

Parish Nurses Notes

January, 2026

The start of a new year always encourages me to get better organized. I spend time transferring birthdays and anniversaries into my new appointment book. I put in doctor's appointments that are already set, reminders to change the furnace filters, etc. This effort makes me feel that I am ready to take on whatever comes at me in the next year.

I quit making specific New Year's Resolutions a couple decades ago. Now I prefer to assess my health, my home organization, and how I'm doing in loving and caring for those around me. I usually find things I need to "tweak"--drink more water, throw or give more things away, s-l-o-w down, watch more sunsets.

This year I am going to focus on lowering my blood pressure. I've told you that the newest guidelines from the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology are encouraging doctors to treat even modest elevations in blood pressure as threats to both heart and brain health. **You must be lower than 120/80 to be within the normal range. 130-139 over 80-89 is Stage 1 and 140/90 or higher is Stage 2.**

My family doctor just increased my dosage of blood pressure medication, despite my insistence that my B/P is always higher in the doctor's office than it is at home. I reluctantly got it filled and began taking the higher dose.

A few days later I had my annual eye exam. As I did the visual field testing, I thought there were more blank areas than I remembered. At the end of all the testing, the doctor told me that the pressure inside my eyes is too high and that I have lost some vision in my left eye. So I now have a glaucoma diagnosis, eye drops before bed every day and a repeat eye care visit scheduled in two months.

A computer search confirmed that my slightly elevated B/P could have contributed to my eye problems. So I'm gonna lose a few pounds, eat more veggies, watch my salt intake, stay active (not a problem for me!) and sleep better (a bit of a problem).

Please make every effort to keep YOUR blood pressure under control. Stop by the table where your Parish Nurses will be offering B/P checks the first Sunday of every month. We can do this together!