

# Health



It's time to empty the holiday food from your refrigerator and get back to eating healthy. FUZZBONESO, GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

## GETTING BACK ON TRACK FOR THE NEW YEAR

Now that the holidays are officially over, it's time to get back into healthy eating and exercise



**Susie Bond**  
Special to Florida Today  
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Now that the holidays are officially over, it's a good time to refocus and get back into a routine of healthy eating and exercise.

The first thing on the agenda is to clear out the pantry and fridge of all the remaining holiday food. Restock with healthy and wholesome items, such as lean meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, nuts and whole grains.

Re-establish a pattern of eating that includes balanced meals and healthy snacks throughout the day. It's best to keep your body on a regular "feeding" schedule of about every three to four hours. This prevents hunger, revs up the metabolism, and helps keep blood sugar and brain chemicals steady all day long.

Start your day with a healthy breakfast that includes lean protein, whole grain and fresh fruit, such as whole

See BOND, Page 4D

## Cutting edge treatments help women with private issues

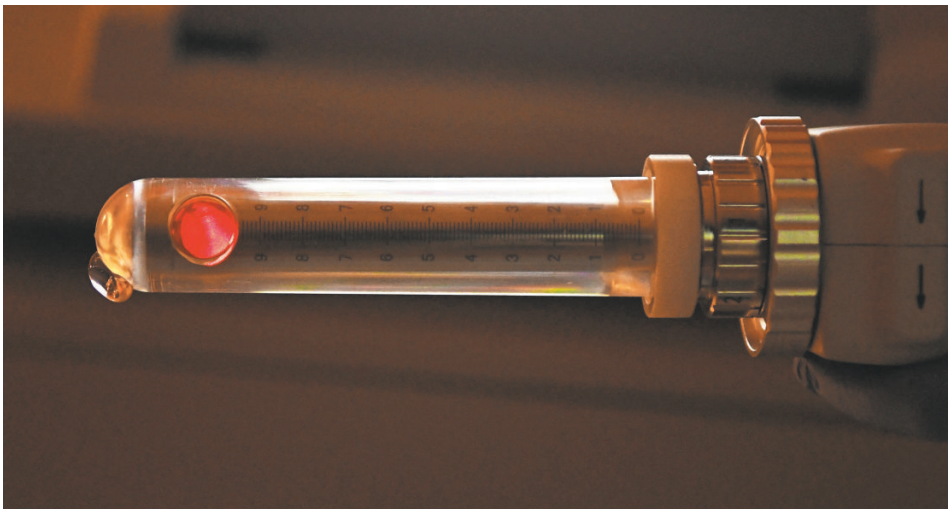
**Maria Sonnenberg**  
Special to FLORIDA TODAY  
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For some women, discussing certain issues with doctors can be difficult. Especially when it comes to the most private of parts. However, it also is one of the most essential parts of the anatomy for reproduction and birth. With the exception of C-section babies, the vagina is humanity's hallway to the world.

However, like all sections of the human body, vaginas unfortunately age, and childbearing, menopause and shifts in hormones can affect it negatively, as can disease.

According to nurse practitioner Simone Paul with TEPAS Healthcare in Melbourne, nearly 50 percent of peri- and post-menopausal women report symptoms of Vulvo-Vaginal Atrophy, or VVA, a common and often underreported condition associated with decreasing

See WOMEN, Page 2D



Laser treatment is used for vaginal rejuvenation at Imani Skin & Cosmetic Center at TEPAS Healthcare in Melbourne. TIM SHORTT/FLORIDA TODAY

# My prescription for health in 2018



**Dr. Ross A. Clevens**  
Special to Florida Today  
USA TODAY NETWORK –  
FLORIDA

Happy New Year! It's time again for introspection, self reflection and goal setting.

The time of year when we look at ourselves in the mirror and peer into our world through a microscope.

It's the time of year for New Year's Resolutions! But let's start 2018 off on the right foot and ensure our resolutions are among those that succeed.

*The New York Times* recently advised its readers: "don't waste your time with bad resolutions."

According to columnist Tim Herrera, our resolutions tend to fail for three reasons.

First, we set resolutions based upon external factors such as society and friends who tell us to change. If we don't want to make the change ourselves, then we are less likely to succeed.

Second, we set ambitious goals without clearly defined markers of success and progress.

And finally, if our resolutions are too lofty and unrealistic, then we are less likely to succeed.

So, based upon health research, I would propose three goals for the New Year that are meaningful, impactful and attainable for all of us.

### 1. Replace soda with water

Soft drink beverages are loaded with refined sugar. One 16-ounce soda packs up to 16 teaspoons of sugar. Soda contributes to obesity and obesity leads to heart disease, kidney disease and diabetes.

Simply trading a bottle of soda for a glass of water goes a long way to control weight and illness.

Imagine if we replaced one 20-ounce soda per day with water, we would each cut out 52 pounds of sugar per year. This could translate into 14 pounds of weight loss in a single year. Simply trading a soda for water is an easy resolution to keep and could dramatically change your health in 2018.

### 2. Get a good night's sleep

Many of us are highly motivated to live a hard-charging, connected life with little rest. Recovery is necessary and im-



**Follow Dr. Clevens' New Year's prescription for success this year and you'll be reaping the rewards at this time next year.** WAVEBREAKMEDIA LTD, GETTY IMAGES/WAVEBREAK MEDIA

portant to recharge our batteries and clear our minds.

A recent study from the University of Nottingham in England examined the habits of nearly 100 super successful people. Many of these individuals stressed the value of a good night's sleep.

Part of this discipline involves setting

our alarm clocks for a precise time, not hitting the snooze button, and planning to get enough sleep based upon our daily wake-up time.

Sleep time and quality is closely tied to memory, learning and performance. Further, research has shown that sleep deprivation is a probable cause of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, infection and

cancer.

Setting the alarm and planning a good night's sleep is a goal for the New Year we should all be able to achieve.

### 3. Care for Your Skin

Skin care and sun protection are key to preventing skin cancer and looking our best.

A daily skin care regimen is especially important for all of us living in the Sunshine State, because exposure to ultraviolet light causes premature aging and can lead to skin cancer.

I recommend consulting with a Licensed Medical Aesthetician who can customize a skin care plan around your unique needs using pharmaceutical-grade products.

These products contain active ingredients at higher concentrations than the consumer-grade products available over the counter, which are relatively mild in comparison.

Medical-grade products are specially formulated to deliver results, combat the signs of aging and reveal brighter, smoother skin. I also suggest daily use of a sunscreen with micronized zinc oxide and broad-spectrum projection against UVA and UVB rays.

With the help of an experienced aesthetician or facial plastic surgeon, you can begin a personalized skin care regimen that takes just 5 to 10 minutes each morning and night that creates younger, healthier and more radiant skin.

Adopt my New Year's prescription for success this year: replace sugary soda with water, get a good night's sleep and take care of your skin. If we stick with these three simple resolutions in 2018, this time next year we'll be reflecting on how much healthier and happier we feel.

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## Women

Continued from Page 1D

estrogen within the vaginal tissue.

The problem causes the thinning, drying and inflammation of vaginal walls because of a decrease in estrogen. Symptoms can additionally include discomfort and pain in the vaginal and vulvar areas, urinary incontinence and painful intercourse.

The issue is of particular relevance for breast cancer patients who, says Dr. Emran Imami of TEPAS Healthcare, often experience VVA as a lesser-known side effect of chemotherapy and breast cancer hormonal therapy.

Women also often experience genitourinary syndrome of menopause (GSM), which also includes urinary stress incontinence, painful urination and recurrent urinary tract infections.

"Historically, many of these symptoms were managed with estrogen replacement, vaginal moisturizers and surgical procedures for stress incontinence," Paul said. "However, women with either a personal or family history of breast cancer were not likely candidates for these treatments. Tremendous advances have been made to prevent and correct erectile dysfunction in men undergoing treatment for prostate cancer, but women with breast cancer have been silently suffering from VVA and GSM. Laser vaginal rejuvenation is a similar remedy for women."

Vaginal rejuvenation counters the results of aging or disease with a medical laser used to revitalize the cells in the vaginal tissue, encouraging them to produce increased collagen, an essential ingredient in vaginal cell health.

"Vaginal rejuvenation treatments are performed for varying reasons, including painful intercourse and urinary incontinence issues," said Imami. "This cutting-edge, non-surgical laser technology is also ideal for breast cancer survivor unable to receive conventional hormone replacement regimens."

Laser have been used in medicine for decades, but only recently has the CO2 laser been used to ablate the vaginal lining and the external labia to stimulate the body to produce collagen for a



**Brenda Reynolds and Simone Paul, ARNP/BC at Imani Skin & Cosmetic Center at TEPAS Healthcare in Melbourne.** TIM SHORTT/FLORIDA TODAY

healthier and tighter lining.

"Radiofrequency generating devices also stimulate collagen, though they require 20 to 30 minutes per treatment session," explained Paul. "CO2 devices are considered more effective with much shorter treatment times of three to four minutes."

No anesthesia is required for the three required treatments that are spaced a month apart. Results become apparent in weeks but plateau in approximately four months. For most women, no additional treatments are needed, although some may benefit from a repeat treatment one or two years later.

Brenda Reynolds, who had undergone cryogenic breast lumpectomy surgery at Imami's office last year, opted for vaginal rejuvenation over frustration with urinary urgency.

"Over the past few months, the ur-

gency to urinate became a concern for me," said the West Melbourne resident.

Reynolds had suffered through six surgeries in a little over a year and was not looking to go back for more, but she eventually realized that she was waging a losing battle against urinary incontinence. Something needed to be done.

"One day I was sitting in my recliner, reading a book and I thought, oh my, I need to go the bathroom," she said. "I wanted to finish the chapter, so I didn't go. Finally, I decided I would have to get up and get myself to the bathroom. When I stood up, I thought I was going to pee my pants. As I struggled down the hallway, I kept saying to myself that this is definitely the 50-yard dash to the outhouse by Willy Make-it!"

She did make it, but she knew the minor incontinence now would increase with age, so she decided to take care of it right away and booked the vaginal reju-

venation treatments.

"The procedure is 99.9 percent pain-free," said Reynolds. "The procedure was a bit uncomfortable during the last 10 or so seconds, but once the procedure as complete, all discomfort was gone."

The procedure is FDA-approved and requires practically no downtime for patients.

Most insurance carriers unfortunately do not cover vaginal rejuvenation treatments and Reynolds' was no exception, but she felt that even at \$800 per treatment, it is well worth the cost. For her, the urgency to urinate was nearly gone after just the first treatment.

"I no longer have to make that '50-yard dash,'" she joked. "I can now sneeze with confidence!"

For more information, call 321-312-4198.