

## Doctors write New Year's script for a healthy 2020

Doctors are urging Queenslanders to scrap New Year's resolutions and sign up for a proactive health plan instead.

Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia said most New Year's resolutions failed within the first month, either because the goal that was set was unachievable in the first place or the plan to accomplish it was unrealistic.

"We often see this in resolutions that involve weight loss," he said. "Someone pledges to lose 20 kilograms, but doesn't set a clear plan of the daily steps required to meet this goal. Or they get sick of trying because it takes too long.

"Rather than set yourself up to fail, try setting yourself up to succeed by taking proactive, preventative health steps."

Dr Dhupelia said people seeking a healthy 2020 should make a list of medical check-ups that will highlight any problems requiring treatment, as part of a plan of self-management and prevention.

"This often leads to advice and strategies from doctors and health practitioners on ways to live a healthier lifestyle," he said. "In the end, this can lead to weight loss, more physical activity and a better lifestyle because you are more in touch with your overall health."

### Doctor's prescription for a healthy year ahead:

- **See your GP for a check-up**

Ask for a long appointment and get a full check-up which will include your weight to your blood pressure, blood tests to detect any abnormalities such as diabetes, high cholesterol, renal disease, liver or blood disorders and thyroid function. This is your first step to provide a good picture of your overall health. Your GP may also be able to determine if you are at risk of developing diabetes, a chronic disease affecting more than 20,000 Queenslanders. Undiagnosed, it can lead to lifelong health issues.

- **Have an eye test**

More than one-third of our day is spent in front of electronic screens - more than we spend eating, commuting, working and exercising combined<sup>i</sup>. Vision loss reduce our independence and mobility and lead to a higher risk of falls and injuries. Have your vision checked by an optometrist and ask if you have any signs of glaucoma while you're there. Glaucoma is a condition that damages the optic nerve and can cause permanent vision loss, and may require an urgent referral to an Ophthalmologist.

- **Book a mole scan**

Queensland is the skin cancer capital of the world<sup>ii</sup> with a case of melanoma diagnosed almost every 30 minutes. Early detection is essential and can save lives. Regular monitoring is a good plan and recommended.

- **Preventative tests**

Women over 50 years should have a mammogram to check for breast cancer while those over 25 years should have a for cervical cancer test. Men over 50 years should have their prostate checked.

- **Exercise and alcohol**

Walk 30 minutes daily. Stick to the recommended guidelines of an average of no more than 10 standard drinks of alcohol per week, with zero alcohol whilst pregnant or breast feeding.

- **Check your vaccinations**

Check if vaccinations are all up to date. Depending on your age, you may be due for a pneumonia or shingles vaccination. And if travel is planned in 2020, get in early to see what you need. Well in advance of your trip

- **Quit smoking**

Smoking still remains the biggest cause of death in Australia. Set a realistic plan with your GP to quit during 2020. You can do it!

- **Book a dental check**

Book a dental check to take care of your oral health and for early detection of any potential problems. You need your teeth for the duration of your life.

**MEDIA CONTACT: Chiara Lesevre, AMA Queensland – 0419 735 641.**

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<sup>i</sup> <https://1v1d1e1miki1gcvx32p49h8fe-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/1366-Screen-Time-OPSM-FINAL-Report-31-03-2017.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.melanoma.org.au/understanding-melanoma/melanoma-facts-and-statistics/>