

Here's to You!

Tips for your good health provided by your district

January 2022

2022 goals: Be happier and healthier



It turned out that 2021 was not the year we reclaimed normalcy from the pandemic disruptions. The only certain thing, it seems, is the uncertainty of the current times.

A positive outcome, however, is that we have a better understanding of our own rights and responsibilities in how we feel. While we may not be able to change circumstances, we have control over our attitudes about the circumstances – and our actions based on those attitudes. At the risk of overgeneralizing, it is helpful to understand that the way we feel, our mood, affects our health and vice versa.

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It turns out that most people can increase their happiness. Research suggests that, on average, 50% of people's general level of happiness is determined by genetics. However, 40% is under people's control, and the remaining 10% depends on the circumstances.

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—Harvard Medical School

According to Harvard health experts,

people who self-describe as happy have fewer health issues, lower rates of depression and longer lives. And, they say, we can learn to be happier.

There may be limits to how happy we can train ourselves to be. Researchers believe we have genetic levels of happiness. But, they believe, we can make changes to increase happiness up to a point. Here are their top tips for being your most happy self:

- Smile: Facial expressions affect our moods.
- Connect with family and friends.
- Volunteer, especially if you are over 70.
- Be kind. Pick a day and plan ahead to treat others with kindness.
- Pick up old hobbies and pastimes from youth.
- Spend money on time-saving services, such as housecleaning.

- Buy experiences rather than things.
- Build a network of other happy people.
- Spend more time in green spaces.
- Vary your routines. Small changes to daily habits, such as new workouts, a new route to the store or a new podcast, can be stimulating.
- Practice gratitude. Reflect on and write down things you are grateful for.
- Reduce your options when making decisions. Fewer choices, or a limit on the amount of time for decision-making can reduce regret.

<https://bit.ly/3llwajR>

Here's to You! is published for school district staff members in the interest of your good health. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Here's to You! is written and published by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

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Ready to travel again?



If your wanderlust was put on hold, and you are thinking about getaway plans for travel in the new year, you need the latest information on how, where and when to travel.

COVID-19 travel restrictions have been continually changing, which may be the new normal for the foreseeable future.

The best strategy is to do your research, plan ahead, and build in flexibility. And, get an app or two to help you track the requirements.

Here are a few, recommended by SmarterTravel.com:

- **Tripit:** free for basic plan. Tripit Pro is \$49 per year and offers expanded tools. This app is an all-in-one organizer. It keeps your mobile itinerary, important travel documents and the latest COVID travel guidance, including COVID information about your destination, in one place.
- **Omio:** Tracks COVID news for your trip, including restrictions, partial openings and fully opened locales. It is a helpful planning tool and offers information about

cancellation policies for your reservations.

- **Airsiders Compass:** a tool to learn about safety measures and restrictions for airports and airlines. Information is updated daily, and tips for staying safe are included.
- **Check&Fly:** Created by the Airports Council International and only available for IOS systems for Apple devices, this app compiles health and safety information from airports to help you stay informed before arriving at the airport. Airports also use it to communicate directly with passengers to inform them of last-minute changes.
- **App in the Air:** Available on IOS or Android systems, this app is billed as an all-in-one tool. Travelers can check health and safety measures for their flights, get notifications about flight changes and learn about pandemic regulations at travel destinations.

www.smartertravel.com/apps-for-covid-travel

Find credible COVID-19 guidance

Vaccines and boosters are a hot-button issue in some communities. There is a lot of information that may be adding to the confusion and fueling differences of opinion.

To ensure that state and employer restrictions don't have an adverse impact on your activities, get reliable facts and verify credibility by checking reputable sites.

These sites were top search engine results in a Google search of vaccine facts and reliable COVID information. Of note, top hospitals around the country all have similar pages, and most people consider doctors a credible source of information.

Global Citizen: Nine Reliable Resources for Information about Coronavirus

<https://bit.ly/3Dp12w4>

CDC: Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines

<https://bit.ly/31xqr9Y>

Mayo Clinic: Get the Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines

<https://mayoclinic.org/3dnKD0m>

American Hospital Association: COVID19-Vaccine Communication Resources

www.aha.org/vaccineconfidence

Ad Council: COVID Collaborative

<https://getvaccineanswers.org>