



## New Year, New Resolutions

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With the beginning of a new year, we traditionally think of resolutions or changing how or what we do to improve something in our lives. The changes we most often consider involve our health.

This year each of us should consider starting a simple process that has potential to save our lives. This single activity can also make things easier for us and those who are closest to us as well as our healthcare providers.

Everyone, young or old, should complete a detailed **Health ICE** form. Many people have learned of the **ICE "In Case of Emergency"** process this past year with the programming of cell phones which include immediate emergency name and phone contact information. Your **Health ICE** form details your specific health information.

A **Health ICE** form can be a simple; easy to locate form that can provide necessary health information very quickly should you become involved in an emergency and unable to share the details. In my practice, I have patients who have had accidents and injuries and this form proved to be a life saver.

The most useful **Health ICE** form should include your minimal personal and health information, your name, address, phone number, allergies (penicillin, aspirin, etc.). It is also very important to include special medical conditions (diabetes, seizures, wearing contacts or having a pacemaker or prosthesis).

Also, it is critically important that you include an up-to-date list of all you medications and how you take them. You are also encouraged to note the identifying codes of the medicine you use, the numbers or letters are marked on the tablets. Since many medications now come in generic and may look similar, the identifying marks can make it easier for them to be identified and verified. It is also very important to include any over the counter (non-prescription) medications, vitamins, or herbal supplements that you may use. The names and phone numbers of your physicians and the pharmacy providing your health care

should also be included on your **Health ICE**. You may also want to include your insurance (health and drug) information.

You are also encouraged to keep several copies in several places. I suggest prominently posting a copy of your **Health ICE** on the refrigerator. If you wish, place your form in an envelop with **Health ICE** written on the envelop. Emergency responders will check the refrigerator for the **Health ICE** and your health information is kept more private inside an envelop. A copy in your purse or wallet gives you easy reference when you visit your doctor or pharmacy. Others who would also benefit are your children and other close friends who may be asked for this type of information in case of a medical emergency. Some health issues or concerns may be more quickly resolved by healthcare professionals knowing all the medications and supplements that you are taking and how you are taking them.

Any **Health ICE** document is a great asset when updated and used. Change your **Health ICE** when you start or stop a new medication or supplement. Many medications change in the hospital, be sure to update your **Health ICE** after being hospitalized. Always take your updated **Health ICE** to your healthcare appointments-doctors, pharmacists, lab work and when you may be hospitalized.

Make your new year's resolution to keep your **Health ICE** up-to-date. Include important changes and date the document when it is updated. Your refrigerator and purse/wallet copies should always be accurate.

This vital life saving information can be gathered on any type of document. But, if you or a friend have access to a computer, an easy to use **Health ICE** form can be downloaded from my website, [www.SeniorPharmacySolutions.com](http://www.SeniorPharmacySolutions.com).