



## MEDICALINK

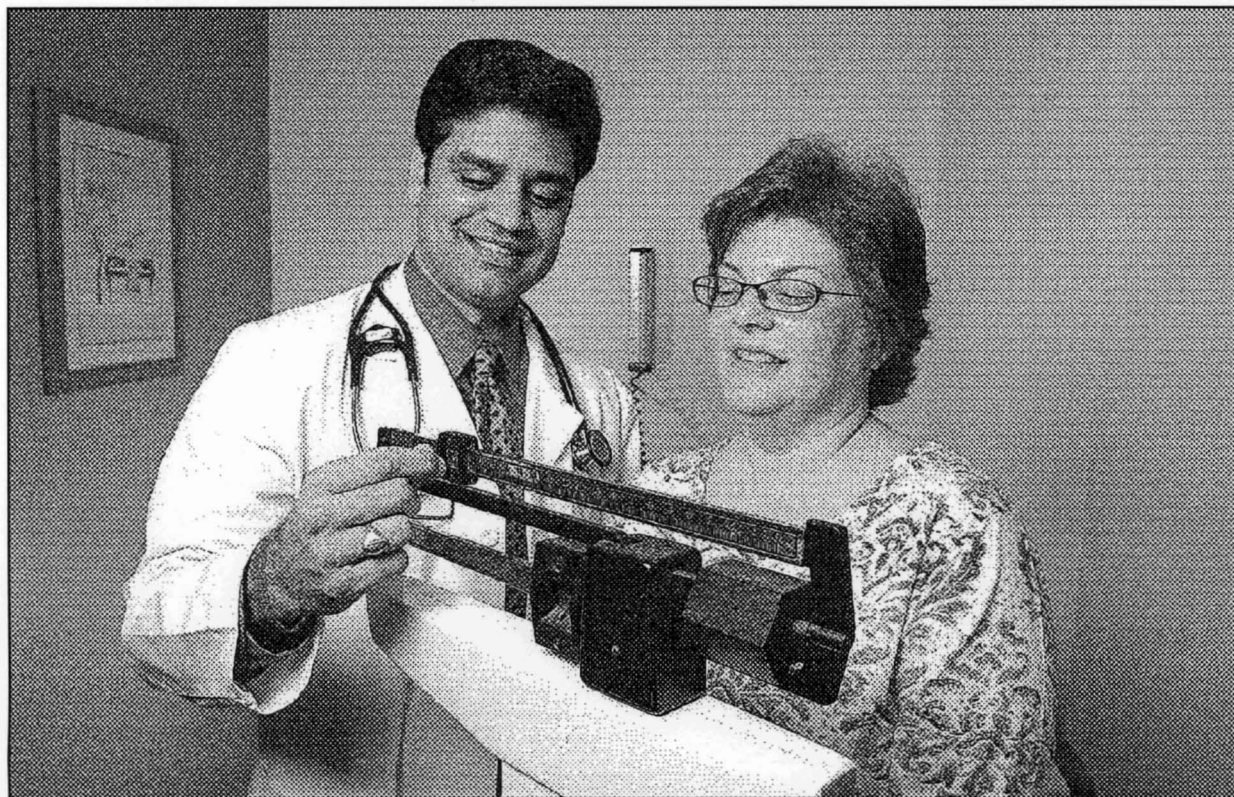


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**Dr. Adarsh Gupta**, director of the Weight Management Program at the UMDNJ-School of Osteopathic Medicine, advises one of his patients.

# Physician offers daily tips for a healthy '08

Each year, resolutions to lose weight, exercise more and be healthy start strong, but don't make it past the cold, dark days of January. It's easy to see why.

"Too often, people fail to connect the dots from their resolutions to the steps that will accomplish their goals," said Dr. Adarsh Gupta, director of the Weight Management Program at the UMDNJ-School of Osteopathic Medicine. "Positive health changes can be easy if you make those changes as easy as possible. For example, replace one 12-ounce soda per day with an equal amount of water and, over a year, you will eliminate enough calories to equal almost 15 pounds of body weight."

Gupta recommends breaking down New Year's resolutions into small achievable steps.

He's put together a list of 31 steps to a healthier 2008 which can be found online at

[www.som.umdnj.edu](http://www.som.umdnj.edu).

"You can look at these as daily tips or as a list to follow at your own pace," Gupta said. "The important thing to remember is to keep taking steps toward better health. Face it, change is going to happen. If you're not making positive changes then the changes that occur over the year might not be the ones you envisioned in January."

To get you started, here are some of Gupta's top health tips for 2008:

**1. Move more.** Make conscious efforts to move your body. Use stairs instead of elevators; walk your dog; chase your kids; or do yard work. Gradually work up to a goal of 30 minutes daily.

**2. Reduce fat.** Avoid fried foods, burgers and other fatty meats. Whole grains, fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products can lower your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke

and diabetes. Eat lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, walnuts and almonds.

**3. Eat slowly and small.** Taking at least 20 minutes to eat a meal will make you feel as though you are eating more. Use smaller plates to help to control portions that put on pounds and only take more if still hungry.

**4. Eat breakfast.** People who eat breakfast tend to take in more vitamins and minerals, and less fat and cholesterol. Some good options are whole grain cereals, oatmeal, cottage cheese, egg whites, fruits and one percent or skim milk.

**5. Reduce stress.** Stress can lead to high blood pressure, headaches, upset stomachs and more. Spend 30 minutes a day doing something you like. Soak in a hot tub; walk on the beach or in a park; read a good book; visit a friend; play with your dog; listen to soothing music; watch a funny

movie; meditate or get a massage, a facial or a haircut.

**6. Quit smoking.** It's not easy, but you can do it. Know what you're up against, what your options are, and where to go for support. Ask your doctor about medicines that can help.

**7. Drink more water.** Water flushes out toxins lingering in the body and replenishes fluids that help lubricate the joints. It reduces hunger and helps to make skin look smooth and young. Add a hint of lemon for taste. At a minimum, drink 64-ounces a day and more if you can.

**8. Get enough sleep.** Sleep brings serotonin levels back in line, relaxes muscles and allows the mind clear itself for the next day. Usually, six to eight hours a night is enough. If you have difficulty getting to sleep, try yoga, soft, relaxing music, a glass of wine, or — if you can talk some-

one into it — a good massage.

**9. Keep a positive mental outlook.** Optimistic people are less likely to get sick and tend to get well faster than those who are pessimistic or depressed. Remember: You can't be unhappy when you're smiling or singing.

**10. Get regular checkups.** Mammograms, pap smears, checks for colon cancer and EKGs, are essential for good health and could end up saving your life. If you do not feel well, have your doctor check things out.

**11. Stimulate your metabolism.** To increase your metabolism, don't skip breakfast or eat late at night when metabolism is slowest. Eat lots of smaller meals during the day to keep metabolism churning. Eat protein with almost every meal or snack. Daily exercise will help boost metabolism.