

Making Your Body Last A Lifetime

Health is a precious commodity. Too often, however, we don't realize its value until it is slipping away from us. When I worked as an emergency medicine physician, I saw firsthand just how quickly and easily one's health and life can be taken away. Accidents, injuries, and serious illnesses too often snatch health out of the hands of ordinary, well-intentioned people. Can we always prevent accidents and disease? No. But, can we dramatically improve our chances? An emphatic yes!

Interesting research on longevity has shown that Okinawa, Japan and Loma Linda, California have 2 of the highest rates of long life spans in the world. A city in Japan makes sense with eating more traditional diets with lots of fish, rice, and drinking green tea. But why Loma Linda? The answer is the number of 7th Day Adventists. You see, Loma Linda is home to many Adventists who, for example, don't smoke, and they consume lots of fruits, vegetables, and nuts. In fact, 7th Day Adventists, on average, live 7 years longer than a typical Californian, extending life span from a typical 78 years to 85 years. Fewer cases of heart disease, cancer, and strokes are some of the additional benefits.

Look at the leading causes of death in the U.S. Controlling overweight, optimizing nutrient intake, limiting alcohol, avoiding drugs and promiscuous sex, using seat belts, and staying fit has proven benefits in the risk of each of these common causes of death. Our risks are modifiable. The 7th Day Adventists have proven it. It's time for the rest of us to step up and do our part to improve our futures!

Ten Leading Causes of Death in Adults

1. Cancer (breast, colon, prostate, other)
2. Heart Disease
3. Accidents
4. Diabetes
5. Stroke
6. Lung Disease
7. Liver Disease
8. Suicide
9. HIV Disease / AIDS
10. Infections

*Note: Risk of each can be lowered with Nutrition,
Weight Control, and Lifestyle Choices.*

So, how should we think about death and disease? Should we just give in to it and "eat, drink, and be merry" while we can? Or, is there a higher path? One which will more likely lead to vitality, productivity, an active lifestyle, longevity, fewer doctor visits, lower healthcare costs, and an enhanced quality of life on every level. I firmly believe that we can influence our risk of disease and the quality of life we will experience by thoughtfully, strategically choosing a lifestyle plan that demonstrates a high level of respect and care for our precious bodies that by definition must "last us a lifetime".

After treating tens of thousands of bariatric, emergency room and primary care patients, and studying public health, nutrition, and preventive medicine, I am convinced that as Americans we can do better. In fact, I have seen dramatic transformations occur in thousands of my weight loss and nutrition patients. In the past, we have too often been our own worst enemy. Even those who are highly conscientious in every other area of life too often fall short when it comes to caring for their own body. Fortunately for us, our bodies are extremely forgiving. Even if you have fallen short in caring for your body for many years, there is hope. Others are embarking on a path of restoration and healing that is life changing. We see people regain a sense of youthfulness and vitality that is inspirational. Although I've been accused of being a "miracle-worker", the real credit goes to our Creator who designed bodies that are amazing in their ability to recover from unintentional "neglect".

Disease Risks Change With Weight Change

1. Breast Cancer: 20 lb gain from age 18 doubles risk .
2. Uterine Cancer: Obesity triples risk.
3. Heart Attacks: Obesity triples risk.
4. Blood Pressure: 10 lb weight loss equivalent to taking BP medication.
5. Cholesterol: 20 lb weight loss lowers cholesterol by about 20%
6. Type II Diabetes: 2.2 lb weight loss extends average life expectancy 3 months.

This article is written for those who want to courageously and assertively choose health instead of "going with the crowd" and who consider taking steps toward health an investment in the future. Unfortunately, if we lose our health, we severely limit our options. Service opportunities, travel, work, business, life pleasures, and many forms of productivity may become non-options for us. Think about what your most rewarding activities are now. Then, consider the impact of common U.S. diseases like heart disease, osteoarthritis, stroke, cancers, type II diabetes and even disabling fatigue. If you were the victim of one of these conditions, how might your life change?

These diseases and conditions, many of which are preventable, are much less common in the conscientious, concerned, and nutritionally informed person. (I am aware that many illnesses are not preventable, regardless of lifestyle. Bad things do happen to great people.) Yet too many preventable diseases continue in epidemic proportions. Being 25 lbs or more overweight triples the risk of heart attacks. We can do better! My hope is that the common sense advice given below will be embraced, implemented, and encouraged in others. Let us treat our bodies with wisdom and insight and anticipate the blessing of a healthy life.

We want to pursue a specific set of health outcomes. By effectively controlling body weight, nutritional intake, and fitness level, your risks of disease are dramatically lowered. In fact, cancer, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes are all much lower in those who are pursuing optimal weight, nutritional intake and fitness. No doubt, the following "healthy habits" can strongly promote your physical health so you can be doing everything possible to make certain that your body will "last a lifetime":

What will I allow to go into my body?

1. **Consume the proper “macronutrients” (protein/carbohydrates/fats).** If it doesn't seem healthy to eat, limit or avoid it, Daniel did. Daniel 1:12 “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.” ... At the end of the 10 days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.
 - a. Eat at least 2 fruits and 4 or more non-starchy vegetables every day.
 - b. Eat lean protein (dairy, lean poultry, fish, beans, peas, etc) 4-6 times a day to maximize energy, maximize lean body tissue, and to normalize blood sugars.
 - c. Limit animal fats and fried foods.
 - i. “The fat you eat is the fat you wear.” Eating fat contributes to fat gain.
 - ii. Saturated fats cause high cholesterol, cancer and heart attacks.
 - iii. Fats tend to make us sluggish.
 - d. Limit white foods and sugars.
 - i. Processed carbohydrates can cause cavities, diabetes, and weight gain.
 - ii. Processed carbohydrates “squeeze” healthy foods out of our diet.
 - e. Eat high fiber foods. (Fruit, flax seeds, vegetables)
2. **Consume the proper “micronutrients” (vitamins/minerals/plant nutrients).** Gen. 2:7 “The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground.”
 - a. Get your minerals. We are made from “dust” and we need dust (minerals) to maintain health. Foods that grow out of the ground provide minerals, as do animal products.
 - i. Calcium helps prevent obesity, osteoporosis, colon cancer, high blood pressure and other diseases.
 - ii. Magnesium helps prevent high blood pressure (present in 25% of Kansans).
 - iii. Selenium lowers cancer risks significantly.
 - b. Get your vitamins.
 - i. Researchers from Harvard Medical School recommend that “everybody - regardless of age or health status - take a daily multivitamin”. The research team reviewed 36 years of scientific literature that investigated the links between vitamin intake and diseases. Across the board, the researchers found numerous benefits and little risks. The research team stated, “It’s rare to find a health-promoter that offers such a substantial benefit with a relatively low cost and low risk of problems. When you have such a thing, you ought to jump on it”.
 - c. Get nutrients from plants (phytonutrients). Examples include:
 - i. Green tea to lower cancer risks and enhance metabolism rate.
 - ii. Lycopene from tomatoes to lower prostate cancer risk.
 - iii. Resveratrol and other compounds found in red grapes and red wine have anti-aging and heart attack risk benefits.
 - iv. Lutein from spinach helps prevent vision loss with age.
 - d. Get essential oils.
 - i. Long chain type Omega 3 fatty acids from cold water ocean fish lower heart attack risk by up to 50% in those with heart disease. Since 50% of Americans are having heart attacks in America, this one is a “no-brainer”.
 - ii. Short chain Omega 3 fatty acids from flax seed and other plants support health.

***Disease Risk and Nutrients
Best Research Indicates That:***

1. Calcium & Colon Cancer: 22% lower risk.
2. Vitamin D & Breast Cancer: 50% lower risk. Once diagnosed, 94% more likely to have cancer spread if deficient!
3. Vitamin D & Prostate Cancer: 50% lower risk.
4. Lycopene or Tomatoes & Prostate Cancer: 35% lower risk.
5. Fish Oil & Heart Disease: 40% lower risk of death.

3. **Stay hydrated.** 8 cups (2 quarts) per day is a recommended minimum.
 - a. Mild dehydration is common.
 - i. Fatigue
 - ii. Kidney stones
 - iii. Constipation
 - iv. Bladder and kidney disease
 - b. 60% of our body is water.
 - c. Water cleanses us of toxins.
 - d. We burn 37 calories when drinking a quart of ice cold water as it heats to body temperature.
 - e. Drinking 5 glasses of water daily decreases the risk of colon cancer by 45%, plus it can slash the risk of breast cancer by 79%, and one is 50% less likely to develop bladder cancer.
 - f. 75% of Americans are chronically dehydrated.
 - g. In 37% of Americans, the thirst mechanism is so weak that it is often mistaken for hunger.
 - h. Even mild dehydration will slow down one's metabolism as much as 3%.
 - i. One glass of water shut down midnight hunger pangs for almost 100% of the dieters studied in a University of Washington study.
 - j. Lack of water is the number one trigger of daytime fatigue.
4. **Limit exposure to toxins.** I Cor. 6:19 "...your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit... You are not your own.... Therefore honor God with your body." I Cor. 3:17 "...for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple."
 - a. Drink clean water. Baton Rouge and New Orleans have had the highest bladder cancer risk in the country, which is thought due to polluted river water.
 - i. Consider a carbon filter to remove pesticides, chlorine, and other hydrocarbons.
 - ii. Emphasize water over processed beverages in aluminum or plastic containers. Don't drink out of plastic bottles with a number lower than 7 inside a triangle on the bottom of the bottle (most have a 1, which is bad). This plastic dissolves into the water and contains Biphenol A, which causes weight gain and insulin resistance. SCARY!

- b. Breathe clean air. Spend time away from traffic areas or industrial areas when possible.

How will I manage my body?

1. Control your weight.

Excessive weight gain is devastating to the human body. Look at the following list of illnesses associated with being overweight: high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, stroke, cholesterol, breast/colon/prostate cancers, depression, infertility, and lung disease. Can you think of a disease that is not impacted negatively by weight gain? The fact is that those who are obese, i.e. 25+ lbs overweight, the risk of death is 50-100% higher than for normal weight people. Let's attack the overweight "monster" head-on and get it controlled and keep it controlled!

To determine if you are significantly overweight, ask yourself if you are 20 lbs over your ideal or if you have gained 20 lbs since you were age 20. If you answered yes to either question, you have a risk factor for death and disease that needs addressed. And that is not to mention the quality of life issues, including discrimination, poor self-esteem, and distractions from life's pleasures.

A recent patient reported that after achieving normal body weight and losing 35 lbs in 12 weeks on our program that she was being asked to give presentations for the first time ever and that a recent promotion was definitely the result of an improved appearance and bolstered self-confidence. Other patients have reported social lives blossoming and marriages being revived. Few life changes have the potential benefits that achieving a health body weight can accomplish if someone has suffered from being overweight.

Consequences of Overweight:

Hippocrates – 400 B.C.

“Sudden death is more common in those who are naturally fat than in the lean.”

- 1. Increased illness and premature deaths.*
- 2. Less productivity and function.*
- 3. More healthcare costs.*
- 4. Social and economic discrimination.*

2. Avoid unnecessary injuries.

- c. Avoid car accidents. Don't drive if weather is an issue or if intoxicated drivers are thought to be about.
 - i. Wear seat belts always.
 - ii. Drive vehicles with lots of air bags. My first question when buying a car.
 - iii. Never drink alcohol and drive or ride with those who do.

- iv. If driving while sleepy, pull over and sleep.
- d. Keep guns and ammunition safe and locked up.
- e. Caution around water to avoid drowning.
 - i. Don't drive into flooded road areas.
 - ii. Care with boating and swimming.
- 5. **Maintain an active lifestyle.** I Timothy 4:8 "... physical training is of some value ..."
- a. Use a pedometer and get 10,000 steps a day!
 - b. Rather than watch TV with the family, play an activity. (Frisbee, play catch, swim, walk, bikes, tennis, ping pong, trampoline, etc).
 - c. Schedule time for your activity. It won't just happen. 20 minutes a day is a minimum investment for the reward of youthfulness, energy, elevated mood, stress management, fitness, improved health, and weight control.
- 6. **Get your sleep.** Psalms 127:2 "In vain you rise up early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat – for he grants sleep to those he loves."
 - a. 6 ½ to 7 ½ hours per night gives the lowest risk of death.
 - b. Sleeping more than 8 hours seems to increase the risk of death. Reason not clear.
- 7. **Enjoy the sun, in moderation.**
 - a. Sun is needed for vitamin D production.
 - b. Sun helps many people with their mood.
 - c. Sun exposure is often associated with physical activity.
 - d. If you will become more than slightly pink, wear sunscreen.
- 8. **Control your numbers.** Be pro-active. Proverbs 18:9 (Amp.) "He who does not use his endeavors to heal himself is brother to him who commits suicide."
 - a. Body weight and BMI.
 - i. BMI = weight (lbs) X 703 divided by height (inches) divided again by height in inches.
 - ii. BMI of 20-24.9 normal
 - iii. BMI of 25-29.9 is medically overweight
 - iv. BMI of 30 or more is obesity
 - b. Maintain a blood pressure of less than 130/80.
 - c. Ideal c-reactive protein of less than 1.5 for women, less than 0.55 for men.
 - d. LDL cholesterol < 100, HDL cholesterol > 45, triglycerides < 150.
- 9. **Let positive, joyful thoughts fill your mind.** Happy people are healthy people.
 - a. Surround yourself with cheerful people. Proverbs 15:30 – A cheerful look brings joy to the heart ...
 - b. Fill your ears with good news (positive comments from others). Proverbs 15:30 –and good news gives health to the bones. Prov. 16:24 Pleasant words are ... healing to the bones."
 - c. Let positive, worthwhile images flow through your eyes. Psalms 101:3 I will set no worthless thing before my eyes.
- 10. **Play the life game of "Beat the Life Expectancy Tables".** Look at the table at the end. Find your current age and look at your life expectancy. Make a point to lower your risks of every known common disease and see if you can beat the life expectancy and enjoy great health in the process.

Conclusions: Care for and nurture your body. It is the best investment you can make in terms of worldly ambitions. Follow simple advice as outlined above and expect results. You can change your future for the better. Best wishes and may you be blessed with a long and health life!

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Caring for the Body:

- * 1) Get your nutrients (and water) from food, beverages or supplements.
- * 2) Avoid harmful food and chemicals.
- * 3) Get physically fit and get adequate rest (7+ hours).
- * 4) Control your numbers?
 - * , i.e. Weight, BMI, BP, % body fat, cholesterol, blood sugar, c-reactive protein, vitamin D level, etc.
- * 5) Set specific, written goals with dates.
 - * Pray for wisdom.
 - * Seek counsel, support and accountability.

Expectation of life by age and sex: United States preliminary 2003.

Current Age (years)	Both sexes	
		Expect
0.....		
1.....		
5.....	77.6	
10.....	77.1	
15.....	73.2	
20.....	68.2	
25.....	63.3	
30.....	58.5	
35.....	53.8	
40.....	49.0	
45.....	44.3	
50.....	39.6	
55.....	35.0	
60.....	30.6	
65.....	26.4	
70.....	22.3	
75.....	18.5	
80.....	15.0	
85.....	11.8	
90.....	9.1	
95.....	5.1	
100.....	2.9	

Note: Add approximately 2 years for women, subtract approximately 2 years for men.