

Your Take-Charge Guide To
GOOD HEALTH

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
STEPS YOU CAN TAKE EVERY
DAY TO IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH,
CONTACT THE FOLLOWING
ORGANIZATIONS:**

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

www.cancer.org or (800) 227-2345

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

www.heart.org or (800) 242-8721

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

www.nih.gov or (301) 496-4000

**THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE
CONTROL AND PREVENTION**

www.cdc.gov or (800) 232-4636

AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION

www.lung.org or (800) 586-4892

**8 Best Things
YOU Can Do
For Your Body**

[illegible]HEALTH *Media* NETWORK

WHEN IT COMES TO GOOD HEALTH, YOU HAVE CHOICES

You may think that good health is something that just happens to some people—the lucky ones. And you may feel that there isn't much you can do to boost your own chances of having great health. The truth is, though, you have a lot more control over your health than you may realize.

No, you can't change risk factors such as your age, your family health history, or any medical problems you were born with or developed earlier in your life. But you do have choices about the way you live your life.

Every day you make dozens of choices that have the potential to improve—or harm—your health. Most of these are small decisions that you probably don't even think about. And yet, they have power.

In the pages of this Take-Charge Guide to Good Health, you'll learn about the 8 best choices you can make for your health. These 8 healthy habits are potent ways to enhance your health and improve your well-being. Along the way, you'll see why making these choices can reduce your risk of disease and possibly lengthen your life. You'll also find tips, advice, encouragement, and resources you need to make it as easy as possible to incorporate these everyday smart choices into your daily life.

You won't be on your own as you make these healthy changes. Your healthcare provider can be an active member of your healthy choices team, answering your questions, giving you motivation, and pointing you in the direction of resources that can support you.

Having good health isn't just about luck. It's about taking charge and making smart choices. By taking the steps outlined in this magazine, you will do everything in your power to have a long, healthy life.

HEALTHY CHOICE 01

Avoid Tobacco

There's no doubt about it: smoking is dangerous. Whether the smoke comes from your cigarette or someone else's secondhand smoke, it can rob you of your health. Cigarette smoking is the number one cause of preventable disease and death worldwide, killing 440,000 people a year in the U.S. alone.

Why is smoking so bad for your health? The smoke from burning tobacco contains 69 chemicals that are known to cause cancer—not just lung cancer, but at least 12 other kinds of cancer as well. And it plays a part in causing a variety of very serious diseases in the heart, lungs, bones, eyes, blood, and autoimmune system.

Smokeless tobacco is a health risk as well. Chewing tobacco, or “snuff,” causes several kinds of cancer as well as heart disease and other ailments.

Most smokers know the risks. The hard part is quitting. Tobacco contains nicotine, a very addictive substance. Anyone who has tried to stop smoking knows what a strong grip the habit can have on you.

Even if you've tried unsuccessfully to quit in the past, it's worth giving it another try. Start by talking to your healthcare provider about whether you should use medicines that help smokers quit. Options include nicotine patches, gum, lozenges, and nasal spray, as well as non-nicotine prescription medicines.

Your healthcare provider can also help by giving you information and support. Many hospitals sponsor smoking-cessation programs; organizations such as the American Lung Association (www.lung.org) offer online and telephone support and other help. Ask your provider what's available in your community.

HEALTHY CHOICE 02

Eat Fruits and Vegetables

If you're looking for a simple, delicious way to boost your health, look no further than the fruit bowl on your counter or the veggie drawer in your fridge. Eating more fruits and vegetables every day is one of the healthiest steps you can take.

Fruits and vegetables deliver a long list of potential benefits. Eating them can lower the risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, some kinds of cancer, and some kinds of gastrointestinal problems. They help you keep your weight in check and even reduce your chances of developing eye ailments such as cataracts and macular degeneration.

Nutrition experts recommend that we eat five to nine half-cup servings of fruits and vegetables daily—two to four fruits and three to five veggies. But most Americans don't come anywhere near meeting that goal: On average, we eat only about three servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

The best way to add more fruits and veggies to your daily diet is to make it as easy as possible to add them to meals and snacks. Here are some ways to do that:

- Add spinach, onions, tomatoes, and bell peppers to an egg-white omelet.
- Snack on raw veggies dipped in hummus, guacamole, or salsa.
- Whip up a smoothie by blending yogurt, banana, and berries.
- Pile sandwiches with arugula, romaine, and other tasty greens.
- Tuck chopped veggies into your favorite stew, chili, and casserole recipes.



Walk More

Exercise is one of the best things you can do for your body. It tones muscles, burns calories, strengthens bones, boosts mood, and gives you energy. It also strengthens your heart, improves circulation, helps keep blood sugar in control, and reduces feelings of stress.

Exercise can have a major impact on your health. Regular exercise can lower the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, type-2 diabetes, high cholesterol, and some kinds of cancer. It can also improve or maintain cognitive function in older adults, and may relieve some of the symptoms of arthritis.

Understanding the many advantages of exercise is the easy part. What's harder is getting out there and doing exercise. We live busy lives, and when we have time to ourselves, most of us would rather relax in front of the TV than go out and exert ourselves.

That is why walking is such a fantastic fitness activity. Walking delivers the benefits of exercise without requiring a whole lot of effort. Instead of wearing you out, walking energizes you, boosting your stamina and giving you a feel-good effect that can last long after you take off your walking shoes.

Adding more steps to your life is easy, and it's something you can start right away. Here are some tips on how to get moving:

- **Add steps here and there.** A long walk is nice, but it can be hard to schedule. Instead of waiting for a chunk of free time, squeeze in extra steps throughout the day. A few minutes of walking here and there can add up fast.
- **Dress for success.** The only walking gear you really need is a comfortable pair of shoes with good support. As for outerwear, dress in layers so you can peel off a jacket or sweater and tie it around your waist when you start to warm up.
- **Look for opportunities to walk.** Take the stairs instead of the elevator, walk your dog instead of letting her out in the yard, go next door to deliver a message instead of sending an e-mail.
- **Make it social.** Walking with others turns exercise into a get-together. Instead of meeting friends for coffee, go for a walk. To catch up with your spouse about the day's events, take a stroll through your neighborhood.
- **Jump on a treadmill.** If you have access to a treadmill, go for a walk while doing things you ordinarily do while sitting, such as watching TV or listening to music.
- **Walk while you talk.** Put your phone time to good use by pacing around your house or office while talking on the phone.
- **See new sights.** To keep things interesting, choose new places to walk, such as historic neighborhoods, leafy parks, and rustic hiking trails.
- **Start where you are.** If you don't exercise at all, walking even five or ten minutes may seem like a lot. That's OK. Start where you are in terms of fitness, and if you can only walk five minutes, that's fine. Do it every day for a week, and then go up to six or seven minutes the next week.
- **Build up over time.** For optimal health benefits, health experts recommend walking 30 minutes at a moderate pace five days a week. Think of it as a goal, and try to add steps to your day on a regular basis. Before you know it, you'll reach your target.

Check with your healthcare provider before you begin any exercise program.

HEALTHY CHOICE 04

Get Enough Sleep

A good night's sleep leaves you feeling great—relaxed, refreshed, and rested. But you may not realize that in addition to making you feel good, getting enough sleep is actually great for your health as well. While you rest, your brain is laying down memory and doing other important cognitive work. Elsewhere in your body, sleep impacts the secretion of hormones, the action of your immune system, and even the way your appetite functions.

Sleep is so important to good health that people who routinely don't get enough of it have a higher risk of certain disease and medical conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and infections.

Although individual sleep needs vary, most adults do best with seven to nine hours per night. Kids need more.

Talk with your healthcare provider if you're having trouble sleeping or if you don't feel refreshed even when you do get a full night's sleep. Your provider can help determine whether you have a sleep disorder such as insomnia or sleep apnea.

Tips for Better Sleep

- **Make your bedroom sleep-friendly.** You'll sleep best in a room that is quiet, dark, and just the right temperature.
- **Stay on schedule.** Go to bed and get up at the same time each day.
- **Turn off gadgets.** Using electronics before bed can interfere with your ability to fall asleep.
- **Practice relaxation.** Deep breathing, meditation or warm baths can help with sleep.
- **Don't rely on pills.** Sleeping medication can leave you feeling foggy the next day. If you're having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, talk with your healthcare provider about what steps to take.

HEALTHY CHOICE 05



Take Your Medicine

It sounds simple enough. A healthcare provider writes a prescription for a chronic condition such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol. A patient takes the prescription to the drug store and has it filled. Then the patient uses the medication as advised by the provider, taking the right amount at the right time.

Unfortunately, although this scenario sounds simple, it often doesn't play out the way it should. Instead of adhering to the provider's advice, a patient either forgets or chooses not to use the medicine as recommended. This is called non-compliance, and it's believed to cause as many as 125,000 deaths in the U.S. each year. When doctors write prescriptions, 20 to 30 percent of patients don't have those prescriptions filled. And even among patients who do pick up their prescriptions, half don't take them as prescribed.

If you're not taking the medicine your doctor has prescribed, you're putting your health at risk. Call your provider if you have questions about your medication. If you have trouble remembering to take your medicines, set an alarm on your phone, write yourself a note, or ask a family member or friend to help. And if side-effects bother you, ask your provider if there are alternative drugs that are less likely to cause those side effects.

HEALTHY CHOICE 06



Aim for a Healthy Weight

You might think of your weight in terms of how you look. If you're overweight, losing a few pounds can make you smile when you look in the mirror. But the truth is, being slender isn't just a matter of vanity. It's about health. Being overweight or obese boosts your likelihood of getting type-2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, fatty liver disease, kidney disease, pregnancy complications, and several kinds of cancer, including cancer of the colon, rectum, uterus, gallbladder, kidneys, and breast (after menopause).

The good news is that when you lose weight, your disease risk goes down along with your weight. Even modest weight loss can make a big difference.

The first step to a healthier weight is figuring out your own personal healthy goal weight. Healthcare providers typically think about weight in terms of a measure known as body-mass index, or BMI, which takes both your height and your weight into account. To determine your BMI, use the chart provided here.

Keep in mind that BMI isn't always an accurate way to judge weight, because it doesn't factor in the size of your frame or the amount of muscle you have. Your healthcare provider can work with you to decide what goal weight is healthiest for you.

If you're overweight or obese, losing even a small amount of weight can make a difference. For example, studies have found that losing as little as 5 percent of your body weight (10 pounds in a 200-pound person) can lower the risk of developing osteoarthritis and type-2 diabetes.

Use the chart to determine your BMI. Once you know it, check the BMI guide to see where your weight falls.

		Weight in Pounds																	
		120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250				
Height in Feet and Inches	4'6"	29	31	34	36	39	41	43	46	48	51	53	56	58	60				
	4'8"	27	29	31	34	36	38	40	43	45	47	49	52	54	56				
	4'10"	25	27	29	31	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52				
	5'0"	23	25	27	29	31	33	35	37	39	41	43	45	47	49				
	5'2"	22	24	26	27	29	31	33	35	37	38	40	42	44	46				
	5'4"	21	22	24	26	28	29	31	33	34	36	38	40	41	43				
	5'6"	19	21	23	24	26	27	29	31	32	34	36	37	39	40				
	5'8"	18	20	21	23	24	26	27	29	30	32	34	35	37	38				
	5'10"	17	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	29	30	32	33	35	36				
	6'0"	16	18	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	28	30	31	33	34				
	6'2"	15	17	18	19	21	22	23	24	26	27	28	30	31	32				
	6'4"	15	16	17	18	20	21	22	23	24	26	27	28	29	30				
	6'6"	14	15	16	17	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	27	28	29				
	6'8"	13	14	15	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	28				



Underweight



Healthy Weight



Overweight



Obese

Note: This chart is for adults (≥ 20 years old)



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Know Your Numbers

When your provider gives you health tests, it's good for you to know the results—to “know your numbers.” Knowing your numbers empowers you to take steps to lower your risk and make choices that are best for your health.

What numbers should you know? Some of the most helpful are listed in the chart below.

Test	What It Measures	Optimal Range
Blood Pressure	The force of your blood against the walls of your arteries when your heart beats and rests.	Less than 130/80 mm/Hg
Cholesterol	The amount of several kinds of cholesterol (a waxy substance produced by your liver) in your blood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDL cholesterol levels below 100 mg/dL • HDL cholesterol level above 40 mg/dL for Men and 50mg/dL for Women • Triglycerides below 100 mg/dL
Body Mass Index	Whether you are under-weight, normal weight, overweight, or obese.	Body mass index (BMI) of 18.6-24.9
Blood Sugar	The amount of glucose (sugar) in your blood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HbA1c (glycosylated hemoglobin) less than 5.7% • Fasting plasma glucose (FPG) of less than 100

What Are Your Numbers?

Your healthcare provider can help you fill in your important health numbers in the chart below:

Blood Pressure	
LDL Cholesterol	
HDL Cholesterol	
Triglycerides	
Body Mass Index	
Blood Sugar: HbA1c	
Blood Sugar: Fasting Plasma Glucose	

Shield Your Skin from UV Rays

Your skin is pretty tough. It protects your internal organs from injury and guards you from bacteria and other threats. But your skin is susceptible to damage from ultraviolet (UV) rays that come from the sun and from tanning booths. Too much exposure can cause potentially deadly cancers.

You can lower your skin cancer risk—and protect your overall health—by defending it from UV rays. Here's how:

- **Shield yourself from the sun.** Stay in the shade, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest.
- **Wear clothing that protects you from the sun.** Choose clothes made of tightly knit fabric or specially designed sunblock materials.
- **Wear a hat.** Choose one with a wide brim that shades your face, ears, and neck.
- **Wear sunglasses.** Select lenses with 100% UV protection.
- **Don't use tanning booths or sun lamps.** Although you may think they're a safe way to tan, they're not. In some cases, they can actually be more damaging to your skin than the sun.
- **Wear sunscreen and lip-protecting balm.** Choose brands with broad-spectrum protection a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. Apply generously 30 minutes before going outdoors, and reapply every two hours or after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.
- **Keep an eye on your skin.** If you notice any changes to your skin, check in with your healthcare provider.



Questions for My Healthcare Provider

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