

News Column – Donna Krug, District Director and Family & Consumer Science Agent with K-State Research and Extension – Cottonwood District

Start New Decade Off Right with an Action Plan

Wow, can you believe it is 2020? I am still getting used to writing it on my correspondence. With a new decade ahead of us it seems like the perfect time to remind you about an Action Plan. Hopefully you have some goals or expectations written down so that the year ahead can be fulfilling and satisfying. Still, there may be times that challenges get in the way of meeting these goals.

An “Action Plan” can help get the New Year off to a great start. A few years ago I wrote a fact sheet titled, “Action Plan for Healthy Living.” The fact sheet focuses on 15 lifestyle choices that can bring about a healthier life. Several of the lifestyle choices revolve around a healthier plate while others target the importance of physical activity. And finally, I added some other considerations like stress management, simplifying your life, sleeping well, and surrounding yourself with positive people. Helping individuals create an action plan that they can become engaged in was my goal in sharing this information.

So what exactly is an “Action Plan”? The first step in developing an action plan is to find something you “want” to do. Think about lifestyle changes that could impact your health in a positive way. Choose something that is reasonable; something you could expect to accomplish in a week or two. A true action plan is behavior specific. Losing weight is not a behavior, but drinking three sugary drinks every day is. So your action plan might read like this. “I will drink a glass of water instead of a sugary drink twice each day in the week ahead.” As you can see the action plan answered these questions: What? How much? When? How often?

The final piece of a successful action plan is to assess the confidence level that you will fulfill the contract. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 represents little confidence and 10 represents total confidence, your plan should rank at least a 7.

Many serious health problems are directly related to personal habits or behavior. The risk factors that can lead to these problems are of little concern to many people. They may have the attitude, “I feel fine – why worry about a healthier lifestyle? The medical system was built around caring for the sick instead of keeping people well. Achieving a healthy lifestyle takes knowledge, effort, and determination. No one can do it for you. Now is the time to build healthy habits into your daily life. Soon they will come naturally.

Feel free to join me for the educational program, Action Plan for Healthy Living, on Friday, January 24th, at 1:00 p.m. at the Great Bend Senior. If you are unable to participate you can find my fact sheet on the KSRE web site. The publication number is: MF 3053. Have a happy and healthy New Year!

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