



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Dec. 28, 2011  
PH11-065

**CONTACT:** Anita Gore  
Melinda Beer  
(916) 440-7259

**State Health Director Recommends Top Health New Year's Resolutions**  
*Six Simple Changes can Save Lives, Reduce Health Care Costs*

**SACRAMENTO** – As the busy holiday season comes to a close, most Californians take a timeout to draft their New Year's resolutions. California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Public Health Officer, Dr. Ron Chapman, urges Californians to put health at the top of their list.

"New Year's resolutions can be overly ambitious, despite your best intentions," said Chapman. "But I'm recommending six simple steps that will make for a healthier 2012, and just might save your life."

**1. Ditch the butts (and save major bucks!)**

"Quitting smoking is the best thing you can do to improve your health, and your pocketbook. A \$5 pack-a-day habit costs a smoker nearly \$2,000 a year. As a family doctor, I have taken care of people who have suffered the horrible health effects of smoking which harms nearly every organ in the body. Not only that, but secondhand smoke is deadly to those around you, especially children who can develop asthma from being exposed to cigarette smoke. You can get free help to quit by calling 1-800-NO BUTTS or visiting [NoButts.org](http://NoButts.org). This service is also available to people who would like a friend or loved one to quit smoking."

**2. Know your numbers**

"This includes your blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and healthy weight. Being overweight, having high blood pressure or cholesterol can cause heart disease, stroke and kidney failure. When you get these numbers to a normal range, you lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, diabetes, blindness, nerve damage, and other health problems. If you are overweight, by losing five-to-seven percent of your weight (10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person), you can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes, and reduce the risk of developing knee osteoarthritis by as much as 50 percent."

**3. Eat like a champion**

"In addition to making half your plate fruits and vegetables, vow to incorporate more whole grains and to reduce sodium by eating fewer processed foods and drinking fewer sugary drinks like sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks, sweetened teas and coffees. Get involved with your children's school wellness committee to create healthier school environments, support healthier foods and quality physical education for all young people."

**4. Get physical!**

"Moderate physical activity, even in 10-minute increments three times a day, helps keep muscles, bones and joints healthy, improve your heart health, helps reduce stress and makes you feel more positive. Be active with your kids – physical activity is good for their health and brain function!"

**5. Respect your health**

“Prevention really is the best medicine. Getting vaccinated – for both adults and children – is the most effective way of stopping whooping cough, flu and other dangerous diseases. It’s not too late to get a flu vaccination, since flu activity can continue as late as May.

- It is crucial that everyone 50 and older be screened for colon cancer – this is a form of cancer that can be prevented, if it’s caught before it becomes cancerous.
- Women, get screened for cervical cancer starting at age 21. Starting at age 50 be sure to get screened for breast cancer – younger if you have a family history of breast cancer.
- Protect your skin from skin cancer at all times of the year by reducing sun exposure and using sunscreen.”

## **6. Be prepared, California**

“We live in a large, populated state that has a very diverse climate and geography, which is why it is critical to make sure that you and your family are prepared for a disaster before it strikes. You can ensure the safety of your family by developing supply kits and disaster plans, knowing how you will communicate with each other during a crisis, and talking with your children about crisis events.

By doing these simple steps, you will be helping yourself physically, mentally and financially. For example, diabetes costs in California exceed \$24 billion each year. The direct health care costs associated with smoking in our state is estimated to be \$9.6 billion or \$365 per Californian.”

“**My personal resolution is to incorporate the [CDC’s Physical Activity for Everyone’s guidelines into my routine](#),**” added Chapman. “This includes 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week and muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days a week that work on all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms). **You can follow my activity each week on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).**”

[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)

