







## LIVING HEALTHY

Life is not merely being alive, but being well, living healthy!

# **TIPS FOR A LONGER LIFE**

No matter what your age, you have the power to change many of the variables that influence how long you live, and how active and vital you feel in your later years. Actions you can take to increase your odds of a longer and more satisfying life span are really guite simple:



- 1. Don't smoke.
- 2. Enjoy physical and mental activities every day.
- 3. Eat a healthy diet rich in whole grains, vegetables, and fruits, and substitute healthier monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats for unhealthy saturated fats and trans fats.
- 4. Take a daily multivitamin, and be sure to get enough calcium and vitamin D.
- 5. Maintain a healthy weight and body shape.
- 6. Challenge your mind. Keep learning and trying new activities.
- 7. Build a strong social network.
- 8. Follow preventive care and screening guidelines.

9. Floss, brush, and see a dentist regularly. Ask your doctor if medication can help you control the potential long-term side effects of chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, osteoporosis, or high cholesterol.

## Smoking: An enemy of longevity

If you want to live a long, healthy life, make sure you're among the nonsmokers. Smoking contributes to heart disease, osteoporosis, emphysema and other chronic lung problems, and stroke. It makes breathing during exercise much harder and thus can make activity less enticing. It appears to compromise memory, too.

The news does get better. People who quit smoking can repair some, if not all, of the damage done. After a smoker quits, the risk of heart disease begins to drop within a few months, and in five years, it matches that of someone who never smoked. Stroke risk drops to equal that of a nonsmoker within two to four years after a smoker quits, according to one study. The death rate from colorectal cancer also decreases each year after quitting. At any age, quitting progressively cuts your risk of dying from cancer related to smoking, although this drop is most marked in those who quit before age 50.

### Diet and aging: Gaining a nutritional edge

Plenty of research suggests that eating healthy foods can help extend your life and improve your health. Studies reveal that a healthy diet can help you sidestep ailments that plague people more as they age, including heart disease, hypertension, cancer, and cataracts.

There is no shortage of new and conflicting advice on diet and nutrition. Stick to the basics with more broadbased changes, such as cutting back on meat; eating more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains; and striking a healthy balance between calories in and calories out.

## Choose fruits and vegetables wisely

Get at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. When filling your plate with fruits and vegetables, choose from a full color palette. For even more health benefits, aim for nine servings a day. To get there, choose vegetable soups and vegetable or fruit salads. Sprinkle fruit on breakfast cereal and select it for snacks or as a sweet end note after meals.

#### Choose fats wisely

Whenever possible, use monounsaturated and polyunsaturated oils. Avoid trans fats entirely. Limit saturated fats to less than 7% of daily calories and total fat to 20% to 30% of daily calories.

If you don't have coronary artery disease, the American Heart Association recommends eating foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout, or mackerel, twice weekly. If you have documented coronary artery disease, consume roughly 1 gram a day of EPA or DHA from oily fish and supplements if your doctor advises this.

### Choose carbohydrates wisely

Choose whole-grain foods over those made with refined grains, such as white bread. Look beyond popular choices like whole oats and brown rice to lesser-known whole grains like barley, bulgur, kasha, and quinoa. Limit your intake of white potatoes.

### Choosing protein wisely

Emphasize plant sources of protein, such as beans, nuts, and grains, to help you bypass unhealthy fats predominant in animal sources. Enjoying a wide variety of vegetables and eating beans and grains helps you

get a full complement of amino acids over the course of a week. Shy away from protein sources high in saturated fat. Favor fish and well-trimmed poultry. If you do eat beef, pick lean cuts.

Don't char or overcook meat, poultry, or fish — it causes a buildup of carcinogens. Cutting off fat, which causes flames to flare on the grill, can help avoid charring; try gently sautéing, steaming, or braising these foods in liquid instead. Grilling vegetables is safe, however.

## Turning the tide on weight gain

Turning the tide to lose weight — or just holding the line at your current weight — can be difficult. The following tips may help:

Line up support. Work with your doctor and, possibly, a nutritionist or personal trainer. Ask for help in setting a reasonable goal and taking small steps that make success more likely. Tell friends and family about your goal, too.

Shut down the kitchen. Make your kitchen off-limits after dinner — even if you need to run a strip of crime tape across the door to do so.

Aim for a small change. Trimming 5% to 10% of your starting weight is a realistic goal with excellent health benefits, including reducing blood pressure and cholesterol levels and lowering the risk for diabetes.

Eat well. Focus on vegetables and whole grains, which are digested slowly. Limit refined carbohydrates. Enjoy moderate amounts of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats in your diet. Cut down on saturated fats and avoid trans fats.

Watch the balance. Taking in more calories than you burn off adds extra pounds. Burning off more calories than you take in shaves pounds. A moderately active person who gets about 30 minutes of exercise a day needs 15 calories of food for each pound of body weight. To lose a pound a week, you need to lop off about 500 calories a day by becoming more active and eating less.

Step up activity. If you are struggling to maintain a healthy weight or need to lose weight, the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend 60 to 90 minutes a day of moderate activity. You can work out in one daily session or shorter bouts at least 10 minutes long. Walking is safe for practically everyone. Talk to your doctor if you'd like to include more vigorous activities, which give you twice the bang for your exercise buck — that is, one minute of vigorous activity equals roughly two minutes of moderate activity.

Source: Harvard Health

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