- Health self-care

Trying to improve your health and wellness in 2026? Keep it simple

BusinessMirror · 29 Jan 2026 · B7 · By Devi Shastri

THE new year is a time when many try to start new good habits and commit to improving health and wellness. But resolutions, lofty as they may be, can turn daunting quickly with all the advice and sometimes contradicting information coming at you from news reports, advertisers, influencers, friends and even politicians.



But they don't have to be.

This year, The Associated Press got the downlow on all manner of health and wellness claims and fads. The good news is that the experts mostly say to keep it simple.

As 2026 opens up, here's what you can skip, what you should pay attention to, and how to get credible information when you are inevitably faced with more confusing claims.

■ Protein and fiber are important, but you probably don't need to pay more. When it comes to your diet, experts say most people can skip the upcharge. If you're eating enough, you're probably getting enough protein and don't need products that promise some big boost.

And it's true that most people could use more fiber in their diets. But, please, ditch the "fiber-maxxing" trend. Instead, eat whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains.

■ A good skin care routine is not expensive or complicated. That 20-step skin care routine and $200 serum some Tiktoker sold you on? Dermatologists say you really don't need it. Stay away from the beef tallow and slather on a good sunscreen instead (yes, even if you have darker skin), they say.

And the same rule for simplicity applies to that hourlong “everything shower.” The best showers are simple and short, dermatologists say, no “double cleansing” required.

■ There are many simple ways to get that workout in. If the gym and all its equipment feel intimidating, you can drop the illusion that a good workout requires either. This year, the comeback of calisthenics puts the focus back on no frills, bodyweight workouts you can do in the comfort of home. Research shows calisthenics helps with muscle strength and aerobic conditioning. You may eventually need weightlifting or other equipment, but it is a great place to start to build consistency and confidence.

■ Be wary of wellness fads and treatments— they are often too good to be true. Even if you imbibed too much this New Year’s Eve, doctors say you can do without “IV therapy” which have vitamins you can get more easily and cheaper in pill form—if you even need more, which is unlikely if you have a balanced diet. You’re pretty much just paying for “expensive urine,” one doctor said.

Same for “wellness” focused products like microbiome testing kits that generate information that doctors can’t actually act on. And if you don’t have diabetes, there’s scant evidence that you need a continuous glucose monitor.

■ To improve your health, go back to the basics. The idea of a panacea pill, product or routine can be enticing. But science already knows a lot about how to improve mental and physical health, and they are tried and true:

1. Whether you’re in the city or the country—walk more. Research shows walking is great for physical and mental health. It’s so good for you, doctors are literally prescribing time in the outdoors to their patients.

2. Take steps to get certain health metrics under control, like high blood pressure, which often goes undiagnosed and is known to cause a range of health problems down the road. Prioritize getting enough sleep, and make sure your family does too. Don’t just eat right—eat slower.

3. Give your mind some care too. Set better boundaries with your technology and regain and retrain your attention span. Build out your social networks and invest in all forms of love for the people around you.

These lifestyle changes don’t just make you feel better in the moment. Research shows they impact your life for years to come, by lowering the risk of dementia and many other health issues.

■ Don’t know who to trust? Start with your doctor. It can be tough to know who to listen to about your health, faced with compelling personal stories on social media from people who swear something worked from them, or clever marketing and advertising from companies that scare you or promise an easy fix.

Doubts have been raised this year about established medicine, including the safety of food dyes, fluoride dental treatments, hepatitis B shot for newborns, and hormone therapies for menopause. While the medical system is not perfect, your doctor remains the best person to talk to about prevention, health concerns and potential treatments.

If you can’t get to a human doctor and turn to Dr. Google instead, be sure to follow these tips and never use it to diagnose yourself. When you do get that doctor’s appointment, you can make the most of it by bringing a list of written questions—and don’t hesitate to ask for any clarification you need.