



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Resolve to Be Healthy in the New Year

PATTY RITCHIE December 26, 2013

| ISSUE: **HEALTH**



Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

The New Year is a time for resolutions, and according to recent statistics roughly 45 percent of Americans usually make them. However, of those who make resolutions, only 8 percent actually stick to them.

Not surprisingly, topping the list of resolutions year after year, are those related to our health. Whether it's losing weight, staying fit or quitting smoking, there are countless people looking to make healthy changes when we turn the calendar page to the next year.

Here are tips that can help you improve your health and achieve your goals in the New Year:

- ***Cut the salt:*** Too much sodium can increase your blood pressure as well as your risk for a heart attack and stroke. One of the most important steps you can take to become healthier is reducing the amount of salt you use on your food.
- ***Convenience is key:*** It's critical to get enough fruits and vegetables each day, and the key to that is making sure you have these foods accessible. For example, keep a bowl of fresh fruit on your kitchen counter, place a box of raisins in your child's backpack and in your briefcase or add fruit to your cereal or oatmeal.
- ***Eat right while out and about:*** It's easy to over-eat and consume too many calories when eating at a restaurant. It's a good idea to skip the sides, try healthy options like grilled chicken and skip sodas, which are loaded with sugar and calories.
- ***Choose fresh:*** Here in our region, we are fortunate to have so many options for healthy eating. For fresh foods, vegetables and meats, try shopping at a local farmers' market or farm stand. Not only will you be eating healthy, you'll be supporting the local economy too.
- ***Get moving:*** The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends 30 minutes of physical activity per day for adults and 60 minutes per day for children at least five days a week. For those who aren't active, it may sound daunting. However, it's a lot easier than you think—take the stairs, hit the gym, go for a walk—it all adds up.
- ***Kick the habit:*** Each and every day, 4,000 US children under the age of 18 smoke their first cigarette, and 1,200 people die from smoking-related illness—an average of 50 an hour. Smoking can be deadly, and we need to do more to help those who want to quit. That's why I joined a bipartisan group of 16 Senators in calling on Governor Andrew Cuomo to increase funding for smoking cessation and youth tobacco prevention programs in next year's state budget. If you need help quitting, I encourage you to contact the New York State Smoker's Quit Line at 1-866-NY-QUITS.

The great thing about the New Year is that it offers us an opportunity to make a change and start fresh. Whatever your resolution may be, I wish you the best of luck as you work to stick to it and make a difference in your own life. Happy New Year!

