five things you can do

1. Establish a relationship with your doctor.
The most important step in staying healthy is choosing a doctor that you are comfortable with. Building a relationship with your doctor can help ensure you get the preventive care and screenings that are recommended for your age, gender, and personal and family history. Plus, you will have peace of mind knowing your doctor knows your preferences and beliefs in the event of an emergency.

A typical emergency room (ER) visit costs at least five times more than an office visit. That’s why it makes sense to visit the ER only for a medical emergency. As an Independent Health member, you have access to a 24-Hour Medical Help Line to get answers to urgent health care questions after hours – giving you immediate professional clinical guidance and peace of mind, with no added cost.

3. Be proactive — get preventive screenings.
Knowledge is power. Among other things, preventive screenings can identify health risk factors. They might even uncover conditions that you are unaware of. Since most chronic diseases are avoidable, it may be easier than you think to get started on the path to better health care for you and your family.

4. Make the decision to quit.
Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health, but it is also one of the most difficult habits to break. There are a variety of options to help you quit, and support systems to help you become, and remain, a non-smoker. Get the support you need by calling the New York State Smokers’ Quitline at 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487). Or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), which connects you to counseling and information about quitting smoking in your state.

5. Become more physically active.
Try parking farther away or take the stairs instead of the elevator — the benefits might surprise you. Research shows that weight gain can be prevented by increasing daily physical activity by just 2,000 steps and eating 100 fewer calories.

At Independent Health, your health and well-being are important to us. Take advantage of our online health and wellness tools and resources to help you take charge of your health today.

For more information, and to view additional resources, visit us online at independenthealth.com.
**make the most of your doctor visits**

### HAVE YOU AND YOUR PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN HAD A GOOD TALK LATELY?

Think of your doctor as your partner in health. By building a relationship with your primary care physician (PCP) you allow them to provide the best possible health care. The more your doctor knows about you, your family history and your medical history, the better he/she will understand your overall health and be able to offer the best treatment advice and keep track of your screenings. **Use the following guide to help you make the most of your next doctor’s visit.**

### BEFORE YOU GO TO THE DOCTOR

| If you are seeing a doctor for the first time, bring your medical history. | Medical history should include:  
  - Illnesses or diseases you have had in the past, especially those you have been in the hospital for or received medication or treatment for.  
  - Surgeries you have had.  
  - Your family history of illnesses, especially your parents, sister and brothers.  
  - The dates of any vaccines you have had, such as tetanus, pneumonia or flu shots. |
| Make a list of questions you have. | Example: Am I due for any preventive screenings or vaccinations? |
| Write down any problems or symptoms you may have. |  
  - When did the symptoms start? How often do they happen?  
  - When do the symptoms bother you most? (e.g., in the morning, after you have eaten something, after you exercise)  
  - How bad are your symptoms? |
| Prepare a list of your medications. | Include prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, antacids and herbal supplements. |

### AT YOUR DOCTOR’S VISIT

| If your doctor thinks you need a medical test, be sure you know why. | Ask your doctor:  
  - What is this test for?  
  - How is this test done?  
  - Is there anything I need to do before I have the test done? (e.g., whether you can eat before)  
  - When will I get the results? |
| The doctor may tell you that you have a certain disease or condition. | Ask your doctor:  
  - What is the name of my disease or condition and how will it affect me — and my life?  
  - What does the diagnosis mean?  
  - Are there different ways to treat my condition?  
  - What are the benefits and risks of my treatment options?  
  - Will the problem go away with treatment or will I have this for the rest of my life? |

For more information, and to view additional resources, visit us online at independenthealth.com.