**A Healthy Rotarian Is A More Effective Rotarian - Make a great New Year's resolution**

By Ron Goodenow

As luck would have it, I ran into a one-time Rotarian friend well into middle age while shopping the other day. After the pleasantries about the holidays, cameras, the Patriots, shopping and travel, he asked me how I was doing physically.

“Pretty good," I replied. "I just had a great physical … being on a relatively low-salt, low-carb diet and exercising every day does wonders. Gotta keep blood pressure down and diabetes away."

When I asked him about his health, he responded that he ran in the Boston Marathon, "haven't been to a doctor for years, and don’t need a health club.”

I shot back, hopefully not too quickly, “You sound like a lot of guys I talk to, lately. Here we are, approaching a certain age, living near some of the best health-care facilities in the world, and able to afford Medicare B, but so many friends, guys usually, just leave things to chance … and don’t want to fess up 30 bucks a month at the health club.”

Sermon ended. Fast drive home, to fire up Google.

Turns out my concerns are right on target, and too many guys are health laggards. Here you go. The prestigious Cleveland Clinic, according to [60 Percent of Men Don’t Go to the Doctor: Here’s Why,](http://www.everydayhealth.com/columns/health-answers/why-men-dont-go-to-the-doctor/) posted on Everydayhealth.com, “surveyed more than 500 men ages 18 to 70 across the United States and found that only three in five men get an annual physical, and just over 40 percent go to the doctor only when they fear they have a serious medical condition. Interestingly, half of the men we surveyed (53 percent) agree that their health just isn’t something they talk about, and 19 percent admitted they go to the doctor so their significant other or loved one will stop nagging them (another stereotype proven!).”

Turns out that the Cleveland Clinic has a new program called [MENtion It](https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2016/08/mentionit/), the purpose of which is to get men talking to doctors about what needs to be known about prostate issues, sexual dysfunction, and symptoms of ticking time bombs in our bodies. Of course, talking to one’s physician will lead to tests that can bring on controsl and cures that just running in a marathon won’t confer. Oh, and Google around. You’ll find what Rotary clubs here and abroad are doing on the preventive-health side of things. Sites like [Livestrong.org](http://www.livestrong.com/) offer a plethora of information on nutrition, exercise, irritating conditions that should really get attention, and a heck of a lot more. You’ll think twice about whether that Diet Coke is really better for you than the real one. But, here’s a warning: Most doctors know very little about nutrition, so befriend a nutritionist or dig around on line. Type in “bananas nutrition.” Wow, great potassium.

Okay, you say, some good reading and maybe doc visits ahead. But there’s more here, and this applies to my opposite gender as well.

Sure, clubs promote the raising and consumption in our communities of good and healthy food, many members swear by - and even own - health clubs and exercise daily, and much more along these lines. All well and good. But what are we doing in our own Rotary clubs to help those who have special dietary needs or just want to get rid of the salt and sugar? Anything more than a dry salad with vinegar and oil on the side and probably salted chicken on top for the non-vegetarians among us? Do we share information on where one can eat healthily, including at chains like Olive Garden that will hand you a document with the nutritional content of everything on the menu, including the healthy brown pasta they now offer? And, they will happily help you put together a good meal.

One can say a lot about all this, but first one has to think about it - and what it means for being an even more active Rotarian who can travel long and safely, add hours to local service, and live longer to do it all. Let me end by saying our energetic district governors, Pat and Skip Doyle, are paragons of healthy eating and are not shy about that. Where do you think I learned about Diet Coke and the Polar stuff I once drank by the gallon?

Ideas, examples, feedback? Drop a note to me at Ron.Goodenow@gmail.com. If you make a New Year's resolution after reading, this let me know! And a happy and healthy New Year to you all. See you at the health club.

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