

## **Just for the Health of It**

We all want to live a healthy life. Lately, we are being asked to work with our health care providers on many tough health care issues. Every day brings fresh news about what we can do to stay well, or to improve a chronic condition. And it almost always involves our taking action, changing behaviors, forming new habits. We'll be busy, won't we!

An important first step for you might be to get organized about your health. Make a health care plan and set goals with your health care provider. And then, plan healthy rewards. Have you thought about what your top "3 healthy pleasures" might be?

Challenge yourself to come up with actions that will add to your well-being with every "dose". A leaf collecting trip around the yard will give you exercise, and feed your need for beauty.

While we're thinking about all this, it's important to remember to be kind to ourselves. Habits take a long time to develop, and making changes takes more than just making a decision to change. It takes practice. It's often helpful to look for other people who are making similar efforts. Sharing the journey can be reassuring and more effective than going it alone.

Being healthy is more than just not being sick. We need to work with our bodies to resist diseases and recover from injuries more easily. Here are some tips for improving our hardiness:

- Eat well. Less processed foods, more whole foods like vegetables, fruits and grains.
- Exercise often. Even a five minute walk is a step in the right direction.
- Keep a positive attitude. How you "talk" to yourself is very important.
- Schedule time for something you enjoy.
- Nurture a friendship with a person you trust.
- Keep current with shots and health screenings.

And finally, remember that attitude affects things on the most basic level. It turns out that if you expect to live a long and healthy life, you'll have a better chance of doing so!