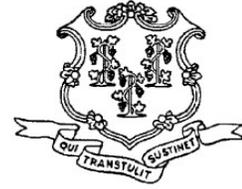


News



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 28, 2010

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Department of Public Health Urges People to Consider Their Health When Choosing a New Year's Resolution

Public Health Department Offers Free Resources to Help Lead a Healthier Life

Hartford – The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is urging people to consider resolutions for a healthy lifestyle for the New Year. Whether your resolution is to take better care of your general health, lose weight, or quit using tobacco, the DPH offers tips and resources to help you succeed in leading a healthier lifestyle.

Chronic diseases are responsible for 7 out of 10 deaths in the United States, and lead to pain, disability and decreased quality of life for millions of Americans - yet they are also among the most preventable of all health problems. In July, Governor M. Jodi Rell announced the availability of an online, interactive tool to help improve the health, fitness and quality of life of Connecticut residents. Developed with funding from a grant awarded by the National Governors' Association, the *Protective Health Assessment*, or PHA, is available at <http://www.dph-ct.us> and focuses on the prevention and early detection of chronic diseases and their related risk factors.

“The *Protective Health Assessment* is a great tool for people to use to evaluate their health and help them on the road to a healthy life,” stated DPH Commissioner J. Robert Galvin. “The confidential, online assessment only takes 10-15 minutes to complete and will give you a personalized report about your health habits as well as give recommendations on how to reduce or better manage your risk for chronic disease.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 66.3% of adult Americans are considered overweight or obese, so it's not surprising that weight loss is at the top of many New Year's resolution lists. Healthy weight loss isn't just about diet or a program, but rather making a commitment to an overall healthy lifestyle regarding daily eating and physical activity habits. Evidence shows that people who lose weight gradually and steadily (about 1 to 2 pounds per week) are more successful at keeping and maintaining weight off.

“Being overweight can contribute to other health problems including diabetes, heart disease and even asthma,” said Commissioner Galvin. “Establishing and maintaining a healthy weight will make you feel much better inside and out. We understand that sometimes it's hard to get there, but once you reach your goal, you will much improve your quality of life.”

If you are ready to take the challenge, here are some tips from the Connecticut Department of Public Health on getting started:

- Write it down and make a plan that includes the amount of weight you want to lose, the date you'd like to lose the weight by, the dietary changes you'll make to establish healthy eating habits, and a plan for getting regular physical activity.
- Before you start your new healthy lifestyle, consider meeting with your health care provider to assess your height, weight, and explore other weight-related risk factors you may have, and schedule a follow-up to monitor any changes. Keep a diary and identify any barriers to healthy eating and being physically active and plan solutions to overcome them.
- Be realistic and set achievable goals so you don't get discouraged. Small changes in the beginning can lead to big results in the long run and serve as positive motivation to keep going!
- Use the "buddy system." Family members, friends, coworkers or neighbors with similar goals can be great support and make the healthy lifestyle changes easier.
- Monitor and evaluate your goals and progress continually, and adjust or change as necessary. Once a goal is achieved, add a new one to keep your healthy lifestyle fresh and to help you continue on your pathway to success.

Quitting tobacco use is another great way to improve your health. More than 450,000 adults in Connecticut are cigarette smokers, and every year in Connecticut, more than 4,900 people die from smoking-related diseases. To assist smokers in their attempt to quit, the following resources are available free of charge in Connecticut.

- The Connecticut QuitLine at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) is available to all Connecticut residents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. By calling the QuitLine for help, professionally trained Quit Coaches will help to prepare participants for their quit date and help them to design their own quit plan. Many of the Quit Coaches are former smokers themselves. Residents may also register for services online at www.quitnow.net/connecticut.
- The BecomeAnEX.org website offers an online support service that allows tobacco users to create their own quit plan, blog with other users, and ask questions of professionals. Log on to www.BecomeAnEX.org to start.
- Some community programs have been funded to provide tobacco cessation programs to Connecticut residents. AIDS Project-New Haven; CommuniCare, Inc., with several locations; Fair Haven Community Health Clinic, Inc., New Haven; Generations Family Health Center, Inc., Willimantic; Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective, Hartford; and the Hospital of Saint Raphael, New Haven. Programs include educational materials, counseling, and quit medications if appropriate. Access the full list of locations at www.ct.gov/dph/tobacco.

Setbacks happen for a variety of reasons, don't let them deter you and remember to reward yourself occasionally for meeting your goals and to help keep you motivated on the path to better health!

The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at www.ct.gov/dph or call (860) 509-7270.

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