

## 7 Easy Health Goals for Women

By Get Healthy Staff  
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From the Get Healthy Inbox—We're committed to keeping you informed on health care news and ideas throughout the region and nation. Here's today's recommendation, submitted by The Northwestern Specialists for Women:

With every new year comes the stream of well-intentioned resolutions for the year ahead, yet statistics show that while 90% of Americans make annual resolutions, a whopping 30% are broken within a month.

Dr. Seema Venkatachalam of the Northwestern Specialists for Women and Clinical Instructor in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine explains that instead of setting unrealistic, stifling resolutions—that often leave people feeling guilty and disappointed when they can't follow through—it is far more beneficial to set simple health goals that provide long-term, achievable results.

**“Being healthy doesn't have to mean cutting out all carbs, exercising for hours on end, and giving up wine and chocolate. There are simple, easy changes that people can make such as drinking more water and taking a daily multivitamin, that can greatly improve health and require little effort,” she adds.**

To help women start their year off with optimal health, Dr. Venkatachalam offers the following 7 simple health goals for women to achieve during 2010:

- 1. Group Activity Works.** One of the reasons the Biggest Loser has become such a phenomenon is because it reinforces the importance of support when exercising or dieting. Studies have shown that group support can lead to better and more sustained results. Create a “Bigger Loser” group at your office. Promote the idea of bringing healthy snacks to the office place, losing weight in a slow and steady pace, and giving continued positive support.
- 2. Fill Your Water Bottle.** Water flushes the body of toxins, curbs appetite, improves skin tone and moisture. Don't force yourself to commit to six glasses a day, rather make it a goal to simply drink more water and it will quickly become a habit. Inside Tip: the best way to measure hydration is not by the number of glasses consumed, but rather by the color of your urine—the clearer the better.
- 3. Start Snacking.** Snacking can be good for you! The body requires fuel throughout the day, and when the body gets hungry and doesn't receive fuel, the metabolism starts to slow down. This can make it much harder to lose weight. Make sure to include a healthy mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack into your diet and you'll see a boost in your metabolism.
- 4. Cut Out One Cup of Coffee.** Over 50% of Americans above the age of 18 drink 3.1 cups of coffee per day. Unfortunately, coffee and other caffeine beverages add chemicals and dehydrate the body. In addition, there are studies that suggest caffeine in the first trimester of pregnancy may increase the risk of miscarriage. Overcoming a caffeine addiction can be difficult, but when done gradually and moderately, can be successful. Instead of the third cup of coffee, drink a glass of water instead and accomplish two goals at once!
- 5. Line Up Annual Medical Appointments.** Save yourself the stress of waiting for your preferred appointment date by setting your annual medical appointments now. Seeing a doctor and getting the recommended tests is the first step in achieving a clean bill of health and peace of mind. Follow the below testing recommendations for the year ahead.
  - Osteoporosis: screenings recommended for women 65+
  - Annual Mammograms: should begin at 40
  - Annual Pap Smears: should begin at 21
  - Colorectal Cancer: start screening at 50
  - Skin cancer: screenings should begin at 50
  - Blood and cholesterol tests: should be taken every 5 years, starting at 20*Begin testing earlier if you are predisposed or have a family history with a health risk.*
- 6. Apply Portion Control.** Everyone knows that denying yourself every food you crave will simply make you desire more. Instead, allow yourself to eat meals and snacks in moderation and appropriate size portions, while avoiding seconds. For example, one serving of meat (3 oz.) should be about the size of a deck of cards, while one serving of pasta (1/2 cup) is the size of a tennis ball.
- 7. Start Sleeping More.** Making a pledge for more sleep will increase your energy levels, increase immunity against sickness, improve skin tone and brighten overall mood. The key is proper sleep hygiene. Get the TV out of the bedroom, make sure there are blinds covering the windows, and create a conducive environment that promotes sleep. Everyone has different sleep patterns, but it is best to have at least 7-9 hours per night. Even if you can only add 30 minutes for now, your body will thank you!



**About the Northwestern Specialists for Women:** The Northwestern Specialists for Women (NSW) is a progressive, full service obstetrics and gynecology practice providing superior medical services for women of all ages. Located in River North, the state of the art practice takes pride in offering all aspects of obstetrics and gynecological care on site, including progressive testing, diagnosis, treatment, minimally invasive procedures and outpatient surgery. Based on a mission to nurture, educate and deliver the highest standard of care for all women in a unique, soothing

environment, the office of NSW features distinctive, healing artwork, designed to reflect the very essence of the practice. Patients recognize this as a soulful, caring environment where the comfort and respect for their body, mind and spirit is realized. NSW was founded by the industry-acknowledged and highly accredited team of doctors including, Bonnie Wise M.D, Kimberly McMahon M.D, Dayna Salasche M.D, Seema Venkatachalam M.D., and Melissa Dugan-Kim M.D. For more information visit [www.nswobgyn.com](http://www.nswobgyn.com)