

Wellness: Tips for a Healthier You!

Tips for a Healthier You - Nutrition

According to recent statistics, the United States leads the world in the percentage of people that are obese, which is defined as people with a body mass index greater than 30. Whether you are part of that statistic or not, there are basic things you can do to improve your over-all health and well-being.

Start with the numbers! Many of us hate to start with the scale, but it really does tell part of the story. Being overweight increases the likelihood that you will suffer from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, and a whole host of other undesirable conditions. Research tells us that even a modest weight loss of five to ten percent of body weight can have a significant impact on the way we feel and how our bodies respond to illness. Even if you already have one or more of these conditions, implementing new, healthy habits (approved by your doctor) can help you better manage your health issues.

It doesn't have to be complicated. Here are some suggestions:

- Eat breakfast! That alone can boost your metabolism by as much as 10%.
- Eat a variety of foods, with an emphasis on colorful fruits and vegetables.
- Choose whole grains over processed grains and foods with added sugars.
- Choose fish, lean meat and poultry. Limit processed meals, especially from high fat or high sodium sources.
- Scale back on your menu choices; if you're eating a burger, consider a salad rather than fries or leave off the cheese.
- Eat smaller portions. Do you really need or even want the dinner-sized meal when a lunch-size choice is available?
- Avoid saturated and trans fats, which include full fat dairy products, fatty meats, cookies, and snack foods.
- Drink lots of water; it's good for your body and calorie-free!



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Tips for a Healthier You - Exercise

There are certainly things all of us can do to improve our over-all health. Let's look at a few of them – if you choose just one or two of these activity tips and implement them consistently, you can improve your health in a relatively short period of time.

Exercise does not have to be complicated. Small changes can have a big impact. Here are some suggestions:

Look for small ways to move more.

Consider taking the stairs instead of the elevator at least a few times a day. Park a few blocks from work, or in the back of the parking lot to get in some extra steps. You might even get back in touch with a sport you enjoy. Recreational leagues are often available.

Replace coffee breaks with an exercise break.

This will be more effective if you are systematic. Set aside certain times during the day to exercise. You can walk in place or jump rope during commercials while watching your favorite TV show.

Resistance Training

Several studies show that resistance training can help boost metabolism. Endurance training also increases your body's ability to produce and use energy efficiently. Think about adding some weight training to your exercise regimen, and some aerobic exercise as well.

Moderate Exercise

To maintain a healthy weight, try to get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days. If you're trying to lose weight, it will take more than 30 minutes a day.

SafetyConnection: Wellness: Tips for a Healthier You!

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Tips for a Healthier You - Stress Reduction

Most of us have some level of stress in our lives, and some stress can be a good thing. Too much stress can affect your physical and mental health. Symptoms of stress include fast heartbeat, headache, stiff neck or tight shoulders, back pain, or an upset stomach. Stress can also have long-term effects, and can make existing health problems worse. Examples include elevated blood pressure, weakened immune system, feeling cranky or frustrated, high levels of fatigue, and lots of other symptoms.

Here are a few tips to help you take control of the stress in your life.

- Keep a positive attitude. It's really not as difficult as it sounds. You can choose how you respond to most everything in your life.
- Accept that there are just some things in life you can't control.
- Express your feelings, opinions, or beliefs instead of being angry, defensive or passive.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Get enough sleep.
- Use alcohol in moderation or not at all, and avoid non-prescription drugs.
- Look for ways to manage your time, and use it wisely.

Sources:

- VitaMin: Vital Health information in a minute! Cigna, 2012
- WeightWatchers.com and 101 Ways to Wellness, Wellness Councils of America



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