

HAPPY NEW YEAR | HAPPY NEW YOU

Don't Forget; It's National Blood Donor Month

Winter is one of the most challenging times of the year to collect enough blood products and donations to meet patient needs. That's why National Blood Donor Month is celebrated every January.

This year's national health observance comes as the nation's blood supply has dropped to concerning levels and could delay essential blood and platelet transfusions. Blood donors of all blood types—particularly type O blood—are needed to give blood or platelets to help meet daily hospital demands.



It's vital to have plenty of blood banked to meet the demand. Blood is needed for surgeries, traumatic injuries, cancer treatment and chronic illnesses. On a daily basis, roughly 29,000 units of red blood cells, 5,000 units of platelets and 6,500 units of plasma are required. Blood and platelets cannot be made synthetically, making voluntary donations necessary.

The Benefits of Being a Blood Donor

This month, resolve to be a blood donor and consider the following health benefits of donating blood regularly:

- Health problems detection—Donated blood is tested to determine if any irregularities were found. You're also required to undergo a quick health screening before giving blood.
- Reduced heart disease risks—Donating can help eliminate any excess buildup of iron in the blood, lowering your risk for a heart attack.
- Caloric burn—The blood donation process can burn up to 650 calories.
- Mental health boost—Not only are there physical benefits of donating but volunteering to help others can release dopamine and help combat depression and increase your confidence.

Before you roll up your sleeve and commit to being a regular blood donor, check if you meet the American Red Cross' requirements to donate blood safely. Additionally, each state has its own requirements for the minimum age to donate. Talk to your doctor if you have questions.

Protect Your Skin During the Winter

The changing of the seasons can impact your skin. Specifically, winter weather brings colder and less humid conditions, leaving your skin prone to issues such as dryness. Dry skin symptoms can include itchiness, flakiness, redness, cracking and bleeding. Dry skin may not seem like the most concerning health problem, but not treating dry skin can result in itchiness, cracked or painful skin, eczema and dermatitis.

The following tips can help care for your skin during the winter months:

- Adjust your shower routine. The length and temperature of your showers can make a big difference in the dryness of your skin. Long and hot showers during the cold months can strip the natural oils in your skin, drying it out. Try short and cold showers instead.
- Use moisturizer. Applying moisturizer, especially after showering, can help keep your skin hydrated and prevent dryness.
- Avoid products with fragrances. Often, the better a product smells, the more irritating it can be for your skin. As such, consider choosing fragrance-free skin products and laundry detergents.
- Use a humidifier. Humidifiers can return moisture to the air in your home, helping prevent and relieve environmental dryness.
- Stay hydrated. Make sure you're drinking enough water throughout the day to improve the appearance of your skin and make it less susceptible to drying out.

How to Make—and Keep—Your New Year's Resolution

As a new year begins, you may be reflecting on the past year. This introspection is a significant first step toward selecting a New Year's resolution to help you grow as a person. Many New Year's resolutions fail by mid-February due to a lack of self discipline, with only 1 in 5 people sticking with them all year. That's why setting yourself up for success when choosing a resolution is important.

The U.S. News and World Report estimates that 80% of people ditch their New Year's resolutions by February.

Regardless of what you choose as your resolution, make sure it's a "SMART" goal—one that

is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely—to increase the odds that you will stick to it. Here's what that means:

- **Specific**—A specific goal is simple and strategic. It's something you can easily conceptualize. For example, instead of saying you'll eat healthier, be specific about how you can actually do that (e.g., cook breakfast daily or eat fish twice a week)
- **Measurable**—A measurable goal is quantified. You'll be able to see if you're making progress as you go. For example, if you want to save \$500 for your emergency fund or save for a down payment on a home, you'll be able to track your savings and prove you're making progress along the way
- **Achievable**—An achievable goal is realistic and attainable. If you've never worked out before, a daily workout goal won't likely be feasible or sustainable in the long run. Alternatively, if you're already taking walks, start with increasing their duration or frequency
- **Relevant**—A relevant goal needs to make sense or be appropriate for you. You want your goal to matter, so reflect on the past year about what's working in your life and what's not. Timing is equally important, so ensure this is the right time for you to tackle the resolution
- **Timely**—A timely goal is accomplished within a specific time frame. You can adjust this period as needed and make new goals or deadlines after achieving the first one

Remember that New Year's resolutions don't have to be health-related, so find what matters to you to help you live a better life in 2025.

Dry January: Are You In?

As the holidays end, some people give up alcohol in what's known as "Dry January." The monthlong wellness challenge can serve as a reset after overindulging during the holidays or as an opportunity to reassess one's relationship with alcohol. While a month of sobriety can seem overwhelming to some, it can provide multiple advantages.

Alcohol can also contribute to various health conditions, such as high blood pressure, kidney or liver problems, heart disease and certain cancers. Furthermore, a study published in JAMA Network Open reported that alcohol consumption is a leading preventable cause of death in the United States. As such, a period of sobriety can positively affect one's well-being and overall health.

One out of 4 Americans completed Dry January in 2024, according to a CivicScience tracking poll.

People may experience health-related benefits when taking a brief break from moderate to heavy alcohol consumption. Dry January participants often report sleeping better, having higher energy levels, being in a better mood and feeling more focused. Some also experience weight loss and clearer skin.

Tips for a Successful Dry January

The goal of Dry January is to consciously drink less, even if you don't give up alcohol fully. Consider these tips for a successful month without alcohol:

- Think about potential challenges during the month, such as social events or stress triggers, so you can plan how you'll handle these situations without alcohol.
- Stay busy and engage in activities that don't involve drinking. You may discover a new hobby, exercise more or spend quality time with others in alcohol-free settings.
- Stock up on nonalcoholic beverages that you enjoy. Many great options include sparkling water, functional sodas, mocktails, and nonalcoholic beers and wines.
- Let friends and family know about your goal so they can offer support or even join you.
- Pay attention to the positive health and mental changes you notice, as they can reinforce your commitment

Participating in Dry January can be a great way to start the new year on a healthy note. If you have any questions or concerns about your alcohol consumption, talk to a health care professional.



January Jokes

What New Year's resolution should a basketball player never make?
To travel more.

What's a spider's New Year's resolution?
To spend less time on the web.

What was Dr. Frankenstein's New Year's resolution?
To make new friends.



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