



Caring for Your Whole Self

Being healthy means caring for all parts of your health, and every little step towards better health makes a difference. The start of a new year is a great time to take inventory of life, and make change. Consider the following for a healthier you.

What You Can Do

Sleep

Did you know sleep plays a major role in your overall health and wellness? Each night, those precious hours of sleep rejuvenate your body and mind. Getting enough sleep is a critical factor in your mood, health, weight management, and energy level. Long-term sleep deprivation can also increase your risk for certain health issues, including.

- High blood pressure
- Heart attack and heart failure
- Stroke
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Depression and other mood disorders

Many factors can disrupt sleep. It could be a small thing, like an old, uncomfortable mattress, or it could also be a larger issue like stress, certain medications and medical conditions. Talk to your healthcare provider if you continue to struggle with sleep.

Manage stress

While stress is a normal reaction, high levels of stress over long periods of time can increase your blood pressure and weaken your immune system. Stress is also linked to certain chronic health conditions, like depression. To keep stress in check.

- Identify what causes you stress (triggers), and find ways to manage it.
- Practice a relaxation technique, such as yoga, walking outdoors, or playing a sport.
- Get support. Build a team of people you can turn to when life is challenging. Talking to a counselor can also help you find ways to relieve stress and anxiety.

Be active *and* eat healthy

While healthy eating and exercise each provide excellent health benefits on their own, it's when they are combined that they provide the cornerstone to a healthy weight and lifestyle.

- Try to include fruits and/or veggies in every meal.
- Pay attention to portions—how much we eat is just as important as what we eat.
- Aim to exercise more days of the week, but always look for opportunities to be active, such as taking the stairs rather than the elevator or taking a daily walk around the neighborhood.

Laugh

Laughing reduces the level of stress hormones in your body and increases the level of health-enhancing hormones, like endorphins and neurotransmitters. It also exercises the diaphragm, heart, and shoulder muscles, which may explain why a good laugh can feel like a physical release. In a nutshell, laughing makes you feel good. It lightens our mood, refreshes our perspective, encourages creativity and connects us to others. To encourage laughter and humor:

- Decide you want to laugh more and look for opportunities to do so.
- Surround yourself with individuals who share your sense of humor.
- At the end of each day, write down or tell someone something that brought you happiness or made you laugh.
- Spend time with children.

For more information and tools on healthy living, visit the website or call the toll-free number listed below.



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