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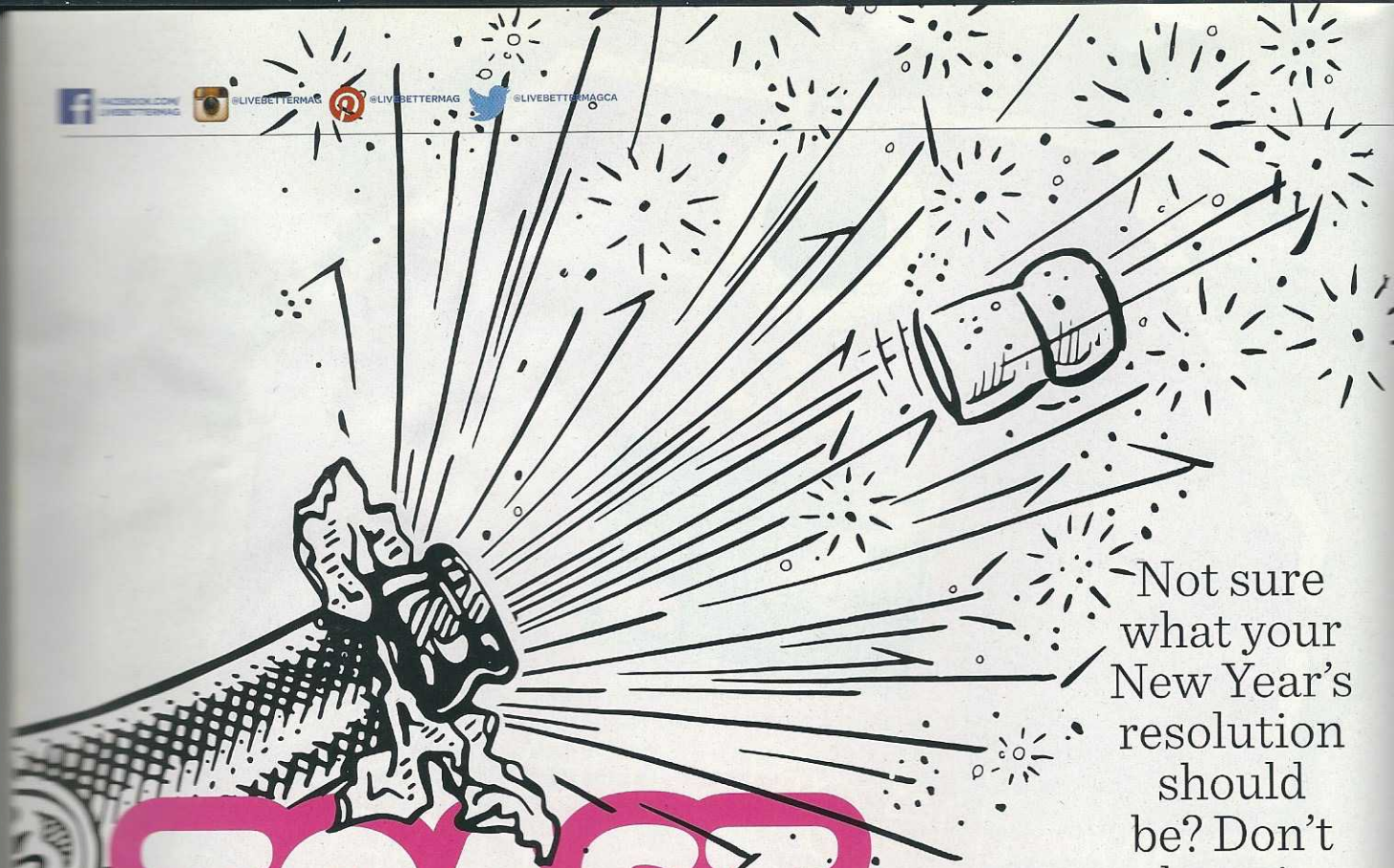
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TOAST TO YOUR HEALTH!

Not sure what your New Year's resolution should be? Don't despair. Start 2016 with one of these ideas from ten Canadian healthcare experts.

By Lisa Mesbur



YOU SHOULD:

Move for 30 minutes a day

Be physically active at least 30 minutes every day. This physical activity can include cycling, sports or walking your dog if you have one. Research shows that even if you break up the 30-minute goal into three 10-minute segments, you will still see the same health benefits. Studies also show that adding 30 minutes per day of easy-to-moderate exercise can reduce your risk of heart disease, slow progression of dementia and Alzheimer's, reduce pain from knee arthritis, reduce anxiety and depression, slow the progression of diabetes, and much more. So if you're motivated to live better this year, park your car a little further away from the store, go for a walk with a friend or make a habit of strolling your neighborhood after dinner. Every little bit helps. —**Richard Gregory, osteopathic manual practitioner and certified athletic therapist, Ottawa**

YOU SHOULD:

Stop smoking!

Thankfully, the number of people who smoke seems to be decreasing, but if you still do, quitting is the single best thing you can do for your health. Smoking increases the risk for so many diseases, including macular degeneration and glaucoma, two of the leading causes of blindness in North America. Without the toxins from smoking in your bloodstream, your body is able to function better, deliver more oxygen and remove other toxins.

—**Dr. Kristin Heeny, optometrist, Toronto**

YOU SHOULD:

Get your teeth checked

Routine visits help detect potential problems early. They also lower dental costs in the long run and help avoid unpleasant emergencies. Another important reason? Early detection of gum disease, which can remain undiagnosed unless detected by a dental exam. You can even arrange for an assessment with a general dentist and get a preventative cleaning to better understand what's going on in your mouth. —*Dr. Suzanne Baptista, general and cosmetic dentist, Toronto*

YOU SHOULD:

Give yourself a scrub

Exfoliating is often forgotten, but it's an essential step in self care. It clears away dead skin cells so oil trapped underneath can come up and hydrate instead of clogging your pores. It also helps products work to their full potential by letting them get beyond layers of dead cells. Use a fine scrub daily, and grainier scrubs one to two times a week. —*Gloria Papasodaro, esthetic trainer at The Ten Spot, Toronto*

YOU SHOULD:

Get enough sleep

If there's one thing that's going to give you results across the board, it's catching enough zzz's. It makes a huge difference to mood and affects decision-making, productivity and metabolism. Looking to shed some unwanted weight? Get to bed early. When you don't get enough sleep, your body produces a compound called ghrelin, which stimulates appetite and makes you more likely to crave high-carbohydrate, high-sugar, high-fat foods. —*Dr. Susan Biali, wellness expert and life coach, Vancouver*

YOU SHOULD:

Top up your vitamin D level

My top tip for 2016 is to know your vitamin D level. In the stark Canadian winter, it's crucial that we maintain healthy vitamin D levels, and the go-to daily recommendation of 2000 IUs is often not enough. To correct this, have your individual level measured and supplement it with a liquid drop, as determined by your healthcare professional. Vitamin D is important for more than bone health—it impacts blood sugar, immune

function, heart health, hormone balance and even mood. —*Tara Maltman-Just, founder and executive clinician, Vitality Integrative Medicine, Winnipeg*

YOU SHOULD:

Protect your skin

Always use sun protection—it's the single most important way we can reduce the risk of skin cancer. Choose a sunscreen that is "broad spectrum" with an SPF of 30 or higher and reapply every two hours, or when you get wet or sweat. Have a dermatologist examine your skin regularly, especially if you have a skin lesion that isn't healing or a mole that changes. —*Dr. Marlene Dytoc, dermatologist and director of MD Skin Health, Edmonton*

YOU SHOULD:

Sit up straight

Good posture not only helps you look better, it helps you feel better, too. It improves circulation and breathing, puts less strain and pressure on your muscles and joints, and leads to fewer aches and pains. Try to check how you're sitting or standing and if it should be adjusted; you should also vary your posture every 15 minutes when sitting. —*Dr. Marilyn Field, chiropractor, Bridgewater, NS.*

YOU SHOULD:

Stop and check in

Acknowledging how you're feeling is one of the most powerful tools we all have in our "emotional toolboxes." It takes just ten seconds and can be done multiple times a day. It opens up the possibility of supporting yourself from the inside out. —*Elisse Peltz, therapist and yoga teacher, Toronto*

START TODAY

Stop waiting to discover the perfect miracle workout or find the ideal day, week or moment to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Instead of planning for the new year, do something—anything—today. Think of your health like drops in a bucket. You accumulate drops every time you make a positive decision, such as drinking a glass of water or eating a vegetable. If you are conscious of these actions whenever possible, eventually your bucket will be full. And remember: Health doesn't have to be complicated or expensive.

—*Kathleen Trotter, personal trainer and fitness writer, Toronto*