

# LET'S Talk

WINTER 2007

HEALTHY BODIES • SOUND MINDS • A SAFE PLACE TO WORK

## World AIDS Day — Friday, Dec. 1, 2006

*Stop AIDS —  
Keep the Promise*

World AIDS Day is a unique moment each year when all of humanity is challenged to reflect on the way HIV and AIDS affect us and how we can respond to the epidemic.

After two decades of HIV/AIDS, we know that with sufficient will and resources,

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we can turn this epidemic around. In 2001, Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General, said at the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, "All of us must recognize AIDS as our problem. All of us must make it our priority."

This year has seen new and renewed commitments worldwide to make significant progress in reducing the spread of HIV, increasing treatment

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## The 7 Best Ways to Stay Healthy This Winter

**YOU PROBABLY ALREADY KNOW MANY OF YOUR HABITS** influence your health and longevity more than genetics and the environment. Make an effort to adopt the following tips to help you stay healthy, energized and out of the doctor's office this winter — and beyond.

- 1 EAT A WELL-BALANCED, LOW-FAT, HIGH-FIBER DIET** that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables every day. A healthful diet boosts your immunity and protects you against some cancers, stroke, heart disease, diabetes and other chronic diseases.
- 2 WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN.** Hand-washing gets rid of many of the viruses that cause illness.
- 3 AVOID SMOKING AND SECOND-HAND SMOKE.**
- 4 DRINK ALCOHOL MODERATELY, IF AT ALL.** More than one drink (for women) or two drinks (for men) a day increases the risk for liver disease, heart failure and some cancers.

**5 GET MOVING.** People who have high levels of stress have twice the risk of catching colds, and exercising reduces stress. Plus, staying active helps you maintain a healthy weight and reduces your risk for many diseases.

**6 GET ENOUGH SLEEP.** If you feel wide awake and alert all day, you're probably getting enough sleep. But if you're not getting the sleep you need, you become more vulnerable to illness.

**7 TAKE MENTAL HEALTH BREAKS.** Some people suffer from symptoms of depression associated with seasonal changes in light during the winter months. Others just have a more difficult time feeling upbeat in the winter. Don't overschedule yourself, and spend time outdoors during the day whenever possible. Seek professional help if you suffer from depression or persistent anxiety.

# Late Breaking Health News

## >>Exercise can cut your risk for heart disease by up to 90 percent — even if you don't start until middle age.

One study of 791 people found those who got little exercise until their 40s were still able to cut their risk for heart disease, with those who went from getting very little activity to being very active reducing their risk by 90 percent.

The level of exercise required to achieve health benefits depends on age, sex and level of fitness, according to the report published in the journal *Heart*.

Among those who are sedentary, moderate intensity activity is sufficient. People who are more active, physically fit or younger may need to do vigorous activity to gain additional benefits.

## >>Light-cigarette smokers are only half as likely to quit smoking as those who smoke regular cigarettes,

according to one study of 12,000 smokers published in the *American Journal of Public Health*. “Even though smokers may hope to reduce their health risks by smoking lights, these results suggest they’re doing just the opposite because they’re significantly reducing their chance of quitting,” says researcher Hilary D. Tindle, M.D., M.P.H., assistant professor of medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

The study showed smokers who had used light cigarettes were 54 percent less likely to have successfully quit smoking than those who had never smoked them.

This effect increased as people aged, as adults ages 65 and older who had smoked light cigarettes to reduce health risks were 76 percent less likely to quit than those who smoked only regular cigarettes.



## >>Extra pounds mean higher health costs,

according to a study of 36,000 people published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. Using height and weight data, the researchers calculated each subject's body mass index (BMI), a standard measure of the relative percentages of fat and muscle mass.

Starting at a BMI of 25 — the lower end of the “overweight” range — health costs rose steadily along with BMI. Adjusted for age and sex, annual medical costs increased by about \$120 for each one-point increase in BMI. Drug costs increased by \$83 per one-point increase.

Costs continued to rise for subjects within the “obese” category — a BMI of 30 or higher. For a person with a BMI of 35, medical costs were nearly \$600 higher and drug costs \$413 higher than for a person with a BMI of 30. For each one-point increase in BMI, costs related to diabetes increased by \$6, costs for heart disease by \$20.

## VITALITY-ON-DEMAND

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# A Fresh Look at New Year's Resolutions

IF YOU DON'T USUALLY KEEP YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS, you may want to rethink how you phrase them.

Most resolutions that fail turn out to be negative. They focus on correcting what you think is wrong with you, instead of building on what is right.

For example, you vow to give up certain foods or force yourself into a self-improvement program — then punish yourself if you don't meet your strict guidelines.

But, if you create more pain than pleasure, your resolutions won't be long-lasting.

Instead of making an inventory of your faults, start by thinking about goals you can set to make your life more healthful, happy and rewarding. Then make resolutions that will help you achieve those goals.

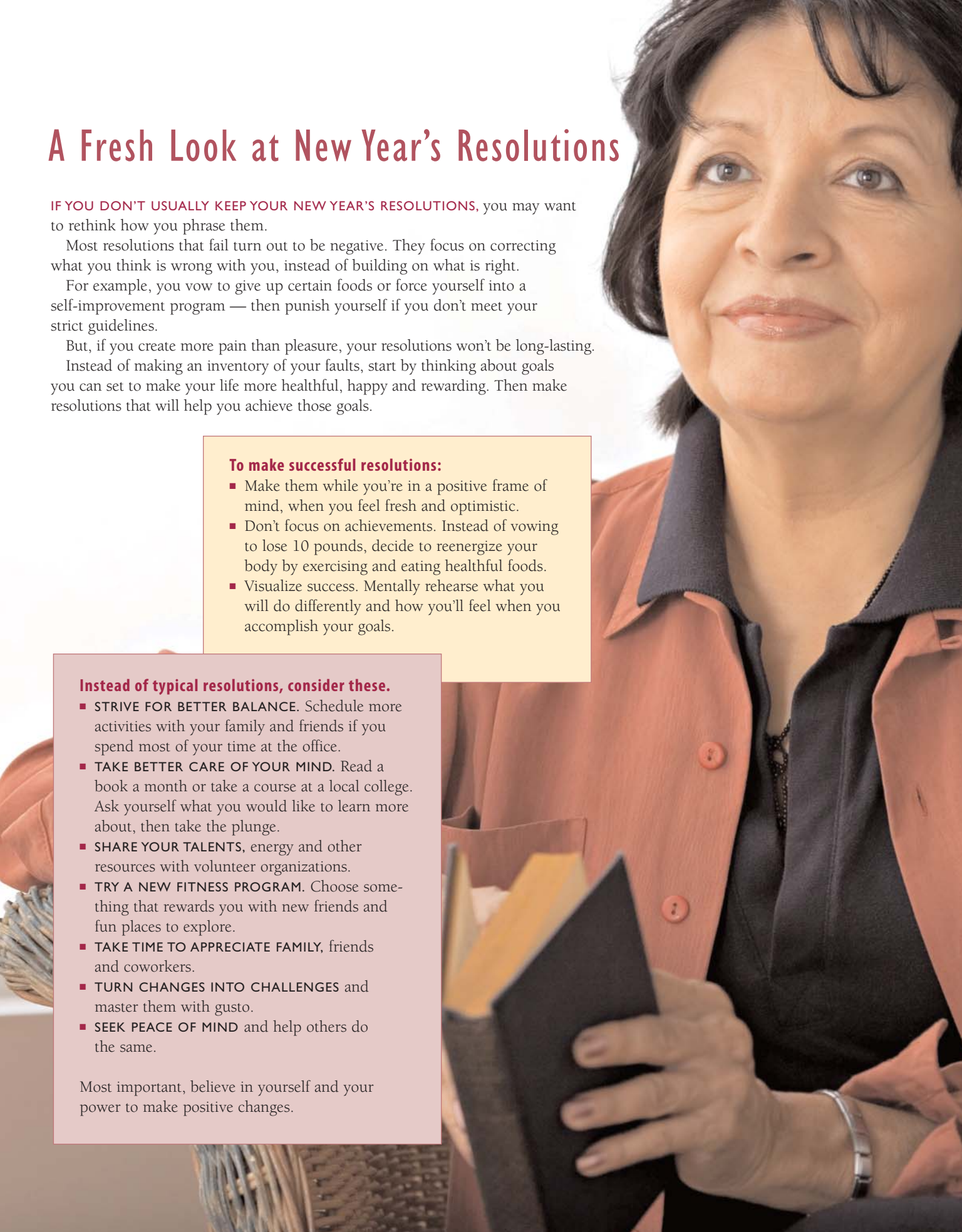
## To make successful resolutions:

- Make them while you're in a positive frame of mind, when you feel fresh and optimistic.
- Don't focus on achievements. Instead of vowing to lose 10 pounds, decide to reenergize your body by exercising and eating healthful foods.
- Visualize success. Mentally rehearse what you will do differently and how you'll feel when you accomplish your goals.

## Instead of typical resolutions, consider these.

- **STRIVE FOR BETTER BALANCE.** Schedule more activities with your family and friends if you spend most of your time at the office.
- **TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOUR MIND.** Read a book a month or take a course at a local college. Ask yourself what you would like to learn more about, then take the plunge.
- **SHARE YOUR TALENTS,** energy and other resources with volunteer organizations.
- **TRY A NEW FITNESS PROGRAM.** Choose something that rewards you with new friends and fun places to explore.
- **TAKE TIME TO APPRECIATE FAMILY,** friends and coworkers.
- **TURN CHANGES INTO CHALLENGES** and master them with gusto.
- **SEEK PEACE OF MIND** and help others do the same.

Most important, believe in yourself and your power to make positive changes.



# Do You Have Those Winter Blues?

REMEMBER THE LONG, GOLDEN DAYS LAST SUMMER when you enjoyed sunlight well into the evening? Happily, those days will return this spring.

Until then, you'll have to make the best of winter's darkness, but don't be alarmed if you occasionally get the blues. Experts say mild depression caused by winter's lack of daylight is quite common.

## Beat Those Winter Blues

Here are some ways to brighten your spirits and keep your energy high during winter's short, overcast days.

- Sit in very bright light (the equivalent of 10 100-watt bulbs) for an hour each day.
- Find a gymnasium where you can exercise regularly. Many people find exercise helps to fend off the blues.
- Avoid loading up on sweets and starches. Substitute with vegetables or fruit where possible. If you start gaining weight during the winter, it erodes your morale even further.

When you wake up to a bright sunny day in the dead of winter, take advantage of it. If you work in an office, take a walk in the sun at lunch. Studies show that even an hour here and there can make a significant difference when you're combating the winter blues.



**FOH** FEDERAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH  
a component of the US Public Health Service  
Program Support Center  
Department of Health and Human Services

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and working toward universal access for education, treatment and support. But while some promises have been kept, many have not.

The 2006 theme, **Stop AIDS — Keep the Promise**, focuses on accountability. It is a call to action for people around the world — to hold the international community accountable to fulfill the promises made regarding action against HIV and AIDS. This includes commitments for funding, support, health programs and access to treatment.

**Everyone has a role to play, both on the world stage and in our own neighborhoods. You can do your part on Dec. 1 — through planning or participating in World AIDS Day events at your place of worship, your school and in your community. Let's all keep our promises!**