

Simple Steps to Better Health



A Healthy Lifestyle

WELCOME TO SIMPLE STEPS TO BETTER HEALTH!

Many factors affect your health. Some you cannot change, such as the genes you are born with or your age. But many you can control by changing how you live. Even small steps toward healthy living lower your risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke and other serious health problems.

Small changes can bring big results. Pick one or two areas to start making a healthier you.

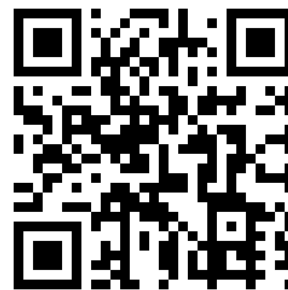
- Eat healthy food
- Keep a healthy weight
- Exercise more often
- Be tobacco free
- Limit alcohol use
- Check your cholesterol
- Watch your blood pressure
- Prevent or control diabetes
- Know your family health history
- Talk with your doctor, nurse or other health care provider
- Take medicines as directed

Start small. For example, eat more fruit and vegetables and take a brisk walk every day. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/HealthyLiving

SIMPLE STEPS TO BETTER HEALTH ... TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

For more information:

- www.ct.gov/dph/simplesteps



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Prevent Diabetes

TO AVOID DIABETES

Diabetes causes high levels of sugar in the blood. Too much sugar in the blood can lead to many serious health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness, dental problems, and foot or leg amputation. Warning signs include being very thirsty, blurry vision, needing to use the bathroom often, tingling in the hands or feet, feeling very tired, cuts healing slowly, and losing weight suddenly or without knowing why. Some people are more likely to get diabetes. The risk is greater for Hispanics, Blacks, Native Americans, and Asians, and those who:

- Are over age 45
- Have diabetes in their family
- Are overweight
- Do not exercise often
- Have high blood pressure, high cholesterol or heart disease
- Are women who had diabetes during pregnancy or delivered a baby weighing more than 9 pounds

Many people think there is no way to stop diabetes, especially if others in their family have had it. But research shows that for people more likely to get type 2 diabetes, losing a small amount of weight helps them avoid or delay the diabetes. For a 200-pound person, losing 10-14 pounds can have a big effect. Eating less fat and being active at least 2 1/2 hours per week also helps prevent diabetes.

IF YOU HAVE DIABETES

There are things you can do to control it, so it does not control you! There is a lot to learn. Ask your doctor or health care provider about an appointment with a diabetes educator. Diabetes educators help you learn about caring for yourself. They will teach you about:

- Healthy eating
- Being active
- Taking medicines
- Checking blood sugars
- Problem solving
- Reducing risks
- Healthy ways to handle diabetes

For more information:

- www.cdc.gov/diabetes
- www.diabetes.org
- www.ct.gov/dph



Eat Healthy

HEALTHY EATING

Your daily food choices affect your health. Use these ideas as a way to start. Choose a change you can make today to become healthier. Eating healthy food and maintaining a healthy weight is important for overall health. It can help with many health problems, like heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Watch Calories

- Enjoy your food, but eat less
- Avoid large portions

Eat More of These Foods

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Make at least half your grains whole grains
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk

Eat Less of These Foods

- Read labels & choose foods with lower amounts of salt (sodium)
- Drink water instead of drinks with added sugar

For more information:

- www.choosemyplate.gov
- www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating

SALT INTAKE

Eating too much salt is linked to high blood pressure, which can make stroke, heart disease, and kidney disease more likely. Everyone should limit salt (or sodium) to less than 2,300 mg a day. If you are age 51 or older, or if you are black, or have high blood pressure, diabetes or kidney disease, you should limit salt to 1,500 mg per day.

TO REDUCE SALT

- Buy fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables with no salt added
- Use fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat, instead of canned or processed
- Use herbs, spices, lemon, lime, vinegar, and salt-free seasoning blends instead of salt
- Read labels when shopping. Look for lower sodium in cereals, crackers, pasta sauces, and canned vegetables
- Choose foods with low-salt options
- Eat less processed & packaged food

For more information:

- www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/prevent/sodium/sodium.htm
- www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/Sodium



Stay Active

STAY ACTIVE

Exercise is important to staying healthy. People who are active live longer and feel better. Exercise can help you keep a healthy weight. It can delay or prevent diabetes, some cancers and heart problems.

Most adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five days per week. This includes walking quickly, mowing the lawn, dancing, swimming or bicycling. Stretching and using weights can also strengthen your body and improve your fitness.

The key is to find the right exercise for you. If it is fun, you are more likely to keep doing it. You may want to walk with a friend, join a class or plan a group bike ride. If you have not been exercising regularly, before you start, talk to your health care provider about what exercise is best for you.

HOW TO GET MOVING

- If you can't find a lot of time, do short activities during the day, like three 10-minute walks
- Choose activities that are fun
- Change activities, so you don't get bored. Maybe use different jogging, walking, or biking paths. Or bike one day, and jog the next
- Create reasons to exercise, such as parking your car farther away and walking
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator
- Walk or bike to work or to the store
- Take a break at work to stretch or take a quick walk with a co-worker
- Don't let cold weather keep you on the couch! Find activities for the winter, such as exercising to a workout video
- If you have children, make time to play with them outside. Set a good example!
- Go dancing

- Turn activities into social events—work out with family or friends
- Set short-term goals, and reward yourself when you reach them
- Don't expect to see big changes right away. It can take weeks before you notice change such as weight loss
- Make physical activity a regular part of your day, so that it becomes a habit

For more information:

- www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao
- www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/index.html
- www.health.gov/paguidelines/pdf/adultguide.pdf



Heart Health

LOVE YOUR HEART

About 1 out of every 3 adults has high blood pressure, which increases the risk for heart disease and stroke. High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, so you can have it for years without knowing. All that time, high blood pressure can damage your heart, blood vessels, kidneys, and other parts of your body. That's why it's important to get your blood pressure checked often.

Blood pressure is measured as two numbers. The top (systolic) number refers to the pressure when your heart beats. The bottom (diastolic) number refers the pressure when your heart rests between beats.

Category	Systolic (top #)		Diastolic (bottom #)
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Prehypertension	120-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure			
- Stage 1	140-159	or	90-99
- Stage 2	160 or higher	or	100 or higher

Knowing your blood pressure numbers is important, even when you're feeling fine. If your blood pressure is normal, work with your health care team to keep it that way. If your blood pressure is too high, treatment may help prevent damage to your body.

For more information:

- www.ninds.nih.gov
- www.millionhearts.gov
- www.ct.gov/dph (Click on the WISEWOMAN program)

CHOLESTEROL: KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs. But when you have too much in your blood, it can build up in your blood vessels and lead to heart disease or stroke. If you've never had your cholesterol checked, all you need is a simple blood test.

How to control your cholesterol:

- Eat healthy food
- Keep a healthy weight
- Exercise every week
- Take medicine as directed

Good Cholesterol Levels:

Total cholesterol = less than 200 mg/dL

LDL ("bad" cholesterol) = less than 100 mg/dL

HDL ("good" cholesterol) = more than 60 mg/dL

For more information:

- www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncep/index.htm

Quit Tobacco



Even if you do not smoke, breathing secondhand smoke can make you sick. It can cause heart disease, lung cancer, and breathing problems. Even a little bit can hurt you. Being tobacco free is the best way to protect yourself and your family. If you want to quit using tobacco, here are some ideas to help:

PREPARING TO QUIT

- Pick a quit date and write it down on a calendar or some place where you will see it often
- Start healthy habits to help you quit more successfully
- Write down all of the reasons you want to quit
- Write down all of the times and events that cause you to use tobacco and decide how you will handle them
- Find and talk to your support system—friends, family, co-workers, online support, CT Quitline, BecomeAnEX.org
- Talk to a health care provider about medicines or nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) that may help you quit

TWO WEEKS BEFORE YOUR QUIT DATE

- Think about things you like to do other than smoking
- Start exercising and stock the house with healthy snacks
- Start a hobby that uses your hands
- Get the medication that will help you to quit, if using any

ONE WEEK BEFORE YOUR QUIT DATE

- Tell other people not to use tobacco in your car/house
- Do something you enjoy that does not include tobacco
- Change your normal routine—if you usually smoke before you shower, shower first; drink tea instead of coffee; take a different route to work
- Practice quitting—on one day, try not to smoke for 30 minutes. On another day, pick a time or place not to smoke. This will show how you will feel when you quit and will help your body get used to it

NIGHT BEFORE YOUR QUIT DATE

- Throw away all lighters, cigarettes/tobacco, ashtrays
- Review all the reasons you want to quit
- Review your ideas for how to deal with times and events when you normally use tobacco

AFTER YOUR QUIT DATE

- Review why you wanted to quit, how to deal with times you usually use tobacco, and call your support systems
- Do things with your hands and mouth—bend paper clips, doodle, brush your teeth, chew gum.
- Exercise can help when you really want tobacco.
- If using medication to help, use as directed.
- Reward yourself and celebrate all successes. Save the money you would have used to buy tobacco and buy yourself something special

Even if you slip, you can quit again. Use the slip as a lesson. Think about what happened and why so that you can be even more ready next time. Never give up! Quitting tobacco is one of the healthiest things you can do for you and your family.

Resources & Information:

- CT Quitline – 1-800-QUIT NOW
- www.BecomeAnEX.org
- www.facebook.com/ctquits
- ct.gov/dph/tobacco

Team up with your Health Care Provider

Getting healthy and staying healthy starts with you and your doctor, nurse or health care provider. People who have good relationships with their health care team often are happier with their care and have better results. Here are some ways to help you team up to improve your health care.

- Before your appointment, make a list of what you want to ask.
- Write and bring a copy of your family health history.
- Always bring a list of medicines you take, including over the counter medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements.
- Be honest about your diet, physical activity, smoking, alcohol or drug use, and sexual history.
- Describe any allergies to drugs, foods, pollen, or other things.
- Don't forget to mention if other health care providers, including mental health professionals, are treating you.
- Ask about your medicines. Make sure you understand how to use them.
- Ask questions. If you don't, your health care provider may think you understand completely.
- Bring a family member or friend with you. They can take notes, offer moral support, and help you remember what was said.
- Many insurance plans pay for annual and preventive care visits. Take advantage!

For more information:

- www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/talking-your-doctor-guide-older-people
- www.nei.nih.gov/health/talktodoc.asp

FAMILY HEALTH HISTORY

In addition to sharing holiday customs, family members share genes, behaviors, lifestyles, and environments that may affect their health and their risk of disease.

Did you know that your family history might affect how likely you are to get heart disease, diabetes, cancer or have a stroke? People who have a close family member with one of these illnesses may be more likely to get that disease than those without this family history.

Even if you are healthy now, knowing your family health history and sharing it with your health care team can help you understand your risk and how to avoid getting sick.

Give your loved ones the gift of your family health history.

For more information:

- www.hhs.gov/familyhistory
- www.cdc.gov/genomics/famhistory
- familyhistory.hhs.gov/fhh-web/home.action

BAKED TILAPIA WITH TOMATOES

nonstick vegetable oil spray
4 tilapia fillets
4 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 1/2 teaspoons thyme
1/4 cup pitted black olives, diced
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 cup red onion, diced
1 tablespoon lime juice
parsley and lemon wedges for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 400 °F.
2. Spray baking dish with vegetable oil spray. Arrange fillets in the baking dish.
3. Mix remaining ingredients in a bowl.
4. Spoon the tomato mixture evenly over the fillets.
5. Bake uncovered 15 to 20 minutes or until the fish flakes easily with a fork.
6. Garnish with parsley and a lemon wedge.

LENTIL SOUP

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 medium carrots, diced
2 medium stalks celery, chopped
1 small yellow onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried basil
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 cups dry lentils
1 can (14 1/2 ounces) crushed tomatoes
2 cups vegetable broth
6 1/2 cups water

1. In a large soup pot, heat oil over medium heat.
Add carrots, celery, and onions; cook and stir until the onion is tender.
2. Stir in garlic, oregano, basil, and pepper. Cook for 2 minutes.
3. Stir in lentils and tomatoes, then add the vegetable broth and water.
Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for at least 1 hour
or until lentils are tender.
4. Store leftovers in the refrigerator and reheat on the stove or in the microwave.
The soup will taste better the next day!