

## MEDIA RELEASE

18 December 2015

### VicHealth's top 10 tips to kick start a healthy 2016

VicHealth has compiled a list of practical health tips to support Victorians wanting to improve their health and wellbeing in 2016.

VicHealth's public health expert Dr Bruce Bolam said while people often struggled to keep New Year's resolutions, there are easier ways to make change and get healthy for 2016.

"People often put a lot of pressure on themselves to stick to New Year's resolutions which at times can be unrealistic or unattainable," Dr Bolam said.

"Ensuring a happy and healthy 2016 for you and your family doesn't have to be a daunting challenge. Small changes in diet and lifestyle can lead to big changes in the short and long term."

VicHealth has listed below ten achievable tips to start 2016 the healthy way:

#### Healthy tips for 2016

##### 1. Cut back on sugar – you're sweet enough

Try swapping sugary drinks for water. Sugar sweetened beverages are the largest source of sugars in the Australian diet, and they can lead to weight gain and tooth decay – a person who has one 600ml sugary drink each day will consume 23kg of sugar by the end of a year. If you need a little inspiration to get you going, try swapping to water for 30 days by signing up to VicHealth's H30 Challenge where you'll be supported with emails, SMS notifications and prize incentives. For information visit [www.h30challenge.com.au](http://www.h30challenge.com.au).

##### 2. Get moving

If heading to the gym isn't your thing then there's still plenty of ways to get active. If you've got a furry friend head to the dog park, go for a stroll along the beach, or do a little gardening. Simply walking 10,000 steps a day is an achievable goal for most people, and has many long term health benefits.

##### 3. Sink less drink

It's easy to indulge a little over the Christmas and New Year period. In 2016 try and reduce your alcohol consumption. This doesn't have to mean entirely cutting out the booze, it's all about moderation – and about the message we send our kids at Christmas. Try drinking water in between drinks and slowing your drinking down by eating healthy food when drinking alcohol. Remember, alcohol contains a lot of empty

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kilojoules. Check out what kind of drinker you are by taking VicHealth's drinking profile quiz at [www.yourdrinkingprofile.com.au](http://www.yourdrinkingprofile.com.au)

#### **4. Take the stairs**

A five-minute walk in the fresh air with a healthy dose of sunshine, using a standing desk or having a walking meeting with a colleague can give you the mental and physical refresh that you need. You'll come back feeling productive, refreshed and energised and reduce your risk of Type 2 diabetes.

#### **5. *Don't* pass the salt**

Salt increases the risk of high blood pressure and the risk of cardiovascular diseases including heart attack, stroke and blood vessel disease. To cut back your salt intake try eating more fresh fruit and vegetables and use herbs, garlic and pepper to give your food a flavour hit.

#### **6. Stress less**

Given we spend so much of our lives at work, it's easy to get caught up in it all and become burnt out. If you're feeling stressed at work speak to your boss about how to manage the pressure. You could also request casual Friday or bring your dog to work Friday around the office to boost the mental wellbeing of all staff.

#### **7. Walk your kids to school**

If you've got kids, why not kick off Term 1 by getting into a healthy routine of walking to school. Walking to school helps kids keep active and builds their confidence. If walking the whole way to school isn't possible try parking the car nearby and walking part of the way – every step counts!

#### **8. Look out for each other**

Keep an eye on your friends and loved ones and offer support where it is needed. Social connection is important for strong mental wellbeing. If you're feeling a little isolated, why not volunteer to help a charity– you'll meet new people, and helping someone else can be one of the best ways to help yourself.

#### **9. Wave goodbye to tobacco**

Research shows smokers who quit at age 50 halve their risk of death caused by smoking, while quitting by age 30 avoids almost all of the excess risk associated with smoking. There's plenty of support to help you kick your smoking habit, for good! Visit [www.quit.org.au](http://www.quit.org.au) for support.

#### **10. Have an 'appy' new year!**

Why should you do all the work? Let technology help you out! We've even reviewed some of the best healthy living apps so you can see the top rated health apps and what will work best for you. Check out VicHealth's Healthy Living Apps Guide at <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/apps>

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