

Doctor's Bag



by Robert Sorrenti, MD
Chief Medical Officer

Happy Holidays!

It's hard to believe another year is coming to a close. All of us from HealthLink hope 2009 has been a healthy and happy year for you and your family.

It's time to start thinking about 2010. Here are some healthy ideas to consider when planning the new year. (All HealthLink programs can be accessed through our website, www.healthlink.com.)

- If you smoke, 2010 is the year to quit. Check out HealthLink's online quit smoking program, "The Last Cigarette (TLC)" for helpful guidelines.
- If you are overweight, 2010 is the year to focus on nutrition. Choose healthy food for yourself and your family. "Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids" is our online nutrition and activity guide for children and teens.
- If you are inactive, 2010 is the year to start getting some exercise. Our "Healthy Living" program is powered by WebMD and includes an interactive health assessment tool to put you on the right track.
- If you are experiencing stress, 2010 is the year to learn coping skills. Our "Healthy Living" program is a good resource for basic information.

HealthLink offers a number of free healthy living tools and programs through our website. Also remember, your personal physician is your most valuable resource for health and wellness information.

Wishing you our best for 2010!

HLInfo YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE AWARENESS

Holiday Health and Safety Tips

The following tips are from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). To read the full article, please visit www.cdc.gov/family/holiday/.



- 1. Wash your hands often.** Keeping hands clean is one of the most important ways to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Use plenty of soap and warm water.
- 2. Stay warm.** Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry, and dress warmly in several layers of clothing.
- 3. Be smoke-free.** Avoid smoking and breathing other people's smoke. If you smoke, quit today!
- 4. Manage stress.** Keep a check on over-commitment and over-spending. Balance work, home and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook.
- 5. Travel safely.** Don't drink and drive, and don't let someone else drink and drive. Wear a seat belt. Always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat or seat belt.
- 6. Schedule check-ups and vaccinations.** Vaccinations help prevent diseases and save lives. Schedule a visit with your health care provider for a yearly exam. Ask what vaccinations and test you should get based on your age, lifestyle, travel plans, medical history and family health history.
- 7. Watch the kids.** Keep a watchful eye on your kids when they're eating and playing. Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, choking hazards and other objects out of kids' reach. Learn how to provide early treatment for children who are choking. Visit the CDC website, www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Choking/default.html for a list of resources for administering first aid to a choking child.
- 8. Prevent injuries.** Use step stools instead of furniture when hanging decorations. Most residential fires occur during the winter months. Keep candles away from children, pets, walkways, trees and curtains. Never leave fireplaces, stoves or candles unattended. Install a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector in your home. Test them once a month and replace batteries twice a year.
- 9. Handle and prepare food safely.** As you prepare holiday meals, keep you and your family safe from food-related illness. Wash hands and surfaces often. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs away from ready-to-eat foods and eating surfaces. Cook foods to the proper temperature. Refrigerate promptly. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours.
- 10. Eat healthy and be active.** With balance and moderation, you can enjoy the holidays the healthy way. Choose fresh fruit as a festive and sweet substitute for candy. Select just one or two of your favorites from the host of tempting foods. Be active at least 2.5 hours a week. Help kids and teens be active for at least 1 hour a day.

Newsletter Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Women's Health, "Holiday Health and Safety Tips," last modified October 20, 2009, <http://www.cdc.gov/family/holiday/>; "Choking Episodes Among Children," last modified October 15, 2008, <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Choking/default.html>

HealthLink®, Inc., is an Illinois corporation. HealthLink, Inc. is an organizer of independently contracted provider networks, which it makes available by contract to a variety of payors of health benefits, including insurers, third party administrators or employers. HealthLink has no control or right of control over the professional, medical judgment of contracted providers, and is not liable for any acts or failures to act, by contracted providers. HealthLink, Inc. is not an insurance company and has no liability for benefits under benefit plans offered or administered by payors. HealthLink is a registered trademark of HealthLink, Inc. and a separately incorporated and capitalized subsidiary of WellPoint, Inc. The information provided herein is educational only, and is not intended to provide medical care or medical advice, which only your doctor can provide.

