

“10 Resolutions That Can Add Years to Your Life”

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of Jan. 4, 2025. (A version was posted at newsmax.com on Dec. 31, 2024.)

By Lynn C. Allison

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla.—With the holiday festivities coming to a close, it’s time to open the door to a new year. Hopefully, it will be a year filled with happiness and health. While you set about making resolutions to make the coming year one of the best ever, include some of these science-backed ways that will boost longevity.

- Try giving alcohol a break.

Dry January is a great time to lose the booze and improve your health. Alcohol-related deaths have doubled in the past 20 years, and experts say that heavy drinking is a leading risk factor for early death, heart attack and stroke.

- Get social.

That doesn’t mean spending more time on social media, but actually getting together with friends. Socialization has been linked to increased longevity by boosting mental and physical health, according to HuffPost.

- Practice gratitude.

Science has discovered the multitude of health benefits derived by practicing gratitude on a regular basis. For example, a recent study from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Medicine found that experiencing gratitude may help older adults live longer. Study results showed that participants who scored highest in a questionnaire measuring their levels of gratitude had a nine percent lower risk of all-cause mortality than individuals who had lower scores. Gratitude appeared to be protective against every specific cause of mortality studied, most significantly against cardiovascular disease. Start by writing down a few things you are grateful for every day.

- Walk a little more than you did in 2024.

You don’t have to hit the gym to get healthy exercise. Increase your step count by parking farther away in the parking lot, marching in place as you watch television or walking to the grocery store more often.

■ Meditate.

Studies have shown the benefits of even a few minutes of daily meditation to reduce stress and lower inflammation. Lower stress levels correlate with a lower risk of disease and increased longevity. Try Insight Timer, a free app that can get you started.

■ Eat more probiotics.

Gut-friendly foods can reduce the risk of heart disease and other illnesses, according to Healthline. Researchers are starting to investigate the link between probiotics and enhanced immune function as well. Foods rich in probiotics include yogurt, sauerkraut, tempeh, miso and kimchi.

■ Stay hydrated.

Drinking more water can help lower the likelihood of developing many chronic conditions, improve overall health and lead to a longer life. Dr. Dana Cohen, coauthor of the book *Quench*, says that proper hydration is “the single most important step you can take to treat and prevent chronic disease.” Start your day with a tall glass of water and lemon juice to hydrate your body right when you wake up. Plus, the lemon boosts your vitamin-C intake and may have health benefits for your digestive system, says the Cleveland Clinic.

■ Eat a diversity of foods.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that only about one in 10 adults eats enough fruits and vegetables daily. Each meal should contain a rainbow of colorful fruits and veggies to boost health and longevity. Focus on eating more plant-based meals in the new year and fewer processed foods. Add berries for breakfast, salads for lunch and steamed vegetables for dinner to start.

■ Establish a good sleep routine.

In a news release, the American Heart Association recommends seven to nine hours of sleep daily for optimum cardiovascular health for adults, and more for children depending on age. However, most adults in the U.S. don't get enough quality sleep. The experts at Harvard Health offer these tips to help you get your beauty and healthful rest.

■ Cut back on sugar.

Too much sugar has been linked to chronic inflammation and an increased risk for diabetes and heart disease. Sugar is found not only in sweet treats and soda, but in many of the other food products we buy. Manufacturers commonly use sugar to enhance the flavor and texture of processed foods. In fact, one study published in *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology* found that, out of 1.2 million packaged foods bought in the U.S. between 2000 and 2013, nearly half—48 percent included added sweeteners, according to AARP. Check labels and select foods with minimal amounts of added sugar.