



# Prevention Action Steps for Individuals

## Prevention for the Health of North Carolina

[http://www.nciom.org/projects/prevention/prevention\\_report.shtml](http://www.nciom.org/projects/prevention/prevention_report.shtml)

Healthy individuals are more likely to lead longer, more productive, and healthier lives. The choices you make today will affect your health tomorrow. The 10 Prevention Action Steps below will help you make your lifestyle a healthier one.

### ✓ **Be tobacco-free.**

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in North Carolina. Other tobacco products like chewing tobacco and snuff are also dangerous to your health. If you don't smoke or use other tobacco products, don't start. If you use tobacco and want to quit, talk with your health care provider and contact the NC Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).



### ✓ **Eat smart.**

Good nutrition is essential to good health. A good diet can protect you from heart disease, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes. You can improve your diet. Eat more fruits and vegetables. Cook at home instead of eating out. Drink water in place of soda and sweet tea. Talk with a health care provider or nutritionist for more help. Visit <http://www.myeatssmartmovemore.com> for more ideas.

### ✓ **Move more.**

Physical activity is important to your health. Adults need to be active 30 minutes every day on most days, or for at least 150 minutes a week. Go for a walk, play a game of soccer with your family, or plant a garden. These activities should get your heart pumping and make you breathe faster. Add in activities like yoga that strengthen your muscles at least two times each week. Children need 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day of the week. You can be active with your children, and that will be good for all of you. Visit <http://www.myeatssmartmovemore.com> for more ideas.



### ✓ **Practice safe sex.**

North Carolina's rates of unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and HIV are among the highest in the nation. Use protection such as condoms if you're sexually active. You should also know your HIV and STD status. Your doctor or local health department can test you for HIV and STDs and talk to you about how to avoid pregnancy. The only way to avoid STDs or unintended pregnancies is to not have sex. If you are a parent, talk to your kids about the risks that come from being sexually active. If your child is sexually active, teach him/her about protection.

### ✓ **Be drug-free, and free from dependence on alcohol.**

Alcohol and drug abuse can ruin your life. Even prescription drugs can be a problem if they are not used correctly. Drink in moderation if you drink, and never drink and drive. Talk to your doctor, faith leader, a counselor, or a trusted friend if you think you have a problem with drugs or alcohol. Talk to your kids about the importance of not using drugs or alcohol. If you need help with drugs or alcohol, call North Carolina's CARE-LINE Information and Referral Service at 1-800-662-7030. Call 911 if you suspect an overdose.

✓ **Take care of your mental health.**

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Mental health problems can interfere with your daily routine at home, work, or school. If you feel like you have depression or anxiety, talk with your doctor or call North Carolina's CARE-LINE Information and Referral Service at 1-800-662-7030.

✓ **Use common sense to avoid injuries, and seek help if there is violence within your home.**

Many injuries can be prevented. Remember to follow traffic safety laws, drive the speed limit, and never drink and drive. If you need help because you or someone you know is being abused, call North Carolina's CARE-LINE Information and Referral Service at 1-800-662-7030.

✓ **Get recommended immunizations.**

Immunizations and vaccines are important for kids and adults. Ask your doctor about the shots you need. Also, check with your child's pediatrician to make sure he/she is up-to-date with all recommended vaccines.



✓ **Finish high school.**

Increase your chances for a healthier life by graduating from high school. Your options in life will increase even more if you go to technical/vocational school or college.

**STATE RESOURCES**

**General**

- NC Prevention Partners, NC Good Health Directory. <http://www.ncpreventionpartners.org/dnn/WhatWeDo/Resources/NCGoodHealthDirectory/SearchResources/tabid/168/Default.aspx>
- Local Health Departments. <http://www.ncalhd.org/county.htm>

**Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Family Violence**

- NC Care-Line. 1-800-662-7030
- NC Care Link. <https://www.nccarelink.gov>

**Tobacco**

- NC Quitline. 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). <http://www.quitlinenc.org>

**Nutrition and Physical Activity**

- Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina. <http://www.myeatSMARTmoveMORE.com>

**Poison/Emergency**

- Carolinas Poison Center. 1-800-222-1222
- 911

The above Action Steps were excerpted from recommendations in *Prevention for the Health of North Carolina: Prevention Action Plan*, a collaborative project of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine and the North Carolina Division of Public Health, and have been modified for specific audiences.

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