

## HEALTHY HABITS

# Jumpstart your health!

Keeping priorities on target and juggling life's demands can be exhausting. But what is most important is taking care of your health and your family's health. It only takes a few minutes a day to practice healthy habits. These habits can give you the energy you need to get through a busy day.



Nutrition and fitness are important but so is sleep. In this article of *Your Source*, you will learn a few healthy tips for eating right, exercising and taking time to rest. This article will provide information about the importance of healthy habits at all ages.

Sometimes it's hard to remember to be healthy. There are distractions around us, and it is easy to fall into the unhealthy trap. Whether it's grabbing a quick breakfast on the go or running out to a local fast food restaurant for lunch, unhealthy choices are all around us. Who has time to prepare a large salad full of fresh vegetables every morning? There are options for fast, affordable and healthy meals. Exercise is equally important. Some people might feel unproductive if they cannot get an hour of exercise daily, and although that hour would be great, it's usually unrealistic. Exercise doesn't have to consist of going to the gym or running 10 miles a day. A number of healthy exercise habits can be included in a daily routine, which can equate to going to the gym. Another key to good health is adequate sleep. A good night's sleep is as important as a healthy diet. Many people admit to not getting enough sleep. Stressful days at work and working long hours can contribute to inadequate rest. Changing some daily habits can help you sleep better.

**Go online today!** Log on to access *Healthy Habits* and other helpful resources in the Spotlight section. Share this information with your family members and others.



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## Healthy habits for your child

It is important to give your child the right building blocks for a healthy lifestyle. You can do this by teaching the importance of good nutrition and daily activity. Here are a few healthy habits to establish with children:

- Encourage children to play outside.
- Take family walks on weekends.
- Offer children healthy snacks, such as fruits and veggies.
- Offer variety.
- Avoid high-fat snacks and foods.
- Stick to 100 percent fruit juice.
- Try to eat a family dinner as often as possible.
- Limit dessert or snacks before bed.
- Encourage healthy choices for snacks and meals.
- Avoid fast food if possible.
- Avoid added sugar.
- Limit the amount of TV or computer games during one day.
- Avoid putting a TV in a child's room.
- Join exercise classes or sports activities through a recreation department.

# We all look forward to a good night's sleep

Staying healthy starts with a good night's rest. Sleep is the way our body recharges itself. People who are not getting a good night's rest may have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. Sleep patterns may change as we age, but disturbed sleep and waking up tired are not part of normal aging. In fact, troubled sleep may be a sign of emotional or physical disorders and is something you should talk about with a doctor or sleep specialist.

## Sleep and aging

There are two kinds of sleep in a normal sleep cycle—rapid eye movement (REM) or dreaming sleep and quiet sleep (non-REM). Everyone has about four or five cycles of REM and non-REM sleep a night. For older people, the amount of time spent in the deepest stages of non-REM sleep decreases. This may explain why older people are thought of as light sleepers. Although the amount of sleep each person needs varies, the average range is between seven and eight hours a night. As we age, the amount of sleep we can expect to get at any one time will decrease. By age 75, some people may find they are waking up several times each night. But, no matter what age you are, talk to a doctor if your sleep patterns change.

## Suggestions for a good night's sleep

A good night's sleep can really make a big difference for your overall health. Here are some suggestions to help you sleep better:

- Follow a regular schedule. Go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day.
- Avoid taking long naps during the day. You might be less sleepy at night.
- Exercise around the same time each day.
- Try to get some natural light in the afternoon each day.
- Avoid drinking caffeine late in the day. Caffeine is a stimulant and can keep you awake.
- Choose a warm beverage and a few crackers if you enjoy a snack before bed.
- Create a safe and comfortable place to sleep. Keeping your bedroom clean and organized will help create a comfortable setting.
- Try using calming sounds to fall asleep. Many inexpensive nature-sound machines are available. The right peaceful background noise can make a difference.
- Stick to a bedtime routine. Try to do the same things each night to tell your body that it's time to wind down.
- Avoid worrying about falling asleep. Some people find it stressful to fall asleep. Ease your mind by reading a few pages of a book or a magazine. It is important to relax your mind.

## Now that's an idea!

Most people struggle to find a set time each day to workout or exercise. Although getting exercise is important, it shouldn't be adding stress to your life. Listed below are some great tips to add more exercise to your daily schedule.

- Park at the far end of the parking lot; this will force you to walk more.
- Try to take the stairs rather than the elevator.
- Organize a lunchtime walking group at work.
- Wake up a half-hour earlier in the morning and take a walk.
- Hold a meeting on the go if possible.
- Try to walk a bit faster whenever you are walking.
- Use a fitness ball as a chair.
- Take a break and stand up if you are sitting for a long period of time. If you can, do a few stretches while standing.

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