

Happy New Year!

New Year Goals outside of Dialysis

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

New Year Goals for Dialysis

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Setting Goals for a Healthy New Year

The beginning of a new year is traditionally a time to set new goals. When thinking about setting new goals, it is important to keep them realistic and achievable. The new goals should be personal and geared towards things that are important and meaningful to you! What short-term or long-term goals are you considering for 2025?

Some common health-related goals include being more physically active. It is important to be physically active at least 20 minutes each day and in a safe way. Being physically active can help with improving your blood pressure and blood sugar levels, help with achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, and can even boost your energy throughout the day. Tracking your blood pressure, blood sugar, and weight can help with meeting your goals.

Eating a kidney friendly diet that is right for you is important! Make sure to talk with the dietitian if you have questions or concerns with your current diet, including how much fluid to drink in a day. Eating the right foods can help you feel better in general and have more energy. The dietitian can help you select food groups based on your current lab results and make recommendations for you with planning your meals. Being physically active and eating a healthy diet are two goals that can help with reducing stress and even promote quality sleep.

Living with kidney disease can be stressful! The beginning of a new year is a good time to reflect upon the challenges you face living with kidney disease. It is important to share these concerns with the social worker who can help you think about things you would like to change. Making change, even in small ways, might help to reduce stress and bring more balance, joy, and happiness to your days in the new year.

It is okay to say “no” to doing things that drain your energy. It is a good idea to limit the amount of time you spend on social media to help reduce stress and find more balance in your days. Finding time to do things that energize you may help you feel less tired during the day and help you sleep better at night.

The new year brings about new opportunities to do things differently. Take some time to think about what you would like to change in 2025 to improve your health. Use the resources at DCL that are available to you to help you achieve your new year goals. Talk with your nurse, patient care technician (PCT), dietitian, social worker, nephrologist, and kidney nurse practitioner about your goals and ask them to help you achieve them. Your DCL team will provide you the support you need throughout the new year. We look forward to working with and caring for you in 2025!

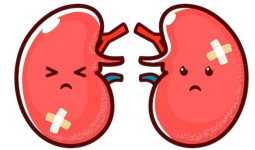


10 Reasons Why You Need a Primary Care Doctor

93.9% percent of children in the United States have contact with a health care provider annually, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). That percentage drops to 82.1 percent of adults in the United States who had contact with a health care provider in the last year. Why do fewer adults visit their doctors, and why are these annual visits so necessary? The following 10 reasons outline the importance of having a primary care doctor.

1. Holistic Health Care

Where should you go if you develop a cough, if you're feeling anxious and depressed, or if you are curious about a certain vaccine? The answer: your primary care doctor. Your primary care doctor focuses on holistic health care, meaning he or she is trained in treating a little bit of everything and coordinates patient health care in one central location. With a primary care doctor, you only need to make one appointment to discuss a variety of health issues you might be experiencing, whether they are physical, emotional or mental.



2. Better Manage Chronic Diseases

Chronic health conditions like [diabetes](#), arthritis and lupus are often difficult to monitor by yourself. A primary care doctor can help you stay organized and aware of how your chronic disease is affecting your body. Scheduling regular visits and performing routine tests are two ways your doctor can help you better maintain your chronic disease.

3. Higher Level of Comfort

Most people don't love talking to strangers, especially about their health care needs and concerns. Choosing a primary care doctor you trust is the first step. The next step is scheduling regular appointments with your doctor so that you can discuss your concerns and overall health. In addition, researchers at the Journal of Health Affairs found that patients with primary care doctors reported higher levels of satisfaction than patients without primary care doctors. The more you visit a doctor you trust, the better your relationship with him or her and the better your care.

4. Transparency of Entire Health History

Routine visits with your primary care provider not only help with your comfort level, but they also build on your health history. Knowledge of your health history, as well as your family health history, is imperative for prevention of diseases and also helps your doctor catch early symptoms of serious conditions.



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5. Lower Overall Health Costs

Attending regular appointments with your primary doctor might seem tedious and like a waste of money at times, but research from the Journal of Health Affairs suggests that routine appointments with a primary care doctor cut overall health costs for patients. Regular screenings, open communication between you and your doctor, and a record of your health history all contribute to an overall lower cost of health care.



6. Routine Screenings

Taking your blood pressure at every appointment might seem like a task, but screenings like these hold great importance when it comes to your health. Undergoing testing on a regular basis helps catch symptoms before they get worse or lead to debilitating health issues. For example, [high blood pressure increases your risk for heart disease and stroke](#), which are leading causes of death in the United States. Blood pressure tracking at annual wellness exams can catch hypertension early.

7. Catch Health Issues Early

While routine screenings may find certain symptoms of health issues before they become larger problems, your primary care doctor also knows you well enough to ask the right questions and detect other health issues in their early stages.

8. Referrals to Other Medical Specialists

Do you need a referral to see an ENT or a cardiologist? Start with an appointment with your primary care doctor. Chances are your doctor has helpful recommendations for specialists since he or she is familiar with how you prefer to participate in your health care.



9. Decrease in Hospital and ER Visits

Research shows that patients who regularly visit their primary care physicians have fewer hospitalizations and emergency visits than those who do not utilize primary care doctors. Waiting too long to see a doctor or ignoring symptoms can lead to a hospitalization or an ER visit, two of the most expensive and overwhelming outcomes for patients.

10. Better Patient-provider Communication

Communication is a two-way street, especially when it comes to your health. Communicating your health wants, needs and concerns are crucial for your doctor to address your health appropriately. Likewise, your primary care doctor should also feel comfortable holding honest conversations with you regarding their concerns and thoughts regarding your health.

Mental Illness: Recognizing Warning Signs and How to Cope

Most people believe that mental health conditions are rare and “happen to someone else.” In fact, mental health conditions are common and widespread. An estimated 44 million Americans suffer from some form of mental disorder in a given year.

Most families are not prepared to cope with learning their loved one has a mental illness. It can be physically and emotionally trying, and can make us feel vulnerable to the opinions and judgments of others.

If you think you or someone you know may have a mental or emotional problem, it is important to remember there is hope and help.



WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS?

Mental illnesses are brain-based conditions that affect thinking, emotions, and behaviors. Since we all have brains – having some kind of mental health problem during your life is really common.

For people who have mental illnesses, their brains have changed in a way in which they are unable to think, feel, or act in ways they want to. For some, this means experiencing extreme and unexpected changes in mood – like feeling more sad or worried than normal. For others, it means not being able to think clearly, not being able to communicate with someone who is talking to them, or having bizarre thoughts to help explain weird feelings they are having.

There are more than 200 classified forms of mental illness. Some of the more common disorders are depression, bipolar disorder, dementia, schizophrenia and anxiety disorders. Symptoms may include changes in mood, personality, personal habits and/or social withdrawal.

Mental health problems may be related to excessive stress due to a particular situation or series of events. As with cancer, diabetes and heart disease, mental illnesses are often physical as well as emotional and psychological. Mental illnesses may be caused by a reaction to environmental stresses, genetic factors, biochemical imbalances, or a combination of these. With proper care and treatment many individuals learn to cope or recover from a mental illness or emotional disorder.

WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

To learn more about symptoms that are specific to a particular mental illness, search under [Mental Health Information](#). The following are signs that your loved one may want to speak to a medical or mental health professional.



It is especially important to pay attention to sudden changes in thoughts and behaviors. Also keep in mind that the onset of several of the symptoms below, and not just any one change, indicates a problem that should be assessed. The symptoms below should not be due to recent substance use or another medical condition.

If you or someone you know is in crisis now, call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org). The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Mental Illness: Recognizing Warning Signs and How to Cope

IN ADULTS, YOUNG ADULTS AND ADOLESCENTS:

- Confused thinking
- Prolonged depression (sadness or irritability)
- Feelings of extreme highs and lows
- Excessive fears, worries and anxieties
- Social withdrawal
- Dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Strong feelings of anger
- Strange thoughts (delusions)
- Seeing or hearing things that aren't there (hallucinations)
- Growing inability to cope with daily problems and activities
- Suicidal thoughts
- Numerous unexplained physical ailments
- Substance use



In Older Children and Pre-Adolescents:

- Substance use
- Inability to cope with problems and daily activities
- Changes in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Excessive complaints of physical ailments
- Changes in ability to manage responsibilities (at home and/or at school)
- Defiance of authority, truancy, theft, and/or vandalism
- Intense fear
- Prolonged negative mood, often accompanied by poor appetite or thoughts of death
- Frequent outbursts of anger

In Younger Children:

- Changes in school performance
- Poor grades despite strong efforts
- Changes in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Excessive worry or anxiety (i.e. refusing to go to bed or school)
- Hyperactivity
- Persistent nightmares
- Persistent disobedience or aggression
- Frequent temper tantrums



Mental Illness: Recognizing Warning Signs and How to Cope

HOW TO COPE DAY-TO-DAY

Accept your feelings

Despite the different symptoms and types of mental illnesses, many families who have a loved one with mental illness, share similar experiences. You may find yourself denying the warning signs, worrying what other people will think because of the stigma, or wondering what caused your loved one to become ill. Accept that these feelings are normal and common among families going through similar situations. Find out all you can about your loved one's condition by reading and talking with mental health professionals. Share what you have learned with others.



Handling unusual behavior

The outward signs of a mental illness are often behavioral. A person may be extremely quiet or withdrawn. Conversely, they may burst into tears, have great anxiety or have outbursts of anger. Even after treatment has started, some individuals with a mental illness can exhibit anti-social behaviors. When in public, these behaviors can be disruptive and difficult to accept. The next time you and your family member visit your doctor or mental health professional, discuss these behaviors and develop a strategy for coping. The individual's behavior may be as dismaying to them as it is to you. Ask questions, listen with an open mind and be there to support them.

Establishing a support network

Whenever possible, seek support from friends and family members. If you feel you cannot discuss your situation with friends or other family members, find a self-help or support group. These groups provide an opportunity for you to talk to other people who are experiencing the same type of problems. They can listen and offer valuable advice.

Seeking counseling

Therapy can be beneficial for both the individual with mental illness and other family members. A mental health professional can suggest ways to cope and better understand your loved one's illness. When looking for a therapist, be patient and talk to a few professionals so you can choose the person that is right for you and your family. It may take time until you are comfortable, but in the long run you will be glad you sought help.

Taking time out

It is common for the person with the mental illness to become the focus of family life. When this happens, other members of the family may feel ignored or resentful. Some may find it difficult to pursue their own interests. If you are the caregiver, *you* need some time for yourself. Schedule time away *to prevent* becoming frustrated or angry. If you schedule time for yourself it will help you to keep things in perspective and you may have more patience and compassion for coping or helping your loved one. Being physically and emotionally healthy helps you to help others.

"Many families who have a loved one with mental illness share similar experiences"

It is important to remember that there is hope for recovery and that with treatment many people with mental illness return to a productive and fulfilling life.

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OTHER RESOURCES

Mental Illness in the Family: Part I Recognizing the Warning Signs & How to Cope is one in a series of pamphlets on helping family members with mental illness. Other Mental Health America titles include:

Mental Illness in the Family: Part II Guidelines for Seeking Care

Mental Illness in the Family: Part III Guidelines for Hospitalization

Mental Health America offers additional pamphlets on a variety of mental health topics. For more information or to order multiple copies of pamphlets, please contact Mental Health America

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Find a Local [MHA Affiliate](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

Phone 800-789-2647

[National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#)

Information Resources and Inquiries Branch

Phone 301-443-4513



Traveling... remember to put your request in 3-4 weeks in advance to give us enough time to find placement. Placement is not always guaranteed. Call **402.489.5339** for questions and to get started on your travel plans!!



Please remember to bring in your **insurance cards** this month for your AA to make a copy. Even if it hasn't changed in years or the last 3 months we still need it. We will need all insurance cards copied by the end of **January!** Thank you!

