Media Release

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Being resolute about new year’s resolutions

A tradition every new year is to make resolutions and, hopefully, stick to them. With January and the summer holidays behind us, it’s make or break time for many.

Six of the most popular resolutions every year concern health and wellbeing, with cutting down on alcohol consumption being number one, according to the US Government’s website 1.

At ninth place is quitting smoking. The others on the list are healthy eating, getting fit, losing weight and managing stress.

Research shows that by mid-January, 30 percent of people have scaled back their resolutions and by June, most have given up on their resolutions completely. Ultimately, only 12 percent actually achieve them. 2

A great degree of resolve is required to beat the odds. According to the Director of the Bowden Institute of Obesity, Nutrition, Exercise and Eating Disorders based at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Professor Ian Caterson, a softer approach was necessary for people to make healthier lifestyle choices, like cutting back on eating, drinking and smoking and taking up exercise.

“Small, simple and realistic changes to lifestyles are far more beneficial and sustainable for people who want to live healthier lives,” Prof. Caterson said.

“Big, sweeping changes are often totally unrealistic and simply too hard for people to sustain so, sooner or later, they give up and end up right back where they started.

“It is also good to have a raft of small changes that you are attempting, and not to get into a boring, strict regime.”

Professor Paul Haber, from RPA’s Drug and Alcohol Department, said that during the festive season alcohol consumption rose above the average and his unit saw a spike in hospital admissions as a result.

“In general, people think about the social effects of alcohol, pub brawls, family violence and motor accidents, but we really need to consider the long term damage it inflicts on the drinkers themselves,” Prof. Haber said.

“Cutting down on the volume of alcohol consumed is important but must be done in a sustainable way, because there is little to be gained if heavy drinking is resumed after a few weeks.”

For information about cutting back on alcohol, you can call Alcohol Drug Information Service (ADIS) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on (02) 9361 8000 or visit http://yourroom.com.au/.

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1 http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/New-Years-Resolutions.shtml
Sydney Local Health District’s Acting Director of Health Promotion, Mandy Williams, said giving up smoking was difficult but evidence showed that people wanted to gain enough confidence to enable them to quit on their own.

“While many people find going cold turkey is the most effective way, research has shown that using nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) in conjunction with smoking cessation counselling doubles the chance of quitting,” Ms Williams said.

“Most people make several unsuccessful attempts to quit, but each time they try to quit it brings them closer to quitting for good.

“If you have tried stopping before but returned to smoking, you are not alone. Many smokers find it difficult to quit smoking and most require several quit attempts before they are successful.”

There are a number of options available to help people quit, including NRT, such as patches and gum, which can help deal with withdrawal.

With a prescription, patches will cost $5.60 for a four-week supply and free if you have a concession card. You can get up to three prescriptions a year.

Free cessation counselling is available to inner west residents at Croydon Health Centre and RPA Hospital.

For advice on quitting and the support available contact your local GP, pharmacist or call the Quitline on 13 7848 (13 QUIT).