

# Minimizing Your Health Risks

The simplest steps for preventing illness and disease are all within your control. Making healthy choices will help minimize your risk for cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. It will also strengthen your body's ability to fight off viral illnesses, including the flu and COVID-19. Try these basics steps to better health:

- ▶ **Eat healthy foods.** Aim for five servings of fruits and vegetables and at least three servings of whole grains a day. If you eat meat, try lean proteins such as chicken and fish. Minimize your intake of salt, sugar, and processed and fried foods.
- ▶ **Exercise.** Physical activity helps manage weight, boosts the immune system, and assists in maintaining mental wellness. Most experts recommend a mix of cardiovascular exercise, weight training, and stretching for 30 minutes a day, four to five times a week. Fitting up to an hour of moderate activity into your day (such as brisk walking, active housecleaning, or playing with a child or pet) has health benefits, too. Remember, even 10 minutes of activity at a time makes an impact.
- ▶ **Create a sleep routine.** Sleep is often the forgotten ingredient in preventative health. Regular, sufficient sleep allows the body and brain to

restore itself and decreases inflammation, which is a key risk factor for a variety of diseases. Most experts recommend adults get seven to nine hours of sleep per night.

Other ways to minimize your health risks include:

- ▶ If you smoke, quit
- ▶ Get a flu shot every year
- ▶ Stay on schedule with your annual checkup and other preventative screenings

LifeMatters is available 24/7/365 to offer support and encouragement with making healthy choices. We're here to help!



Source: The Staywell Company, LLC

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