

# Newsflash

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## 4 Ways to Keep Germs at Bay

- 1. Wash your hands correctly.** It won't strengthen your immune system, but it will reduce germs on your hands, so you're much less likely to transfer an effective dose of a virus or bacterium into your body.


- 2. If water isn't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer such as Purell.** Make sure it contains at least 60 percent alcohol (ethanol and isopropanol) – that's the level at which it's effective against germs.


- 3. Don't touch your face.** Most of us touch our eyes, nose, and mouth about 16 times over the course of 3 hours. That lays down the welcome mat for bacteria, viruses, and other bugs that hang out on your hands.


- 4. Get your shots.** Vaccines prompt your immune system to produce antibodies that protect you from disease. Older adults should have an annual flu shot and a tetanus-diphtheria booster every 10 years after a one-time Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) shot. If you're 60 or older, get the one-time shingles vaccine; at age 65 get both pneumococcal vaccines, a year apart.



HAPPY ★ NEW ★ YEAR

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## Secrets to Keeping Your New Year's Resolutions

As we kick off 2017, you may be thinking about New Year's resolutions. About half of all Americans make resolutions, but research suggests only 8 percent keep them.

Mindy Boccio, MPH, has ideas on how you can better make resolutions — and keep them. As a senior consultant with Kaiser Permanente Northern California's Regional Health Education, Boccio trains physicians, nurses, and wellness coaches on how to help their patients make healthy changes in their lives.

**What advice do you have for people making resolutions?** I see 'resolutions' as simply the decision to make a change in your life. Three suggestions come to mind.

**First:** Get clear on your 'why.' Ask yourself how this change will benefit your life and support your values. For example, the deeper reason for deciding to quit smoking may be that you want to be a healthy role model for your children. Understanding that can boost your motivation initially and help keep you on track when you hit the inevitable rough patch.

**Second:** Try to be specific about the behavior change you propose to make. We know from research that the more specific you are about the change, the better. If your resolution is to exercise more regularly, getting specific might be saying, 'I know I can fit in 15 minutes of walking three times a week.' It's helpful to start with something achievable so you don't feel overwhelmed. You can increase your goal later.

**Third:** Ask for help. Getting support from family and friends has been shown to help us make lasting change. It's also good to partner with someone who's making the same behavior change. That creates accountability, and the camaraderie helps too.

**Thoughts on logging your progress?** Research supports that tracking your progress helps you to achieve your goals. Even if things aren't going perfectly, tracking your progress can be viewed as helpful feedback to make course corrections instead of abandoning ship. Plus, when you're logging your progress daily, it keeps your goal front of mind.

It doesn't matter how you track your progress. Some people keep it simple and mark the days they exercise on a calendar. Others like technology to track exactly how many steps they take each day. If you like using apps, some good health-related ones include KP's Every Body Walk app, My Fitness Pal, and Lose It!

**Any advice for when the going gets tough?** When you're faced with a dilemma around keeping a resolution, slowing down can help. Take pause and recognize that you may have more choices in the moment than you think.

If your resolution is to cut back on sweets because you'd like to lose weight, and then someone offers you a piece of cake, your immediate thought may be 'I want that delicious cake!' You could eat the cake and have the immediate gratification. You could also step away for a few minutes to see if the craving for the cake dissipates. Or you could decide to have a small piece and do more walking that day to burn the additional calories.

If you pause, consider your choices and call to mind your 'why' (the deeper reasons for making a change), you can then make a more deliberate decision. You'll feel positive about that, and you're more likely to repeat that mindful approach.

On the other hand, if you slip up on a given day, resist being overly critical of yourself. Negative self-talk can quickly spiral out of control and undermine your motivation. Consider talking to yourself like a friend would. Acknowledge the set back and what you learned, then focus on getting back on track.



The following **New Drugs** were recently approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration and added to ProCare Rx's National formulary. Each drug will be reviewed at the next ProCare Rx's P&T Committee meeting.

Brand Name	Dose Form	FDA Approved Indication
Rubraca (rucaparib)	Tablet	Treatment for ovarian cancer
Spinraza (nusinersen)	Injection	Treatment for Type 2 diabetes

## If You're Afraid of Falling

### 7 strategies for improving your balance and staying on your feet this winter

Do the snow and ice of winter make you worry about taking a spill? More than one in four people 65 and older slips or trips each year, and about 20% of those who fall are seriously injured. But dealing with the problems by cutting back on physical activity can make you even more vulnerable by weakening the leg muscles needed for balance. Instead, smart lifestyle strategies can help prevent falls, and simple exercises can strengthen the muscles that keep you steady.

#### 1. DON'T WAIT FOR A FALL.

Often people don't talk with a doctor about fall prevention until after they've taken a tumble. So if you've had a fall, you're feeling unsteady, or you're simply worried about falling, ask a physician to check for conditions that can affect balance, such as low blood pressure, anemia, and inner-ear disorders. More serious health issues, including dementia, Parkinson's, or a history of stroke, can also undermine balance. Other disorders, such as arthritis can lead to falls by making it difficult to move easily. If you have any of the problems above, taking steps to prevent falls becomes even more important.

#### 2. STRENGTHEN YOUR LEGS.

Weak legs are a major risk factor for falls. Aim for 30 minutes of walking five days per week. Exercises that target your leg muscles are also helpful, especially if they improve balance at the same time. Here are two examples: Hold on to a bathroom or kitchen counter with both hands, then raise yourself up on the balls of your feet. Hold for a count of 5, release, and repeat 10 times. Or, standing in front of a counter, balance yourself, unaided, on one leg for a count of 5, then repeat with the other leg, for a total of 10 times on each leg. Over the course of a few weeks, work up to 30 seconds. You can find additional exercises from the National Institute of Aging, at [nia.nih.gov](http://nia.nih.gov).

#### 3. CHECK YOUR VISION.

Poor vision can obviously make falls more likely. But some eyeglass lenses, especially multifocal lenses, can impair depth perception, at least until you get used to the prescription. So take care when you get new lenses. And be aware that if you have cataract surgery to improve your vision, you'll need to be cautious after the procedure as you recover.

#### 4. WEAR STURDY SHOES.

"Slippers" is an apt term – they're more likely to make you fall than other kinds of footwear. Instead, try a sturdy shoe with a heel collar that has a firm (not cushy) sole. That helps you feel the ground, which can make you steadier. If you have to walk on ice this winter, consider slip-on cleats, which can improve traction.

#### 5. WALK CAREFULLY.

When possible, hold on to handrails with both hands. And if you find yourself on an icy patch, especially on stairs, don't be embarrassed to slow down and take it easy. Bend your knees, take tiny steps and walk sideways. If necessary, sit down to propel yourself forward using your hands and legs.

#### 6. LOOK FOR HOME HAZARDS.

Replace loose rugs and move pet bowls and cords out of pathways. Install handrails in staircases, in the shower, and by the toilet. Inside and outside your house, use lightbulbs with the highest wattage recommended for each fixture, and always use a night light.

#### 7. CONSIDER YOUR MEDS.

Many medications can cause dizziness, including those that are often used to treat anxiety, such as diazepam (Valium and generic) and those prescribed for insomnia, such as zolpidem (Ambien and generic). Several over-the-counter drugs, such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl Allergy, Sominex, and generic) can also affect your balance. And taking multiple medications multiplies the risk, as does switching doses.

