“Thanksgiving Thoughts”

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

“Let us remember that, as much has been given us, much will be expected from us, and that true homage comes from the heart as well as from the lips, and shows itself in deeds.”

Theodore Roosevelt

“Thanksgiving, after all, is a word of action.”

W. J. Cameron
The holiday season can put people at risk for food borne illnesses. Refrigerators and dining rooms are full, parties and celebrations are plentiful and some of the foods are only prepared once a year. Test your food safety knowledge by answering the following TRUE or FALSE questions. When in doubt, throw it out!

Questions
1. It’s safe to use a turkey that has been in the freezer for over a year. TRUE or FALSE
2. Because it has been cooked for such a long time, it’s OK to let the Thanksgiving turkey or the Christmas ham set out until you make sandwiches later. TRUE or FALSE
3. Leftovers should be cooled before placing them in the refrigerator. TRUE or FALSE
4. To save time on Thanksgiving Day, it’s safe to stuff the turkey the night before and cook it all night in a low heat oven. TRUE or FALSE
5. When there isn’t room in the refrigerator, it’s safe to leave food outside, in the garage or on an extra porch to keep cold. TRUE or FALSE
6. Since you’ve been using it for years, and no one has ever gotten sick, it’s safe to use the old family recipe for eggnog that calls for raw eggs. TRUE or FALSE
7. Because room temperature speeds things up, putting the large turkey on the kitchen counter or setting in the sink is the best way to get it thawed quickly, besides, there’s no room for it to thaw in the refrigerator. TRUE or FALSE
8. Because parties and buffet lines can go on for several hours, care should be taken to keep hot food hot and cold food cold. TRUE or FALSE
9. Pumpkin pies should be refrigerated. TRUE or FALSE
10. Perishable foods received from a mail-order company are always safe to eat when they arrive. TRUE or FALSE

Answers:
1. TRUE. A whole turkey can be safely frozen for 12 months if the temperature in the freezer has been constant.
2. FALSE. Any perishable food should not be allowed to set at room temperature for longer than two hours.
3. FALSE. Food does not need to be completely cooled before the leftovers are put in the refrigerator. If you have a large quantity of hot food break it down into several small containers or chill in an ice bath.
4. FALSE. For safe turkey, the oven should be no lower than 325 degrees F. Once started, a turkey should be cooked completely until it reaches at least 165 degrees F.
5. FALSE. There is no guarantee that the temperature outside will stay cold enough to keep food safe.
6. FALSE. The American Egg Board does not recommend the consumption of raw eggs by anyone.
7. FALSE. Slow thawing in the refrigerator is the best method. It will take one day for each five pounds of turkey.
8. TRUE. If you know that the event will last longer than two hours, make plans to keep the hot foods over 140 degrees F and the cold foods below 40 degrees F. Instead of putting all the food at out early in the event, place small amounts on several serving platters and replace the platters after two hours.
9. TRUE. Pumpkin is a custard pie and must be refrigerated.
10. FALSE. Even foods shipped from reputable mail-order companies may be mishandled and may be unsafe when they arrive.

Source: Communicating Food for Health, November 2007
UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the Dates for “Connecting with Kids”:

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Herkimer, Madison and Oneida Counties presents all-day Connecting With Kids events:

“Mind”
January 30, 2007 9:30 am – 2:30 pm
St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, 551 Sayles St, Oneida

“Body”
March 6, 2007 9:30 am – 2:30 pm
Herkimer County BOCES

“Soul”
May 1, 2007 9:30 am – 2:30 pm
CCE Oneida County, Oriskany

These are free workshops. Lunch may be purchased at $10, or you may bring your own if you are attending the whole day. Watch upcoming newsletters for complete details.

HOLIDAY BOOK TREE

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Herkimer County will be collecting books this holiday season for needy children throughout the area. These books will be donated to the Even Start Program, a family literacy program which supports families by providing resources to upgrade basic skills and learn ways of being their child’s first teacher. New or “gently-used” books for young children are requested.

If you have any books that you would be willing to donate, please drop them off at the Cornell Cooperative Extension office at 5657 State Route 5 in East Herkimer during business hours, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. If needed, other times can be arranged. Please call Cornell Cooperative Extension of Herkimer County at 315.866.7920 for more information.

NEED HELP WITH HOLIDAY BAKING?

USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline:
1-800-535-4555
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/
Food_Safety_Education/

Home Baking Association
www.homebaking.org
“Merry munchies” are sure to spread good cheer with your guests throughout the holiday season.

During the holidays, there are many parties - alot of chips & dips and many calories! Dips made with cream cheese, sour cream & avocados are high in calories. “Store-bought” dips can also be high in sodium. Try making your own dips.

**Cottage Cheese Dip**

1 pound low-fat cottage cheese  
3 tablespoons low-fat Italian salad dressing (or salsa)

Press cottage cheese through sieve or process until smooth in food processor. Add Italian dressing to thin to dipping consistency. You may also use ½ of a package of dry dressing mix if desired.

**Yield:** 16 servings; serving size 2 Tablespoons, (25 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 0 grams fiber, 135 mg sodium)

**Fruit Dip**

1/3 cup reduced-fat peanut butter  
1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt

Mix together. Add more vanilla yogurt if needed to thin to desired dipping consistency.

**Yield:** 10 servings; serving size 2 Tablespoons, (60 calories, 3 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, less than 1 gram fiber, 65 mg sodium)

Assorted raw vegetables and fruits are great as dippers for recipes provided. You can also try the following:

**Bagel Chips** - Slice bagels in half crosswise; then cut thin circles from each half. Place chips in single layer on a baking sheet and bake at 450° for 5 to 8 minutes. Makes about 25 to 30 chips per bagel.

**Pita Wedges** - Cut pita bread (pocket bread) into about 1 1/2-inch wedges. Place wedges in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake at 450° for 3 to 4 minutes. Makes about 10 to 12 wedges per pita.

**Tortilla Chips** - Cut flour tortillas into about 1 1/2-inch wedges. Place wedges in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake at 450° for 2 to 3 minutes. Make about 12 to 14 chips per tortilla. See variations that follow.

**Flavored Chips** - Lightly brush the cut tortillas with apple juice, orange juice or water. Add a seasoning like: basil, chives, dill, oregano, chili powder, ground red pepper, lemon/herb blend, paprika, or sesame seeds. Try cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, mixed with a little sugar or brown sugar for a sweet snack.

Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 375° for 7 to 10 minutes or until crisp. Cool completely and serve with your favorite dip.
“There are three things which are real! God, human folly, and laughter. The first two are beyond our comprehension. So we must do what we can with the third.”

John F. Kennedy

Every parent wants their child to be happy. Most scientists believe that the genes your children inherit influence their happiness potential. But that doesn’t mean you can’t do plenty to make sure they find joy in life.

😊 First, be a model of optimistic thinking.
😊 Love the child you have.
😊 Turn “No, I can’t” into “Yes, I can!”
😊 Set fair rules and stick to them.
😊 Create a caring family team.
😊 Get everyone off the couch.
😊 Instill a sense of wonder.
😊 Find magical moments to connect.
😊 Nurture a caring spirit by teaching your child to volunteer.

Jack Prelutsky and his poetry are a wonderful way to infuse sunshine and humor into the ever-shortening days of winter. Any or all of his books would be a great gift to your family.

My Parents Have the Flu Today

My parents have the flu today, they both are sick in bed, and thoughts of things to do today are swimming through my head. My nimble brain is burgeoning with ways to misbehave. I’ll give my brother’s Teddy Bear a haircut and a shave.

Perhaps I’ll make a mud pie in my sister’s stupid hat; attach my mother’s earrings to the puppy and the cat; hang carrots from the ceiling; stuff bananas into shoes; then set the clocks to different times; it’s certain to confuse.

I’ll switch the salt and sugar; scatter meatballs on the rugs; hide spaghetti in a closet; and refrigerate some bugs. I’ll paint my father’s underwear an iridescent blue. My options are unlimited . . . my parents have the flu.

Here is a list of books available from Jack Prelutsky:

- Zoo Doings
- It’s Christmas
- It’s Thanksgiving
- The Frog Wore Red Suspenders
- Scraminals
- If Not For the Cat
- Something Big Has Been Here
- A Pizza the Size of the Sun
- It’s Raining Pigs and Noodles
- Awful Ogre’s Awful Day
- The New Kid on the Block

Happy Holidays from Even Start
Recent recalls from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and toy manufacturers have raised much concern over the safety of our children's toys. As parents, the best protection we can offer our children is to be informed of potential hazards and select their toys, clothing, and accessories based on current recommendations for what is safe, age-appropriate and constructive.

The latest recalls have highlighted the potential hazards of lead poisoning. In addition to using lead in paint, some manufacturers continue to use lead as a low-cost way of adding weight to items like small pieces of jewelry, and to increase flexibility in vinyl goods. In recalling more than one million toys which may be coated with lead paint, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission indicates that lead is toxic when ingested and can cause brain damage linked to learning disabilities, behavioral problems and, at very high levels, seizure, coma and even death. In addition to toys, lead has been found in jewelry, metal key chains, vinyl bibs, vinyl lunch boxes, vinyl backpacks and clothing with lead-based zippers or buttons.

Lead poisoning occurs when toxic levels of lead build up in the body over time. Simply touching a toy containing lead is not an immediate problem, as lead cannot be absorbed through the skin. However, in addition to swallowing an item containing lead, such as a small charm, chewing or mouthing a toy containing lead or coated with lead paint is dangerous. Parents are cautioned not to burn a toy or article containing lead, as lead fumes can be inhaled.

The first symptoms of lead poisoning are very general, and include nausea, sluggishness, vomiting, painful gastrointestinal irritation, diarrhea, loss of appetite, colic, weakness and dehydration. Other symptoms may include memory problems, reduced coordination, irritability, hyperactivity, increased sleeping, decreased activity and fatigue, hearing loss, vomiting, slow reflexes, and muscle weakness, affecting mainly the upper extremities. Children who ingest dangerous levels of lead do not always show symptoms right away, and many children with lead poisoning do not exhibit symptoms at all. If you think your child is at risk, your pediatrician can perform a simple blood test.

Other recent product recalls have been based on the danger of magnets, which, when present in children's toys and other items may become detached and swallowed. The Consumer Product Safety Commission has issued a safety alert about the serious dangers magnets pose to children. If two or more magnets or magnetic pieces, or a magnet and another metal object are swallowed separately, they can attract one another through intestinal walls. This traps the magnets in place and can cause intestinal damage, infection, blood poisoning and death.

If you suspect that your child has swallowed a magnet, seek immediate medical attention. The CPSC recommends that parents keep small magnets and small pieces containing magnets away from children, and to also continually monitor items in your home for loose magnetic pieces or missing or dislodged magnets. Use caution in purchasing products made for adults that may contain magnets if there are young children in your home.

(continued on page 7)
It is important that parents are knowledgeable about how best to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children. **No amount of preventive information can substitute for parental vigilance and supervision - always be aware of where your child is and what they are doing.**

For further information about the dangers of lead poisoning and magnets, product recalls, and creating a healthy play environment for your child, please visit the following websites:

- www.cpsc.gov
- www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/category/toy.html

**TOY BUYING GUIDELINES**

Billions of dollars are spent on children’s toys that are broken or discarded after a few weeks, and parents face tough choices between pleasing their children and getting the most for their money. Here are some practical guidelines for toy purchases.

- Choose toys that allow children to make and build things, play make-believe.
- Select toys that can be used in many different ways like blocks and dolls that last a lot longer than a wind-up or battery toy that isn’t versatile.
- Choose simply designed toys that prompt children to ask, "What can I do with this toy?" rather than "What can the toy do?"
- Help children resist television character toys that have limited potential for play. Set limits on toy requests and let them see the toys as they actually are in stores.
- Buy some toys that you and your child can play with together. Playing together is fun and helps parents understand how children see the world.
- Toys, games and books that promote stereotypes teach children misinformation and limit their potential. Young children of both sexes like to play with all kinds of toys and should have that opportunity.

- Consider the child's age, interests and abilities when purchasing toys. Use toy manufacturers’ guidelines to decide the toy's suitability.
- Buy only sturdy, durable and safe toys. Look for quality design and construction in all toys for all ages. Stick with reputable manufacturers. Choose toys that can easily be cleaned and sterilized.
- Pay attention to labels. Fabric and cloth materials should be labeled "flame-resistant" or "flame-retardant." Stuffed animals and toys should be labeled "washable/hygienic materials." Painted toys and art materials should be labeled "non-toxic."
- Avoid toys with sharp edges, cords and strings that can strangle young children, small parts that can easily be swallowed or become lodged in a young child's throat, items like dart guns with propelled parts that can injure eyes, loud toys that can injure hearing, electric toys that can cause an electric shock or burn, and hand-me-down toys that don't meet current safety standards.

Source: CCE Suffolk County
NEW MyPYRAMID FOR PREGNANT AND NURSING MOMS

New interactive guidance, found at MyPyramid.gov, provides unique, individualized nutrition guidance to meet the needs of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

During this time of life, proper nutrition for mom and baby are critical. This tool will also be helpful to obstetricians and other health care providers to help women obtain the best possible nutrition for themselves and for their children.

Developed by the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, in conjunction with the Food and Nutrition Service's Women, Infants and Children Program and the Department of Health and Human Services, this new web site provides nutrition guidance consistent with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Obtaining a personalized "MyPyramid Plan for Moms" requires only a few steps. A pregnant woman enters her age, height, pre-pregnancy weight, physical activity level, and due date. A breastfeeding woman enters similar information and the baby's birth date. Breastfeeding women will also select if they are feeding their baby breast milk only or supplementing with formula. Following these entries, a personalized MyPyramid Plan for Moms will be provided on their computer screen which can be downloaded as a full-color printout.

Within the next few months, USDA plans to release another on-line tool known as MyPyramid Menu Planner. The Menu Planner will be a simple, easy to use meal planning tool based on MyPyramid recommendations that will provide users with real-time feedback on planned food choices.

So check out http://www.mypyramid.gov/mypyramidmoms/index.html

REMEMBER: 13-OUNCE MAIL RULE FOR HOLIDAY MAIL

A new Postal Service rule went into effect July 30, 2007 for packages and envelopes that weigh more than 13 ounces, if they're being mailed with only stamps as postage at a location other than a Post Office retail service counter.

Customers can use one of several convenient online postage applications - available 24/7 - or an Automated Postal Center, if they wish to mail items that weigh more than 13 ounces in Postal Service collection boxes or Post Office lobby mail slots; or if they wish to leave the items for pickup by their letter carriers. Online postage applications include the Postal Service's Click-N-Ship service on usps.com and PC Postage from an authorized USPS vendor.

If a customer is unable to use one of the above methods to prepare and affix postage, items weighing more than 13 ounces must be presented for mailing to an employee at a Post Office retail service counter. Business customers who use postage meters may continue to use meter postage for packages of any weight and mailing method.

Customers will notice new decals on USPS collection boxes, and Post Office lobby and Automated Postal Center mail drop slots. The new red, white and blue decals inform customers that deposit of stamped mail over 13 ounces is prohibited, and any such mail will be returned.

Previously, the prohibition applied to mail over 16 ounces. The change is part of ongoing security measures established by the Postal Service, in cooperation with other government agencies to keep the public, customers, employees and the U.S. Mail safe.

Source: US Postal Service 7-24-07
GIVE A GIFT OF FITNESS

It’s the holidays. Give the gift of fitness to someone you love. Here are some great gift ideas to keep you and others motivated to get and stay in shape this year:

**Fitballs:**
These can strengthen the abdominals, knees and back. They can also be used with any stretching program. Find these balls at many discount and sporting good stores or do a search on eBay or Google. Most balls come with instructions.

**Step counters:**
Some pedometers have calories, steps taken, and distance. One place to order is the walking expert Robert Sweetgall at www.creativewalking.com. You can receive a guide that will tell you everything you need to know to get walking.

**Hand or leg weights or resistance bands:**
Having weights or resistance bands available in the home will help your loved ones fit resistance training into their routine. Even 5-pound weights can help people increase their strength. Increasing strength makes it easier to do daily activities.

**Class registration:**
Give a gift certificate for an exercise class. Sign yourself up at the same time and have fun exercising together. Try water exercise, pilates, yoga or any other class you might be interested in.

**Exercise clothes and shoes:**
Running shorts, shoes, socks, bicycle shorts or fun tops are a great gift. Many of the discount stores like Target and Wal-Mart now carry good exercise clothing. There are many companies that specialize in exercise clothing.

**Home exercise equipment:**
Give a gift certificate for exercise equipment. Be available to help your loved one choose the best exercise equipment to use in their home. A basic treadmill with a continuous duty motor of 1.5 horsepower is a good purchase.

**One-day pass to a health club:**
Give a one-day pass to a local health club. This would give a non-exerciser the opportunity to check it out for one day. They may end up joining!

**More Healthful Gift Ideas:**
Here are some delicious and healthful food gift ideas:

- Basket of fruit - arrange a basket of fruit including apples, pears, oranges and dried fruits.
- Apples in a pot - arrange a 3 pound bag of apples in a crock pot. Include this recipe: Rinse, core and quarter apples and place in crockpot with 1/2 cup water, 1/2 cup sugar and 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Cook on low for 6 hours or until soft. Mash and refrigerate until ready to serve.
- Variety of flavored vinegars - these are great for salads, vegetables and rice dishes.
- Healthful cookbook.
- Large salad bowl with utensils and dried herbs.

Source: Communicating Food for Health, November 2007
HOLIDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE

If you think surviving on a deserted island is tough, try maintaining a healthful lifestyle during the hectic holiday season. Simply planning for the challenges helps prevent seasonal stress and weight gain. Follow this weekly guide to healthier, happier holidays.

**Week 1 (Nov. 18-24): Plan!**
Thanksgiving week can be a hectic beginning to a busy holiday season. Take time now to reflect on your personal “reason for the season.” Then, make a plan to accommodate your goals and values. Activities you may need to prioritize and schedule include:

- **Exercise** - make it a priority now so you’ll burn extra holiday calories, fight off stress, and avoid the New Year rush at the gym.
- **Plan holiday meals** - look for low fat recipes for your holiday favorites.
- **Develop a gift budget** - there’s less stress when you know how much you can afford to spend per gift.
- **Social events** - decide which parties and functions you will attend. Plan to take along a healthy dish.
- **Time with family and loved ones** - quality time together will be more memorable than gorging on treats.
- **Volunteering** - helping the less-fortunate makes you feel good.
- **Special time for yourself!**

**Week 2 (Nov. 25-Dec. 1): Shop ‘til You Drop...Pounds!**
Even if you do most of your holiday shopping online or by catalog, you’ll probably find yourself at the mall anyway. While fighting crowds and traffic won’t put you in a festive mood, use shopping time to your advantage.

- **Park and walk** - park as far from the mall or store entrance as possible. You’ll save time by not circling the parking lot for a good spot and get some exercise walking from your car.
- **Take a walk around the mall** before and/or after shopping.
- **Choose the stairs** or walk the escalator instead of taking the elevator.
- **Avoid food court** temptations by stashing healthy snacks - an apple, box of raisins, bottle of water - in your purse.

**Week 3 (Dec. 2-Dec. 8): Party for Your Heart**
Holiday parties don’t have to sabotage your healthful habits. Go to the gatherings where you feel comfortable and will enjoy the company of other guests. You’ll spend more time socializing and enjoying yourself than eating. If you do end up bored or alone at an event, stay away from the buffet table and look for someone else who seems up for conversation. Other party tips include:

- **Bring along a heart healthy appetizer** like veggies and low fat dip or a light dessert like angel food cake.
- **Fill up on low calorie beverages** like diet soda or club soda with a twist of lime instead of high calorie alcoholic drinks, eggnog or regular sodas.
- **Fill your plate with small servings** of your favorites, emphasizing colorful fruits and vegetables. Wait at least ten minutes to go back for seconds to be sure you really are still hungry.

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Week 4 (Dec. 9-Dec. 15):
Healthy Traditions

Make NEW traditions that emphasize healthy choices.

- Gather a group of friends to walk the neighborhood singing holiday carols.
- Experiment with low fat modifications to your family’s favorite recipes - see if anyone really notices the change!
- If you’re overwhelmed with holiday food gifts - tins of cookies or loaves of banana bread - share with neighbors.
- Get some exercise by offering to take a friend’s child or your grandchild for a winter stroller ride.
- Spend a few hours helping out at a soup kitchen or food bank.
- Shovel snow for you & your neighbor.

Week 5 (Dec. 16-Dec. 22):
Push Yourself...Away from the Table!

However you celebrate the season, it usually involves at least one large family sit-down meal. Some people end up eating several holiday meals throughout the day just to please extended families.

- Remember that you are in control, not the food.
- Take moderate portions of the foods you like.

Week 6 (Dec. 23-Dec. 29):
Keep Up the Good Work!

Whether you’ve followed your holiday plan or gotten a little off track, use this week to refocus, recommit, and remember what you love about the season in the first place. If leftovers and extra holiday treats keep you heading for the kitchen, take action:

- Freeze leftovers in single servings for lunches/quick dinners.
- Take extra desserts to work to share with co-workers.
- Share food with an elderly neighbor.
- Invite friends over for a post-holiday potluck dinner.

Week 7 (Dec. 30-Jan. 5): The End

Congratulations! You followed your healthy holiday plan. Greet the New Year with no regrets, no guilt, and no diets.

For more holiday tips, information, and recipes, search the links available at www.foodandhealth.com.

Source: Communicating Food for Health, November 2006

NEW KIDS.GOV WEBSITE

Check out Uncle Sam’s family-friendly site, Kids.gov. With a new design and links to over 1,200 web pages from government agencies, schools and educational organizations, Kids.gov makes it easy for your kids or grandkids to learn, explore, and have fun.

Kids.gov has activities for kids from kindergarten to eighth grade on more than 20 different topics - ranging from the arts and music to space and history. They can play entertaining and educational games, create art projects, explore different careers, learn how the government works, get homework help and much more.

Visit Kids.gov often, because there’s always something new for your children to discover!

NOTES OF THANKS

The holidays are a perfect time to teach your children to write thank you notes for the gifts they receive. Although it may seem like a "lost art", sending a handwritten note is still important to help children be appreciative of the things that people do for them.

Although it sounds simple, writing thank you notes is often a back-burner issue when it comes to mentoring our children. We often put it off and before you know it, several weeks have passed and you think it is too late. But it's never too late. It makes somebody else feel good and it makes your child feel good too.

At what age should children start?? As soon as they're able to involve themselves on some level....whether it is adding stickers or crayon drawings to the note......just so they are involved in the process of expressing appreciation.

Here are some ideas:

Take a positive approach. Briefly explain to your children that it will make the gift-giver feel good to know that they appreciate the present. Tell them that you like to let others know you appreciate the things they do for you. The way you talk about thank-you notes will influence whether your children think of writing them as a chore or as something thoughtful they can do for someone who has done something thoughtful for them.

Make writing the thank-you notes fun and keep your expectations in line with the child's developmental stage. Provide interesting and colorful paper and pens for your children to use. Let them choose what they want to use. Suggest they decorate the paper using crayons, markers, rubber stamps, glitter and glue. Be creative together about fun ways to make the note look special. Let children use their own words to make the note sound warm and sincere. Encourage them to acknowledge the specific gift and how or where they plan to use it. Consider taking pictures of your child playing with the toy or wearing the clothing to include with the note.

Pick a good time to do thank-you notes. Pick a time when you can work together without feeling rushed and when everyone is well rested.

Write thank-you notes yourself! Children learn to be courteous and responsible by watching their parents.

Writing thank-you notes is a habit, and habits are not learned overnight, so be patient.

Source: Adapted from Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet Families Meeting the Challenge, as printed in Chautauqua Living newsletter, November 2003
The American Psychiatric Association (APA) offers tips for attaining your New Year’s resolutions:

“New Year’s is a great opportunity for people of all ages to reflect back on their accomplishments and set goals for the future,” said Thomas Wise, M.D., who is chair of the Department of Psychiatry at Inova Fairfax Hospital, professor of psychiatry at George Washington University School of Medicine, and chair of APA’s Council on Psychosomatic Medicine. “It is important to set realistic expectations so that you can feel a sense of accomplishment and make progressive steps in your life.”

Try again. Everyone has made – and broken – past resolutions. That does not mean that you won’t succeed this time. Start with a positive approach, including thinking about what has disrupted your good intentions in the past. Don’t discourage yourself with a negative outlook.

Don’t make too many resolutions. Trying to eat better, exercise more, quit smoking, and reduce stress is too much to tackle at once. Pick a realistic, attainable goal with a reasonable time frame.

Choose your own resolution. Make sure this is something that you want to accomplish for yourself and not for friends or family. When you attain the goal they will benefit from your success as well.

Make a plan and write it down. Plan what you’d like to accomplish in three or six months. Achieving small goals over time gives you a sense of accomplishment and motivation to keep going. Writing your goals down is a good way to keep track of your progress.

Involve friends and family. They can support your efforts and can motivate you to keep going. Setting a personal goal is not a “promise” that can never be broken. Don’t paint yourself into a corner by overstating what can be a realistic change you plan to make.

Forgive yourself. If you get off track, don’t think that you failed. Review your plan and make adjustments.

Congratulate yourself. Reward yourself when your intermediate goals or resolutions are met.

But be careful that your reward doesn’t work against what you are trying to achieve; for example, don’t eat a large meal when you have lost five pounds or don’t have “just one cigarette” when you’re quitting smoking.

The most important consideration when making resolutions is to decide if you are truly willing to make the change in your life. Deciding to make a change just to have a resolution will not keep you motivated to attain your goal. Many people fail because they are afraid or don’t fully realize how the goal can benefit their every day lives. When you decide on your resolution, make a plan of action and list the ways it will improve your life. When you can see the prize, you are more likely to keep up the fight.

Source: American Psychiatric Association website: www.HealthyMinds.org
TIPS TO AVOID DEER-RELATED COLLISIONS

Cars and deer can be a lethal combination. Deer migration and mating season generally runs from October through December, and causes a dramatic increase in the movement of the deer population. As a result, more deer-vehicle collisions occur in this period than at any other time of year, so drivers need to be especially cautious.

The following facts can be helpful in avoiding deer-related collisions:

- Deer are not just found on rural roads near wooded areas, many deer crashes occur on busy highways near cities.
- Deer are unpredictable, especially when faced with glaring headlights, blowing horns and fast-moving vehicles. They often dart into traffic.
- Deer often move in groups. If you see one, there are likely more in the vicinity.

When driving, take the following precautions:

- Drive with caution when moving through deer-crossing zones, in areas known to have a large deer population and in areas where roads divide agricultural fields from forestland.
- Always wear your seat belt and stay awake, alert and sober.
- When driving at night, use high beam headlights when there is no oncoming traffic. The high beams will better illuminate the eyes of deer on or near the roadway.

Be especially attentive from sunset to midnight and during the hours shortly before and after sunrise. These are the highest risk times for deer-vehicle collisions.

Brake firmly when you notice a deer in or near your path, but stay in your lane. Many serious crashes occur when drivers swerve to avoid a deer and hit another vehicle or lose control of their cars.

Do not rely on devices such as deer whistles, deer fences and reflectors to deter deer. These devices have not proven effective.

In the event your vehicle strikes a deer, try to avoid going near or touching the animal. A frightened and wounded deer can hurt you or further injure itself. If the deer is blocking the roadway and poses a danger to other motorists, you should call the police immediately.

Contact your insurance agent or company representative as quickly as possible to report any damage to your car. Collision with a deer or other animals is covered under the comprehensive portion of your automobile policy.

Source: Insurance Information Institute, October 1, 2007 press release
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