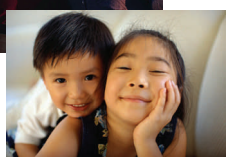
OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

STEPS UP-TO-DATE
Healthy Holidays Edition

TIPS FOR STAYING HEALTHY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

HOLIDAY TIME IS FAMILY TIME



As the orange and black colors of Halloween become ghosts of the past and snowflakes begin to appear, we are reminded of precious time with family and loved ones from far and near. At this time of year, sickness and disease are the last things we should have to worry about...which is precisely why we should not let preventable diseases get in the way. **This holiday season is the perfect time to learn about your own *family health history*.**

WHAT IS A FAMILY HEALTH HISTORY?

A family health history is information about health and disease in all members of your family, including distant relatives. It reflects all the factors that influence health and are often shared by family members, such as lifestyles, behaviors, ethnicity, traditions, cultures, religions, social supports, and environments as well as genes.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Your family health history can help you understand your risk for chronic disease. Knowing this information can help you and your health care provider identify lifestyle changes in **physical activity, eating, or tobacco use** that are especially important for you. It will also help you identify which types of screening (such as blood pressure or mammograms) are most important for maintaining your health.

FOR MORE INFORMATION.

A fun and easy way to create a portrait of your family's health, called *My Family Health Portrait*, is available for free at www.hhs.gov/familyhistory.

Also visit www.michiganstepsup.org to learn how you and your family can adopt a healthier lifestyle together during the holidays.

A message from Michigan's Surgeon General...

This year, take control of your health by getting to know your family's health history. Families traditionally gather during the holiday season, which makes it the perfect time to learn about the health conditions that run in your family.

Start the conversation. It can help improve your health and the health of your loved ones.

Happy holidays to you and yours,

Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom

SO LONG, WINTER WOES!

We all know that when it gets cold in Michigan, it gets *COLD*! Sometimes, the bitter weather penetrates deeper than our skin. In fact, it is quite common for cold weather to affect our usual routine. Winter weather can bring about feelings of sluggishness, difficulty performing tasks that normally seem to be easy or enjoyable, and even an increased craving for carbohydrate-rich food like chocolate and sodas. Along with the cold, the holidays also bring tempting treats! While you cannot control the climate or the temptations surrounding you, with a little help from Michigan Steps Up, you CAN maintain your health and well-being this season.

MOVE MORE

Find local community-sponsored walks and runs or use your local school buildings, shopping malls or recreation centers. Check out your local community education office or visit the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health, & Sports website for a list of events in communities across Michigan (listed by month) at: www.michiganfitness.org/endorsements/index.php.

Bundle up and head outside! Build a snowman, or go sledding or cross-country skiing at a local park. Or go for a walk with family and friends after eating a large holiday meal.

Move more in the comfort of your home. Dance with your kids to your favorite holiday songs, or build an obstacle course or treasure hunt in the basement or throughout the house.

EAT BETTER

Prepare healthy treats for office potlucks, and maintain your normal meal schedule whenever possible. Family holiday favorites may be pretty high in fat and sugar. Try starting new healthier traditions this year. Take small portions at potlucks and choose lower-fat foods and beverages, such as apples, low-fat eggnog, cranberry dishes, and baked squash.

Listen to your body for signals of fullness, and avoid return trips to the buffet table simply because the food is there. Try standing farther away from buffet tables so you are not tempted to keep snacking. Instead, indulge in conversation and catch up with friends and family. After all, the holiday season is about friends and family, not just the food!

Choose your beverages wisely. Watch out for calories in soda, holiday punch, and regular eggnog. Keep in mind, most people need to drink at least three cups of milk and plenty of water daily. Milk is full of nutrients and water keeps bodies working right.

DON'T SMOKE

Order a free Quit Kit. The Quit Kit has lots of helpful information, motivation and strategies for quitting! The kit helps you decide if you are ready to quit, steps for planning to quit, and after you've quit, how to stay on track. Look for the link in the "Don't Smoke" section at www.michiganstepsup.org.

Call the Michigan Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-480-7848. The Quit Line provides cessation services to Michigan residents that want to quit using tobacco. The Quit Line offers a personal health coach and toolkits to help tobacco users gain confidence and motivation they need to quit for good.

Visit the "Don't Smoke" section at www.michiganstepsup.org for more helpful resources. Check out the website to find a list of smoke-free restaurants and programs to help you stop smoking!

MAKE 2006 YOUR YEAR!

If you set the same new years resolutions year after year but can never seem to stick to them, don't give up! Make 2006 your healthiest year ever by taking SMALL steps toward a healthier lifestyle. Now is the time to join the thousands of Michigan residents who have taken the Michigan Steps Up Challenge by creating a *Personal Plan* at www.michiganstepsup.org. With your Personal Plan Tools, you can set goals for 2006 and regularly track your progress. And consider these healthy New Year's resolutions...

FIVE HEALTHY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

❶ I will drink 8 glasses of water each day.

We should all aim for eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day. If you only drink two glasses of water on a typical day, aim for three glasses today and four tomorrow. Soon, you'll notice a difference when you're not getting enough water. If water doesn't appeal to you like a soft drink or other beverage does, try a squirt of lime juice or slice of lemon in your water.

❷ I will schedule a routine health checkup.

We know your lives are busy, but don't forget about your regular health checkups! They are the best way of detecting disease early and thus lowering your chances of becoming seriously ill or dying from a disease that is controllable or preventable. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force suggests that you talk to your provider about which tests are right for you, when you should have them, and how often. For example, you should have your cholesterol checked regularly starting at age 45, or if you smoke, have diabetes, or heart disease in your family, starting at age 20.

❸ I will quit smoking (or, for non-smokers: I will avoid exposure to secondhand smoke).

If you smoke, you probably know that quitting is not easy. But smoking kills more people each year than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined. And let's not forget the damaging effects of exposure to secondhand smoke. This year, talk to your doctor about nicotine replacement therapy as one option to help you quit. For more assistance with quitting smoking, check out the helpful resources at www.michiganstepsup.org.

❹ I will maintain a balanced diet, including five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

You CAN eat better and incorporate the new food pyramid into your diet. Check out the "Eat Better" section at www.michiganstepsup.org (click on "Healthy People") for healthy recipes and tips on portion control, enjoying dessert the healthy way and eating on the go, just to name a few. You'll also find a link to the MyPyramid.gov website that can help you choose the foods and amounts that are right for you.

❺ I will increase my physical activity level to at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity five days a week.

Staying active doesn't mean running a marathon for most people. To receive health benefits from physical activity, adults should try to meet the recommendation of 30 to 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity at least five days a week. For those with busy schedules, this can be broken up into smaller blocks of time. Try these suggestions: During the colder months, take a walk with a coworker through the halls of your worksite, or bundle up and walk around the parking lot; park your car farther away from your destination; take the stairs instead of the elevator; wear a pedometer to see how many steps you take in a typical day and increase your steps each week; and if you own a dog, walk it at least once a day.