



# your health & well-being

## Making resolutions? Or making plans?

### *Get the whole family involved – resolutions and plans aren't just for grownups!*

A New Year's resolution is easily made and as easily broken. After all, it's just a decision. Whether you resolve to lose weight, save money, or adopt a healthier lifestyle, New Year's resolutions can be hard to keep. By Valentine's Day, most New Year's resolutions are a distant memory. **To make a real life change, what you need is a plan**, with action steps and a goal. And learning how to set those goals takes practice.

**It takes time**, and a real commitment to your plan for your resolution to become a habit. If you make it a family project, the process can help your children understand that time and patience are needed to make changes.

A small goal, like getting up half an hour earlier in the morning, may be challenging, but **it just takes practice**. After a while, it will become a positive habit, and experience with a small change can motivate you to tackle a bigger goal like quitting smoking or exercising regularly.

**Your children can join the project**, and set some goals of their own. They will learn how to plan and manage their time and make good decisions – skills that can have a lasting impact on their future.

**Together with your child, set a healthy goal and create a plan!** Achieving a small goal will give you confidence for the next challenge.

## How to plan and achieve your goals:

- **Be as specific as possible.** You are more likely to succeed that way. For example, instead of saying that you want to exercise more, set a specific goal to walk for 30 minutes a day.
- **Put it in writing.** Write down exactly what you want to achieve and post it in a place where you will see it every day. Use positive terms. For example, instead of "I will stop eating junk food," write "I will make healthy food choices."
- **Be realistic.** Make sure that your goals are within your reach. Be mindful of your finances, schedule, and personal circumstances; and don't try to change too much at once.
- **Develop an action plan.** Create a timeline that includes steps toward your goal. Set deadlines for each step and cross them off as you go – it will help you stay motivated.
- **Believe in yourself.** Stay positive about your progress. Share your progress with a friend, or set a goal together that you can both work toward. For example, you could invite a friend to walk with you regularly. If someone is waiting for you, it's hard to talk yourself out of lacing up those sneakers and heading out the door. Keep one another accountable.
- **Be flexible.** Keep in mind that setbacks can happen. Don't get discouraged and give up.
- **Ask for help.** If you get stuck or need encouragement, don't be afraid to talk about it. You might be surprised what kind of support people offer.
- **Reward yourself.** Acknowledge your achievements, even the small ones. Reaching a goal takes hard work and you should be proud of your efforts.

Having clear goals and a plan can bring your family together and help you all be healthier all year. Make this New Year count and create a plan to follow through on your resolutions!

Source: [CIGNAbehavioral.com/FindWorklifeResources/PersonalGrowth](http://CIGNAbehavioral.com/FindWorklifeResources/PersonalGrowth)



*it's time to feel better*



*Having a plan is the best way to make any life change, big or small. It's the difference between a goal and a wish.*



## january tip of the month

If you lost sight of your health goals over the holidays, these simple steps will help to get you back on the right track for balanced eating.

- **Don't skip meals** to compensate for earlier calorie overload – just return to “normal” portions.
- Be sure to **drink plenty of water** every day – it helps to keep you feeling less hungry.
- **Replace** holiday snacks with fruits or raw vegetables.
- **Limit** sugary and alcoholic drinks.

## On myCIGNA.com this month

Start the year off right – complete the **health assessment** on the myHealth tab. You'll get information about what you should focus on in the year ahead, and the changes you should consider to live healthier in 2009. It can help you:

- **Identify** medical conditions and health risks;
- **Monitor** your personal health status; and
- **Learn** more about preventive care.

The health assessment is available to CIGNA members and your family members age 18 and over.

CIGNA offers tools like the health assessment on myCIGNA.com to help you make the most of the time you spend planning, managing, and understanding your health benefits.



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