

# PERSONAL WELLNESS FACTS

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING HEALTH:

The five health needs or preventive actions are listed below. These are key factors needing attention to prevent serious health problems. Give these items top priority. Other recommendations and guidelines follow throughout these fact sheets.

1. **Cholesterol reduction** – High cholesterol (or low HDL) can damage the arteries that deliver oxygen to your heart and brain. Cholesterol levels can be controlled through improved eating habits and regular exercise. Make changes now can prevent a heart attack or stroke later.
2. **Stress reduction** – It is not possible to avoid all stress, but you can manage stress through increased physical activity, relaxation, planning and organization, problem-solving, and improving relationships with others.
3. **Physical activity** - Every “body” needs regular physical activity such as walking, cycling, swimming, aerobics, or active sports. Regular exercise helps control excess weight, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and high blood sugar levels. It will also reduce stress and help you relax.
4. **Cancer prevention** – Healthy eating, regular exercise, and other lifestyle factors will greatly reduce your risk of getting many kinds of cancer. Have regular medical checkups and avoid smoking and other cancer-causing behaviors.
5. **Good nutrition** – Good eating habits are basic to your health and can help prevent heart disease, high blood pressure, certain cancers, diabetes, and obesity. Eating healthy fats, along with an increase in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, is best.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING FITNESS:

The marked items below indicate where changes can be made to improve your health. For additional information, refer to the educational material and discuss these items with a fitness trainer, health professional, or your doctor.

- **Abdominal strength/endurance** is important for maintaining good posture and protecting the back from strain or injury. Include abdominal strengthening exercises in your fitness program.
- **Upper body strength/endurance** exercises are needed to maintain muscle mass, bone mineral content, and strong ligaments and tendons. Without regular exercise they tend to atrophy (weaken). Do more strengthening exercises.
- **Flexibility** is important in maintaining full range of motion in joints for preventing pulled muscles and injuries. Maintain your good flexibility with regular stretching exercises.
- **Aerobic capacity** is a measure of cardiovascular fitness. Maintaining a healthy heart and lungs decreases risk of heart disease and increases longevity. Improve your aerobic capacity for better health.
- **Healthy weight** decreases the risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and cancer. To avoid being overweight, get regular physical activity (30+ minutes per day) and choose low-fat foods.

**Caution** – If you have any health problem, talk to your doctor **before** increasing your physical activity.

# HEALTH AGE

| GOOD HEALTH PRACTICES   |
|---|
| Do not smoke  |
| Regular, aerobic exercise, at least 30 minutes, 3+ times/week |
| Alcohol, none or moderate use                                 |
| Adequate sleep, 7-8 hours per night, most nights              |
| Recommended desirable weight, based on BMI                    |
| Eat a good breakfast every morning, or most mornings          |
| Avoid frequent snacking on typical snacks                     |

**Recommendations for Improving Health Age:** The marked items below indicate how you can make changes to improve your health. For additional information, discuss these items with a health professional or with your doctor. Your Health Age is calculated only from these seven Good Health Practices.

- **Smoking -**
  - Nonsmokers, on the average, live 10 to 12 years longer than those who continue to smoke. Politely encourage family and friends not to smoke, as well.
- **Activity -**
  - Every body needs regular physical activity: brisk walking, cycling, swimming, aerobics, or active sports. At least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity three or more times per week is needed for optimum health.
- **Alcohol -**
  - Drinking can lead to serious health problems: liver disease, cancer, high blood pressure, accidents, and alcohol dependency. If you choose to drink, do so in moderation. Do not drink and drive.
- **Sleep -**
  - Research shows that people who get seven to eight hours of sleep daily have lower death rates than those who sleep less. Adequate rest improves physical and emotional health.
- **Weight -**
  - A healthy weight can help you look and feel your best. Achieve a healthy weight, eat low-fat foods, be physically active, and avoid late night meals.
- **Breakfast -**
  - Research shows that people who eat breakfast daily live longer than those who don't eat breakfast regularly. Healthy breakfast choices include fruit and fruit juices, whole-grain breads and cereals, and low-fat milk.
- **Snacking -**
  - Frequent snacking on "junk" foods (chips, pastry, colas, and other high-fat, high-calorie foods) provides excess fat, calories, salt, and sugar, but little nutrition. If you snack, choose fresh fruits and vegetables.