

Freedom *focus*

a  FreedomCare Publication

INSIDE



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Will You Have A Healthy 2019?

Did you make any resolutions for the new year? Whether you are goal-focused or not, there's something to be said about the fresh start that the new year brings. For some of us, our new year resolution hasn't quite stuck for these past few weeks, but there is good news — you can start a healthy habit at any time of the year!

Being a caregiver can be tiring for our bodies and minds. Sometimes you just can't shake that cough or you feel exhausted even before lunchtime rolls around. You aren't alone; caregiving can cause extra stress that zaps your energy and immune system more quickly than your non-caregiving peers.

This year, we encourage you to make 2019 the year of healthy choices! Skip the fad diet and don't exercise into exhaustion. Instead, focus on small changes to keep yourself healthy and happy. If you're wondering where to start, don't worry. We'll give you ideas throughout this issue of FreedomFocus. **Let's get started together!**

Caregiver Goals

Having trouble setting a healthy goal for 2019? Here are some realistic goals that are worth trying:



Plan at least 4 hours of respite care each month.



Commit to having coffee or tea with a friend at least once every month.



Walk around the block twice each day.



Start a gratitude journal.



Take a photo of you and your loved one each week to put into a memory book at the end of this year.



Try one new recipe each month.



Read a book or magazine before bed instead of scrolling through your phone.



Buy a new water bottle to remind yourself to drink more water.



Talk to FreedomCare to see what resources are available for you and your loved one.



Ask for help at least once a month.

Healthy Year, Healthy You!

A healthy year, and a healthy you, starts with food. If you feel like you don't have time to cook a meal packed with healthy foods, you aren't alone. At the end of a long day, most of us would rather sit down and relax than spend more time on our feet cooking in the kitchen after we get home. Instead, try these easy steps to incorporate healthy habits into your day.

1. Start with Water

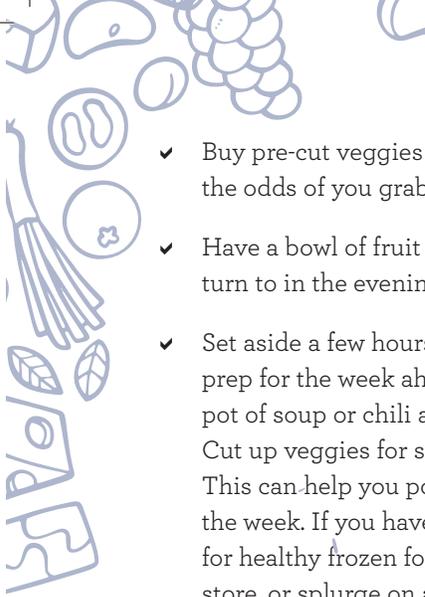
Hydration is important for you and your loved one, so be sure you are both drinking plenty of water throughout the day.

- ✓ Keep the water close! Keep a water bottle handy that you can refill.
- ✓ Add fruit to your water! If you're not a big fan of water by itself, add pieces of cut up fruit like lemon, pineapple, or strawberries.
- ✓ Swap out soda with seltzer. If you enjoy a bubbly beverage like soda but want to cut back on sugar, try flavored seltzer water instead. You'll enjoy a flavorful drink without all the sugar and caffeine.

2. Choose Convenient Healthy Foods

Instead of stopping by a restaurant to grab a burger on your way home, try these tips to keep you eating healthy at each snack and meal:

- ✓ Stock your fridge (and bag and car) with convenient healthy foods. Tuck applesauce cups and plastic bags of trail mix or mixed nuts into your bag to curb hunger on your car or train ride home.

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- ✓ Buy pre-cut veggies from the store to increase the odds of you grabbing them to munch on.
 - ✓ Have a bowl of fruit on your kitchen table to turn to in the evening.
 - ✓ Set aside a few hours one day a week to food prep for the week ahead. You can make a large pot of soup or chili and enjoy it all week long! Cut up veggies for salads to enjoy each day. This can help you portion out each meal for the week. If you have an extra busy week, look for healthy frozen food options in the grocery store, or splurge on a home-delivered meal service like Blue Apron.

3. Involve Your Loved One

Choosing healthy foods and water is not just good for you – it’s good for your loved one too. Make it a team effort by grocery shopping and cooking together. Not only will your loved one love getting out of the house, but you’ll also tackle both of your lists at once. Even better, cooking is a sensory experience that you both can enjoy.

4. Take Time to Breathe

All the water and vegetables in New York may not cure caregiver exhaustion or compassion fatigue. While eating well can lead to better sleep, you can also focus on other coping skills to calm your worrying mind. Here are a few options to consider:

- ✓ Take a yoga or tai chi class at a local gym or library.
- ✓ Download a guided meditation app like Headspace or Calm and commit to meditating for 5 minutes each day.
- ✓ Walk around the block, alone, without listening to anything on your phone.
- ✓ Start and end each day with 3 deep breaths and naming 3 things you are thankful for.
- ✓ Write your thoughts down in a journal during lunch each day.
- ✓ When you feel overwhelmed or worried, count to 20 then take 5 deep breaths.
- ✓ Set up a visit with your doctor to talk about other ways to manage stress.

You can develop healthy habits at any time to lower stress, minimize anxiety, and improve sleep. It just takes a little practice and a lot of support from your friends and family.

Signs of Depression

Winter can be a hard time for a lot of us. The days are short and sunlight gives way to cloudy skies most days. The snow, ice, and cold temperatures leave us feeling like we want to crawl into bed until springtime. But it’s not just the weather that can make winter seem difficult: there’s also the holiday season letdown. The twinkle lights are put away and nothing seems quite as magical anymore.

So how can you determine if you are feeling winter blues or if you are living with depression? Or, how can you tell if your loved one is depressed? While depression can look different in each unique person, here are a few signs to look out for:

- 1 Sleep disruptions (*sleeping too much or not enough*)
- 2 Feeling uninterested in hobbies or events you otherwise enjoy
- 3 Mood disturbances (*feeling cranky or becoming aggressive for no reason*)
- 4 Sobbing or having deep feelings of sadness
- 5 Feeling very lonely
- 6 Having little to no energy to do anything
- 7 Scattered thoughts or shorter than usual attention span
- 8 Poor appetite
- 9 Wanting to harm yourself



If you or your loved one are feeling hopeless, sad, lonely, or exhausted, talk to your doctor about it. Your doctor can help you get the proper care that is right for you. This may include medicines or counseling that could make you feel better, slowly but surely. Don’t suffer in silence, and don’t push your worries to the side. You (and your loved one) are worth it to get the help you deserve.

Caregiver Bonus Program

Refer a friend to FreedomCare & get a
\$100 BONUS

once the patient starts receiving care!

The patient must be someone who has not been enrolled with FreedomCare before.

Are You A FreedomCare Caregiver?
Get \$100 for every new patient you send our way!

TO REFER A PATIENT, use this link: <https://freedomcareny.secure.force.com/enrollnow/CareReferral>. If the patient starts care, you will receive \$100 from FreedomCare within 30 days of the patient starting care!

Caregiver Question & Answer



Question: My mother was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's; where can I learn more about the disease to best support her?

Answer: To learn more about the different stages of Alzheimer's and caregiving, memory loss and confusion and more, click here: <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors>.

To watch short videos on how to best care for someone experiencing late-day confusion (sundowning), sleep disturbances, anxiety, and more click here: <https://www.uclahealth.org/dementia/caregiver-education-videos>

For free online Alzheimer's education programs, click here: https://alz.org/events/event_search?etid=6&cid=121&ga=2.264977547.50198103.1549298481-1081819120.1546451224

Question: My loved one was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's. This has been very challenging for me. Where can I go for professional support?

Answer: To find an in-person Alzheimer's caregiver support group near you, click here: https://www.alz.org/events/event_search?cid=121&etid=2

To speak with a live person and for help, call this 24/7 hotline: 1-800-272-3900.

