Resolve To Be Healthy All Year Round

Like many, you probably made some New Year’s resolutions to improve your health and well-being for 2013. It’s estimated that less than 10 percent of New Year’s resolutions are successfully achieved and 22% of people drop their resolution by the end of January.

New Year’s resolutions are a great thing, but keeping up with them can be difficult because breaking old habits and creating new ones can be difficult. The health care team at FIU Health would like to help you keep your resolutions. Whether you’ve vowed this year that you will lose weight, quit smoking, or exercise, or have not yet made a resolution (it’s not too late!), here are some simple tips to help the FIU Health community surpass the norm:

1. Set realistic, well defined goals – goals need to be specific, measurable, and time-specific.
2. Reward yourself for small ‘wins’ – celebrate your success along the way.
3. Visit your health care provider – they can help you set reasonable weight loss goals, optimize your health, and monitor and refine your successes.
4. Go public – don’t keep your New Year’s resolutions a secret. Share them with friends, family, and your health care team, who are likely to motivate you.

No matter what health resolution you’ve chosen, resolve to keep resolving all through the year!

It’s Not Too Late to Vaccinate – Get Your Flu Shot Today!

You might think it’s too late in the flu season to get your flu vaccine, but it’s not. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) flu season typically peaks in February and can last as late as May. This year is no exception; the flu season is heating up and it’s shaping up to be a nasty one. About 36,000 Americans die annually from the flu and 31 states, including Florida, have reported widespread geographic influenza activity.

A lot of people decline the flu vaccine because they think the vaccine will give them the flu. In fact, the injected flu vaccine preparation contains only dead virus, and a dead virus can’t infect you. But this widespread flu myth just won’t go away. People often mistake vaccine side effects with the flu. Once you’re vaccinated, there’s also a two-week ‘window’ before the vaccine takes effect. If people come into contact with the flu during this ‘window’, they are not protected (another reason to hurry up and get vaccinated!)

The following facts about the vaccine may dispel other common misconceptions. It’s necessary to get vaccinated each year, since the vaccine protects from strains of the virus that experts identify annually. The vaccine does not protect against all strains or symptoms of the flu. This means that even if vaccinated, you still might contract the flu, but your symptoms will be less severe than if you had declined vaccination. Finally, no matter what you might have heard, cold weather does not cause the flu. It’s just a coincidence that flu season in the US occurs during the colder months. Regardless of climate, flu season is the same throughout the whole country: from Minnesota to Florida.

So no matter the month, if you haven’t had your flu vaccine yet, get it today! You could spare yourself and your family a lot of misery.

FIU Health Faculty Group Practice Now Open in Broward

In November, FIU Health in conjunction with the FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health opened a new Faculty Group Practice location on the grounds of Broward Health Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale.

The outpatient practice provides services to children, adolescents, adults and families. Services are provided by departmental clinicians including Leonard Gralnik, MD, PhD (child, adolescent and adult), Christopher La Tourrette La Riche, MD (adult and substance abuse) and Katie Santana, LCSW (child, adolescent, adult and families.) Dr La Tourrette La Riche also continues to provide services at the Faculty Group Practice site on the FIU Modesto Madique Campus. Plans are underway to add Family Medicine services at this new Broward location later this spring.

To make an appointment, or for more information regarding services being offered at the Faculty Group Practice in Broward please call 954-523-2727 or visit health.fiu.edu.
Cervical cancer affects the cervix, the part of the body that connects the uterus (or womb) to the vagina (or birth canal). While 40 years ago cervical cancer was the leading cause of cancer death for women in the United States, the numbers of cases of cervical cancer have decreased significantly. It’s still around despite the availability of tests to screen for the disease (screenings are tests for women who have no symptoms of the disease). In 2009, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 12,000 women were diagnosed with cervical cancer and 4,000 women died from cervical cancer.

Staying informed with the latest news on prevention and screening is an important step in reducing your risk of developing cervical cancer.

Know the Facts About Cervical Cancer

• Screening has markedly improved over the last decade with availability of new tests. Liquid based cytology allows pathologists to more accurately read PAPs. Testing for human papillomavirus (HPV) for women 30 and over has helped identify patients at higher risk for cervical cancer. Speak with your health care provider about recommended screening, as most women should be tested with cytology (Pap smear) every three years as opposed to the historical annual recommendation.
• Vaccination - Certain types of the human papillomavirus (HPV) are linked to cervical cancer. Vaccines such as Gardasil and Cervarix, that are designed to prevent infection with high-risk types of HPV, have the potential to greatly reduce the occurrence of cervical cancer. You can discuss if you are a candidate for the vaccine with your health care provider.

Contact FIU Health today to schedule an appointment with one of our family medicine or gynecology providers to discuss cervical cancer and what you can do to protect yourself.

Get To Know Your New Insurance Plan

For many, a new year also means a new insurance plan. Here are some tips from the FIU Health team that you can take to ensure that your health care experience is a positive one:

Review your Benefits – Now is the time to become familiar with your 2013 benefits. Take the time to read the material you received during open enrollment and visit the insurance company’s website to make sure that you understand the benefit plan including referral and authorization requirements.

Know the Language – Sometimes it may seem like physician offices and insurance companies are speaking a foreign language. Try to become familiar with the terms that are used in your insurance policy so that you can communicate with your health providers. Some commonly used terms are:
• Authorization (Prior Authorization): Process of submitting request and supporting documentation to obtain coverage determination and/or permission for certain services for a patient depending on the insurance plan’s requirements
• Calendar Year Deductible: A fixed dollar amount during the benefit period (usually a year) that an insured person pays before the insurer starts to make payments for covered medical services. Plans may have both individual and family deductibles
• Co-Insurance: A form of medical cost sharing in a health insurance plan that requires an insured person to pay a stated percentage of medical expenses after the deductible amount, if any, is paid.
• Copayment: A form of medical cost sharing in a health insurance plan that requires an insured person to pay a fixed dollar amount when a medical service is received.
• Referral: The act of sending a patient to another doctor or provider and/or the actual paper authorizing the visit.

Schedule your preventive care visits! Schedule a visit with your primary care physician at the Faculty Group Practice for preventive care services. It is important for you to get to know your primary care physician and for them to get to know you. Together you can discuss the steps to making this a healthy year.

New Additions to the Team

FIU Health extends a warm welcome to the newest members of the FGP team:

Jorge Fleisher MD
Specialty: Infectious Disease
Language(s) Spoken: English, Spanish

Geeta Nayyar, MD
Specialty: Rheumatology
Language(s) Spoken: English

Anup Kumar Sabharwal, MD
Specialty: Endocrinology
Language(s) Spoken: English

To make an appointment with any of these physicians, please call 305-FIU-DOCS (348-3627).

Lunch and Learn Lecture Series

Mark your calendars for the following Lunch and Learn sessions which will be held on the Modesto Maidique Campus. Bring a bag lunch and come hear our FIU Health and Faculty Group Practice physicians present timely and topical health information. Free admission.

Wednesday, February 20th - 12 Noon
AH2 170
A Call to Action Against the "Dowager’s Hump": Maximizing Bone Health and Proper Body Posture
Marta Cuellar, MD

Wednesday, March 20th - 12 Noon
AH2 160
Suicide Assessment
Leonard Gralnik, MD, PhD

For more information visit http://health.fiu.edu