Healthy change
4 tips for the new-you revolution

Is this the year or the month—or even the day—you’ll take your first steps toward a healthier life? If so, then you’ve resolved to evolve!

These four strategies can help you turn your health resolutions into a health revolution:

1. Pursue one goal at a time. It’s tough to make several changes at once. Start with one goal, like eating healthy or getting more exercise.
2. Identify mini-goals. Make a list of small, simple steps you can take right away. For example, mini-goals might be:
   - Swapping out your sugary drinks for water, or
   - Taking a 10-minute walk, or even a stroll.
3. Add to the mix. As each new behavior becomes a habit, add a new mini-goal. It will keep you moving forward—and may prevent boredom.
4. Give yourself credit. Evolving toward better health can be challenging. Pat yourself on the back each time you meet a mini-goal. When you have setbacks, don’t give up. After all, every single tomorrow is another great day for change.

Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; American Psychological Association; Mental Health America
I s gloomy weather making you sick? As many as 500,000 Americans struggle each year with a wintertime mood disorder known appropriately as SAD.

SAD stands for seasonal affective disorder. It’s marked by depression in the winter that lifts in the spring and summer. Signs may include anxiety, mood changes, sleep problems, fatigue, overeating, sexual problems, and social withdrawal.

How light affects mood
Mental health experts say SAD appears to be linked to a chemical imbalance in the brain brought on by the reduction in sunlight during winter’s shorter days. When it’s dark, the body releases more of the sleep-related hormone melatonin, which also may be tied to depression.

SAD is more likely among women, and it often starts in people between 18 and 30 years old.

Coping with SAD
Medicine and counseling are sometimes prescribed for people with SAD; however, your doctor may recommend that you try light therapy first.

Daily exposure to very bright light helps to block the brain’s output of melatonin. It’s effective in 50 to 80 percent of SAD cases, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

People with SAD are exposed to light that’s up to 10 times the intensity of normal indoor lighting. Treatments often last 30 to 90 minutes a day throughout the winter.

People with less severe symptoms may find relief by simply increasing the brightness of the lights around them. Others may want to try spending more time outdoors in the winter.

If light therapy doesn’t help, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional about other options.

We care by being there RMHP’s Care Management

Health care can be a complex matter: surgeries, acute or chronic conditions, and preauthorizations are all topics from which questions can arise. Don’t be frustrated: Rocky Mountain Health Plans has a skilled Care Management team that is available to answer any questions you have regarding these and other matters.

The Care Management team is also available to help coordinate your care between your primary care provider and any specialist you may have to see. Summaries of recommendations, including medications prescribed, can greatly assist in this coordination.

RMHP’s Care Management makes it easy to communicate, providing access 24 hours a day, seven days a week, toll-free at 800-346-4643. Business hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. A message may be left after hours on a confidential voicemail for a return phone call the following day. Free language assistance is also available.

RMHP is a Medicare-approved Cost Plan. Enrollment in RMHP depends on contract renewal.
February is love-your-heart month

We’re surrounded by hearts in February. Along with the paper and chocolate versions, there are the beating hearts of more than 300 million Americans.

Unfortunately, we’re also surrounded by heart disease. It’s the leading cause of death for both men and women in the U.S., but it can be prevented and controlled.

Week 1: Scrutinize labels. Unhealthy fats and cholesterol can clog arteries. Salt can raise blood pressure. To avoid these risks for heart disease, read nutrition labels when you’re grocery shopping. Look for foods with unsaturated fats, omega-3 fatty acids, and low percentages of sodium and sugar.

Also, choose plenty of foods that come without nutrition labels: fresh fruits and vegetables. They are low in fat and sodium, and they contain fiber, which can help prevent high blood cholesterol.

Week 2: Get moving. Like all muscles, your heart needs exercise. This week—and every week—aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking.

Week 3: Know your numbers. If you don’t know your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers, make an appointment this week with your doctor to have them checked. Having high blood pressure or too much LDL cholesterol (the bad kind) in your blood can put you at risk for heart disease.

February is a good month to fall in love—with your heart. During American Heart Month, give this hardworking muscle some TLC for lifelong health.

Being overweight also makes heart disease more likely. You probably know if you’re carrying too many pounds, but if you aren’t sure, discuss it with your doctor.

Week 4: Vow to quit. Smoking harms the heart as well as the lungs. Smoking also hurts your family and friends, because exposure to second-hand smoke can trigger heart problems in them. Quitting is an act of love—not only for your heart but also for all the hearts that surround you.

Sources: American Heart Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

The Annual Open Enrollment Period for Medicare ended in December. To our new Members, welcome to the RMHP family!

Have you heard?

Beginning January 1, RMHP offers our Medicare Members a hearing discount program from Rocky Mountain Hearing Benefits that provides savings of more than 50 percent on brands you trust, such as Phonak, Oticon, and ReSound. This program also includes a 60-day trial period and one- to three-year warranty, depending on technology, as well as a one-year supply of free batteries (40 cells per hearing aid purchased).

There’s no charge for an annual hearing consultation, and a routine hearing exam is the same cost as your PCP copay. You can also receive one year of free office visits (up to three) for new hearing aid equipment.

To start saving today, schedule your appointment with a licensed audiologist by calling Rocky Mountain Hearing Benefits at 844-428-6282 or visit rockymountainhearingbenefits.com.

Sources: American Heart Association; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
Since good health is one of your primary goals, it’s a good idea to find a primary care doctor.

Did you know that research has shown that people who have primary care doctors enjoy better health? Not only that, they spend less on their health care.

A primary care doctor acts as your partner in pursuing that healthy life. These doctors are specially trained to oversee your physical, mental, and emotional health. They can treat nearly every illness but also focus on prevention. Your primary care doctor is the one who will make sure you’re getting all the screening tests and vaccinations you need.

Best of all, your primary care doctor knows you. It’s part of the job of primary care doctors to form strong relationships with their patients. The doctor asks about your work and life situations. He or she knows your family history and may even treat other members of your family.

All that knowledge puts the primary care doctor in a good position to help you make the best decisions about your health care—and leads to your better health.

Our new online provider directory

With one of the largest provider networks in Colorado, we had to make it easy for you to find the doctors, hospitals, and other providers near you. Rocky Mountain Health Plans is excited to launch our new provider directory on rmhp.org. The new directory is simple and easy to use and includes smart search and easy filtering features to help you find the providers you need, when you need them.

In the mail

All Members should have received their new 2015 Member ID cards. Be sure to present your new ID card at your next appointment or at the pharmacy to ensure accuracy in all processing. Haven’t received your card yet? Call us and we’ll make sure you get what you need.