

PSA In Good Health: Changing Bad Habits into Good Habits

Old habits don't develop overnight and often die hard! Changing your habits is a process that involves several stages. Sometimes it takes a while before changes become new habits. And, you may face many roadblocks along the way.

Adopting new, healthier habits may protect you from serious health problems like heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and cancer. New habits, like healthy eating, smoking cessation, and regular physical activity, may also help you manage your weight and have more energy. The longer you stick with these changes, the more likely they are to become part of your daily routine.

There are four stages of change. What stage are you in?

Contemplation—"I'm thinking about it"

In this first stage, you are thinking about change and becoming motivated to get started. You might be in this stage if you:

- Have been considering change but are not quite ready to start
- Believe that your health, energy level, or overall well-being will improve if you develop new habits
- Are not sure how you will overcome the roadblocks that may keep you from starting to change

Preparation—"I have made up my mind to take action"

In this next stage, you are making plans and thinking of specific ideas that will work for you. You might be in this stage if you:

- Have decided that you are going to change and are ready to take action
- Have set some specific goals that you would like to meet
- Are getting ready to put your plan into action

Action—"I have to make changes"

In this third stage, you are acting on your plan and making the changes you set out to achieve. You might be in this stage if you:

- Have been making dietary, physical activity, and other behavior changes in the last six months or so
- Are adjusting to how it feels to eat healthier, be more active, and make other changes such as getting more sleep or reducing screen time
- Have been trying to overcome things that sometimes block your success

Maintenance—"I have a new routine"

In this final stage, you have become used to your changes and have kept them up for more than six months. You might be in this stage if:

- Your changes have become a normal part of your routine
- You have found creative ways to stick with your routine
- You have had slip-ups and setbacks but have been able to get past them and make progress

Are you thinking of making a change?

Making the leap from thinking about change to taking action can be hard and may take time. Asking yourself about the pros (benefits) and cons (things that get in the way) of changing your habits may be helpful. How would life be better if you made some changes?

Did you know?

There is an abundance of resources to help you make the changes you desire. Your health plan offers some of the best. Call the Customer Service Department of your health plan and request to be connected with a Disease Manager or Coach. All services are free! They will help you to develop an action plan and help you to implement it! Why not make the call today? Your health and happiness may likely depend on it.