherosclerosis) or a blood clot. *Hemorrhagic* stroke happens when a blood vessel in the brain bursts, and blood bleeds into the brain. This type of stroke can be caused by an *aneurysm*, a thin or weak spot in an artery that balloons out and can burst.

It is a myth that stroke occurs only in older adults. A person of any age can have a stroke, but risk for strokes does increase with age. For every 10 years after the age of 55, the risk of stroke doubles, and two-

thirds of all strokes occur in people over 65 years old.

Stroke risk may also depend on family history. Stroke risk doubles for a woman if someone in her immediate family (mom, dad, sister, or brother) has had a stroke.

The most common symptoms are:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm, or leg (mainly on one side of the body)
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance
- Sudden confusion or trouble talking or understanding speech
- Sudden bad headache with no known cause

Up to 80% of strokes can be prevented. Some stroke risk factors cannot be controlled (such as age, family history, and ethnicity), but you can reduce your chances of having a stroke by following these steps:

- Know your blood pressure
- Don't smoke
- Get tested for diabetes
- Get your cholesterol and triglyceride levels tested
- Maintain a healthy weight
- If you drink alcohol, limit it to no more than one drink (one 12 ounce beer, one 5 ounce glass of wine, or one 1.5 ounce shot of hard liquor) a day
- Find healthy ways to cope with stress

Medication Safety with Young Children By Christine Brennan, MPH



Each year, approximately 53,000 children in the United States are taken to the emergency room because of accidental medication poisonings. Children under the age of 5 are twice as likely as older children to be seen in the emergency room for medication poisoning. Two of the main causes of medication poisonings in children are children ingesting medications without adult supervision and caregivers accidentally giving too much of a medication, especially to infants and toddlers.

To prevent children from ingesting medications without adult supervision,

follow these tips:

- Never leave a child alone with medications. Always take medications with you if you need to do something else (such as answer the phone) in the process of taking your medication
- Store all medicines in a locked medicine cabinet, medication storage box, or childproof cabinet out of the child's reach
- Make sure all medications are in child-resistant packaging
- Keep the poison control number (1-800-222-1222) near every phone in the house and on your cell phone

To prevent accidental overdose of a medication in an infant or toddler, follow these tips:

- Read all the information on the medication label and follow the

medication instructions exactly as listed, unless otherwise instructed by a doctor. Do not give a child medication more often or in higher doses than listed on the medication package

- Use only the measuring device that comes with the medication. DO NOT use a kitchen teaspoon or tablespoon to give medications
- Check the active ingredient in the medications you are giving the child. Make sure you do not give your child two medicines that have the same active ingredient, as it could lead to an overdose
- If you do not understand the medication instructions or how to give the medication to the child, DO NOT use the medicine. Instead, call your doctor or pharmacist and ask for instructions or guidance

New Year's Resolutions (continued from page 1)

- Use post-it notes and display positive affirmations around the house. One example: display positive post-it notes on the bathroom mirror and/or refrigerator
- Don't obsess over occasional slip-ups. One example: "I am going to walk two days each week on Sundays and Tuesdays for 30 minutes." If you are unable to walk once during any given week, then restart the following Sunday

Research shows that if you practice behavioral change, like exercising, after 21 days in a row then the change becomes a habit. After six months, the change becomes part of your personality, according to the University of Washington.

If you decide to make a New Year's resolution, ensure the goal is meaningful, attainable and measurable. I wish you the best in enjoying and celebrating your new behavior change goals in 2012.

For more information, visit:
www.psychologytoday.com



Margo Kerrigan's New Year's resolution is to exercise more (such as riding her bicycle) for 20-30 minutes, three times per week

Osteoporosis Medicines and Your Dental Health By Steve Riggio, DDS

Osteoporosis is the thinning of your bone density over time. This thinning of bones, especially the hip, spine, and wrists, occurs gradually over many years. It is the most common type of bone disease. Osteoporosis affects 10 million Americans and is much more prevalent in women. Researchers estimate that about 1 out of 5 American women over the age of 50 have osteoporosis. The disease causes more than 2 million fractures each year and can cause problems that affect a person's quality of life.

Many people with low bone density take one of the drugs from a group called bisphosphonates. These medications include:

- | | | |
|------------|---------------|-----------|
| • Actonel | • Fosamax | • Prolia |
| • Atelvia | • Generic | • Reclast |
| • Bonfos | • Alendronate | • Zometa |
| • Boniva | • Skelid | |
| • Didronel | • Aredia | |

Study results indicate that these medications help to reduce the number of fractures. It is estimated that osteoporosis

treatment could prevent almost 100,000 hip fractures and many more fracture-related deaths each year.

Some patients who have been treated with certain osteoporosis medications have developed a condition called osteonecrosis of the jaw (ONJ). This is a rare but serious condition that can cause damage to the jawbone. In most cases, this condition is associated with persons who have been treated for cancer and have received high doses of osteoporosis medications thru intravenous infusion. In some patients, ONJ developed when taking much lower doses of osteoporosis medications.

There is no known prevention for ONJ; however, regular dental visits and good oral hygiene is the best way to reduce your risk. Let your dentist know if you are taking one of the aforementioned medications for the treatment of osteoporosis. You should not stop taking your osteoporosis medications without speaking to your healthcare provider. The benefits of taking these osteoporosis medications greatly outweighs the risk of developing ONJ.

Choosing to Immunize By Susan Ducore, RN

Avoiding the Risks of Leaving Children Unprotected

Parents and guardians must make important decisions concerning the care of their children or those for whom they are responsible. One such decision is whether or not to immunize their children. Children who are not immunized have an elevated risk for catching a vaccine-preventable disease and of infecting others, some of whom may be at high risk for complications. Children who are not immunized may also be excluded from school or childcare.

Vaccine “hesitancy” on the part of parents has led to a growing number of children and adolescents who are under-immunized and not fully protected from vaccine-preventable diseases. Recent disease outbreaks in California and elsewhere, of contagious and deadly diseases such as measles and pertussis (whooping cough), have led to growing concern for under-immunization.

To protect people from dangerous and often fatal diseases, vaccines were developed. Vaccines are safe and effective, and are currently recommended as the best protection available against vaccine-preventable diseases. Though some of the vaccines protect against diseases that we have not seen in a while, it is important to

continue to immunize children since there are still strains of these diseases in circulation. Some vaccine-preventable diseases affect American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people at a higher rate compared to other populations. AI/AN children through 18 years of age can obtain vaccines at no cost through the Vaccines for Children Program (VCF) so consider asking if your healthcare provider is a VCF participating provider. Most tribal and urban Indian healthcare programs sponsor a VCF.

Being a responsible parent means making well-informed choices that consider consequences for your child as well as others around them. As a parent or guardian, your vaccination decision affects not only the health of your child, but also the health of your family, your child’s friends and their families, and your community.

For professional medical advice related to immunization practices pertaining to you or others under your care, please talk with your medical provider or other qualified healthcare professional.

For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines>.



Child receiving immunization
(Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention)



Woman standing in the
center of a medicine wheel,
representing balance

May You Heal in the New Year By Helen Maldonado, PA-C, CDE

“I tell myself to listen to my Spirit. But sometimes I become spiritually bankrupt. I feel alone and empty. When I don’t listen to my Spirit, I may feed my physical body with too much food. But it is not my physical body that needs nourishment. It is my Spirit that is hungry. ...I think I understand my people, and why we are sometimes called ‘noncompliant.’ When the Spirit is in pain, what does it matter if you take your medication or take a walk? Look within and see where you are with grief. Reach out to someone. ...Let the healing begin.” -Jacquie Arpan, *Health for Native Life* 2002

Let’s start healing our mind, body, and spirit. As a Native mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, and tribal member, I know the importance of family and community. I know we are conditioned to care for ourselves only after everyone else is taken care of. As a medical provider and a public health professional, I know the importance of a healthy lifestyle. I have learned that the negative effects of stress, sadness, and loss in our lives contribute heavily to our health.

We are a strong and resilient people and we must heal our spirit. We cannot avoid our traumatic feelings. I urge you to think about your mind, body, and spirit when you start working on improving your health. Look for someone to help you with these old pains so that you can live a full, healthy, and balanced life. Don’t be afraid to ask your medical provider for help. The only way to optimum health for our children, families, and communities is to start within ourselves. May you heal in the new year.