

Healthy Resolutions for 2014

By Kjartan D. Armann, M.D.

No surprise my New Year's resolution for everyone is to get a physical exam, by your physician. While you are there these are the things we want to discuss, and it is up to you to bring them up. First question is "Am I healthy?" You will want to know about many parts of your health, such as weight, blood pressure, and alcohol consumption, and laboratory results. The essence of your relationship with your doctor is to openly discuss your health issues and figure out how to continue a healthy life style.

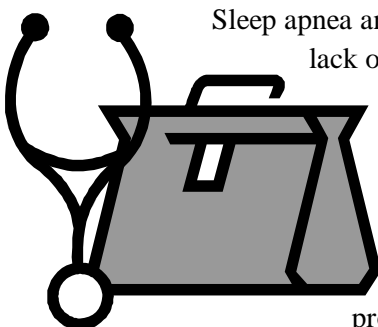
Weight is critical to our overall health. Many of us are overweight. It is not just about over eating. There are many factors involved with being overweight, including emotional, psychological, just as bad as being overweight. lack of exercise, and more. Being under weight can be

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Blood pressure is an easy measurement that can be done at home. A battery powered blood pressure cuff can be purchased for about \$25.00. It is a great investment into your health. High blood pressure is known as the silent killer. There are many reasons to have high blood pressure, it is important to investigate the cause of hypertension. Did you know your blood pressure is usually elevated when you are at the doctor's office?

Sleep apnea and sleep disturbance is becoming a large problem for many people. It causes fatigue, lack of concentration, affects our mood, and is associated with other more significant health issues like high blood pressure. Talk to your doctor about your sleep habits. Ask your partner if you snore you probably don't know if you do snore.

Throughout our lives we need vaccines. Every year in the Fall we should get a flu shot, but here are other vaccines necessary for different stages of our lives to maintain good health. For example everyone should have a hepatitis A series it protects us from a virus we get from eating contaminated foods. HPV (human papillomavirus) is recommended for adolescents and adults 26 years old and under. HPV protects us from several forms of cancer, including cervical cancer in women and oropharyngeal cancers in both men and women. Other vaccines would include a shingles vaccine, Tdap, and a pneumonia vaccine for certain members of the population. Your doctor will know which you need.



Diet is always an ongoing source of any discussion you have with your doctor. Currently the recommended diet for most Americans is the Mediterranean diet because it cuts the risk of heart attacks and strokes. The diet is rich in fish, beans, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and olive oil while being low in red meat, sweets, and dairy.

Laboratory results are critical for knowing how well your body functions are doing. Lipid panel, Vitamin D level, CBC, Chemistries of the liver and kidneys are helpful. The lipids are responsible for heart and blood vessel health. Many people are deficient in vitamin D, which is important for bone health. Next time you have blood work done ask for a vitamin D level.



Finally, I would encourage everyone to take a CPR class. You never know when you will be called upon to save another person's life. My knowledge of CPR saved my mother's life as well as others.