

Health Promotion Recommendation

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HEALTH PROMOTION RECOMMENDATIONS

You will live a longer and healthier life if you take care of yourself. Preventive medicine helps achieve and maintain better health. The paragraphs below contain what we consider to be the most important information you need to live a longer and healthier life.

1. Try to maintain **ideal body weight**. Being overweight increases your death rate from heart disease, diabetes, some cancers and many other illnesses. You are obese if your waist circumference is greater than 35 inches as a female and greater than 40 inches as a male. A more exact measure is the body mass index (BMI). The attached table (the last page) can be used to calculate your BMI. In general, a person age 35 or older is obese if the BMI is greater than or equal to 30. We do not recommend fad diets. To lose weight you must exercise more and modify your eating behavior. A slow, steady weight loss of two pounds per week is better than rapid weight loss. The only thing that has proven to work over the years has been Weight Watchers, willpower, determination and increased exercise.
2. **Exercise** at least 5 times per week for at least 60 minutes. During this time you should attain a pulse rate equal to 50 – 80 % of your “maximal heart rate” (maximal heart rate is calculated by subtracting your age from 220: for example, a 35 year old male is $220 - 35 = 185$. Then, 70% of $185 = 130$). One of the best ways to exercise is to simply start walking. You don’t have to go to the gym. You don’t have to make a big deal out of it. You just have to consistently walk. More strenuous exercise is even more helpful. If you are over age 40, it is important to get medical clearance or discuss this with your doctor prior to beginning an exercise program.
3. Drink **alcohol** only in moderation. We recommend no greater than two drinks per day. One drink per day has been shown to reduce some cancer and heart attack risks. If you have a family history of alcoholism you should avoid regular alcohol intake because your chances of alcoholism are increased four-fold. Never, never, never drink and drive. Positive answers to the following questions indicate a potential problem with alcohol. 1. Have you ever had a problem with alcohol use? 2. In the past year, have you ever drank (or used drugs) more than you meant to? 3. Have you ever thought you needed to cut down your drinking or drug use during the past year?
4. Do not smoke **cigarettes**. Smoking dramatically increases your risk of cancer, heart attack, sudden death, ulcers, mouth cancer and bladder cancer. It also increases the size and number of facial wrinkles. Penis cancer is 400% more common in smokers. Baldness is 63% more common in smokers. **Chewing tobacco** should be avoided because it may cause oral cancer. There are medications that can dramatically reduce your desire to smoke. They can make it very easy to quit. Please ask us about this. It is much easier than you think!
5. Recreational **drug use and abuse** is obviously a bad thing. If you have a problem with drugs or substance abuse, please discuss this with us. We can help in many ways.
6. If you are taking **herbs and supplements**, please let us know. We do not recommend that all patients take herbs and nutritional supplements. We never recommend high doses or mega doses. Many herbs and supplements are not monitored well for quality and consistent manufacturing. Also, some of them can have dangerous side effects and interact with some medications.
7. **Sleep** is very important. It has a strong effect on your physical and emotional health. Poor quality sleep may cause you to develop hypertension, emotional dysfunction, depression and many other chronic, significant health problems that will reduce the quality and quantity of your life. Please tell us if you are not satisfied with your sleep or if you are not rested when you wake up in the morning. Avoid frequent napping because naps may reduce the quality of your nightly sleep cycles. Exercise improves the quality of sleep.
8. Please let us know if you are having **depression** or sadness symptoms. Depression is an extremely common illness. It is a chemical abnormality in the brain that causes the following symptoms.
 1. Loss of enjoyment or interest in activities that used to be enjoyable
 2. Fatigue or loss of energy
 3. Sadness or emptiness

4. Tearfulness
5. Changes in appetite and weight
6. Too much or too little sleep
7. Irritable
8. Altered sex drive
9. Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
10. Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless
11. Persistent physical symptoms – such as headaches, chronic pain, digestive disorders that do not respond to treatment
12. Thoughts of death or suicide

Two questions to ask yourself are:

1. Have you been sad for much of the past several months or year?
2. Do you often feel sad or depressed?

If you have any of these symptoms please let us know. Medications work, and they work very well. Proper treatment can change the quality of your life, your marriage, your performance at school or work and your relationships with friends and family.

9. **Driving and alcohol** is a very dangerous combination. Don't be dumb, not even once.
10. You should **examine your skin** regularly to be sure that you have no abnormal moles or other lesions.
 - a. We do a lot of dermatology work and can take care of 90% of your skin problems and moles.
 - b. Abnormal moles have one or more of the following danger signs:
 - 1) **A**symmetry – If you were to fold the mole on itself, it should match
 - 2) **B**order Irregular – The border should be smooth and distinct
 - 3) **C**olor variation
 - 4) **D**iameter larger than 6 mm (the size of a pencil eraser)
 - 5) Crusting or oozing
 - 6) Changing moles – change in size or color
 - 7) A **n**ew mole in a person over 40 years old
 - 8) Enlarging or elevating moles
 - 9) A family history of melanoma is also a risk factor
 - c. If you have lesions on your skin that concern you, please make an appointment to have them evaluated by us. We can take care of 90% of these skin problems. For the other 10%, we will refer you to the appropriate dermatologist.
11. Wear **sunscreen** (at least SPF 15) when you are outside frequently or for long periods. Avoid sunburns. This is especially important if you have red or blonde hair, blue or green eyes, fair skin and freckles, or skin which tends to burn easily. The sunscreen should protect against UVA and UVB sunrays.
12. Reduce your **stress** level. Stress can damage your immune system, emotions, mental abilities, relationships and happiness.
13. Eat plenty of **fruits and vegetables**. This is the best way to get your essential vitamins and nutrients. Cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, brussel sprouts and kale have significant cancer protection effects. To keep vitamin levels high, do not cook your vegetables for long periods and do not cut them into tiny pieces. Even better, eat them raw as this prevents any alteration of the vitamin levels.
14. **Reduce fat grams** in your diet. You should read the labels on the foods you eat and avoid high fat gram foods. Polyunsaturated fats (these are liquids at room temperature) are healthier than the solid saturated fats. Oils that are high in the good, polyunsaturated fats are safflower, corn and soybean oil.
15. **Reduce your cholesterol** intake and have your cholesterol levels checked regularly. Cholesterol can stick to the inside surface of your arteries and clog them up. This may result in heart attacks, strokes and other medical catastrophes. Reduce cholesterol rich foods, such as eggs, red meats, fried foods, whole milk, ice cream, cheese and butter. Choose lean meats such as seafood, chicken, turkey and veal. There are two main types of cholesterol: the protective HDL and the dangerous LDL. You want to raise your HDL and reduce your LDL cholesterol.
16. Avoid frequent **bakery items**. They are very high in fat. They also increase your blood sugar, weight and tooth decay.

17. Reduce **smoked and barbecued meats** in your diet. This cooking process deposits cancer promoting materials onto the surface of the meats. It is okay to eat smoked and barbecued foods in moderation, but we advise no more often than once or twice per week. Marinating the meat for at least one hour prior to cooking will reduce the cancer promoting deposits.
18. You should drink **caffeine** only in moderation. One dose is a cup of coffee, a glass/cup of tea or a soft drink. Caffeine may have a protective benefit with diabetes, Parkinson's and colon cancer. Caffeine does not increase your blood pressure long term.
19. Know the **warning signs of cancer**. They are:
 - a. Lump or thickening in the breast or any other part of the body
 - b. Change in a wart or mole
 - c. Indigestion or trouble swallowing
 - d. A change in bowel or bladder habits
 - e. Any unusual bleeding or discharge
 - f. Nagging, persistent cough or hoarseness
 - g. A sore that does not heal
 - h. Unexplained changes in weight
20. Your **family history** of diseases is very important. Facts of your family history may change the testing and preventive care that you need. Specific family diseases (parents, brothers, sisters, children) that we need to know about are the following: any family history of heart attacks, colon cancer, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, prostate cancer, thyroid cancer, osteoporosis and colon polyps (in one of your brothers, sisters, parents or children).
21. Do your **self-exams**. Women should do monthly self-breast exams. Men should do monthly testicle exams from age 15-40. Both sexes should do monthly self-skin exams.
22. Keep up-to-date on your **complete physicals and lab work**. This includes an **examination for cancer** of the thyroid, testicles, ovaries, lymph nodes, oral region and skin. You should have a complete physical every year. Women should stay up-to-date on breast exams, Pap smears and mammograms. You should have a yearly flu shot and a pneumonia vaccine if you are over the age of 50, or if you have a chronic disease of the lungs, kidney, heart and liver, or if you have diabetes. See our "Wellness/Health Promotion Guidelines" (we call this our "X sheet") for specific recommendations about physicals and periodic testing.
23. You must stay up-to-date on **screening for cancer of the colon and rectum**. Approximately 30% of people over 50 have colon polyps and 30% of these may silently progress to colon cancer. **Removing these polyps prevents the cancer**. Colon cancer is often a silent disease, and it has a high death rate. It is **extremely** preventable if the proper, regular screening tests are done. You must stay up-to-date with these screening procedures, even if they are distasteful. You should have your colon evaluated by a scope procedure every 3-10 years, beginning at age 50. (This should begin at age 30 if you have a parent, brother or sister with colon cancer or colon polyps). If you have colon polyps or colon cancer, you should tell your children and your brothers and sisters so that they can be properly screened. The fact that you have these problems marks these relatives as increased risk.
24. The **treadmill stress test** is used to screen for blockages in the arteries of the heart. This test can save your life. This should be done if you are a high risk individual (hypertension, smoker, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, family history of heart disease, etc.). You should begin screening at age 40-45, and periodically thereafter. A stress test should also be considered in all men over age 40 and all women over age 50 who are sedentary and planning to start a vigorous exercise program.
25. **Allergies** are a very common problem in the Raleigh area. They can cause nasal symptoms, headache and fatigue. There are many effective treatments for allergies. If allergies have a negative impact on your quality of life, we can help you with medications or allergy testing and shots.
26. The **Sure Path Pap Smear with HPV screening** is a new, advanced Pap Smear technique that detects abnormal cells better than the traditional Pap Smear. We automatically screen for HPV with every Pap smear done in our office.
27. You must be sure you are using an effective **contraception** technique. We can discuss these options with you. If you have teenagers, you need to discuss this with them to avoid major disasters. They are often too young and immature to properly prevent unwanted pregnancies. We also recommend vaccinating all females between the ages of 9-26 with Gardasil.
28. The use of **Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)** in females is a controversial subject. We sometimes recommend HRT in the peri-menopausal years for patients with significant menopausal symptoms (such as hot flashes, mood changes and vaginal dryness). You should discuss this with your doctor to be sure you are making the best decision about hormone replacement therapy.
29. **Erection dysfunction** is very common. Men are hesitant to talk about this, however, there are excellent treatments for this common disorder. You should make an appointment to discuss these issues. If you have concerns about this or other sexual issues/problems, please make an appointment to discuss them.

30. Surgical menopausal and post-menopausal females should have a **Bone Density Scan** to screen for bone thinning (osteoporosis). This disease can be reversed and treated easily if it is discovered at an early stage.
31. We recommend **daily multi-vitamins**. The best source of these vitamins is from proper foods such as fruits and vegetables. However, we recommend vitamin supplements also.
32. Women should take **calcium and Vitamin D** to prevent osteoporosis (bone thinning). Risk factors for osteoporosis are:
- a. Postmenopausal hormone deficiency
 - b. Early menopause
 - c. Low exercise levels
 - d. Poor dairy and calcium intake
 - e. Petite or thin patients
 - f. White or Oriental race
 - g. Family history of osteoporosis
 - h. Smoking
 - i. High alcohol or caffeine intake
 - j. Chronic lung disease

You need 1200-1500 mg of calcium and 400 international units (IU) of vitamin D per day. Most adults get approximately 500 mg of calcium per day in their diet. One glass of milk contains 300 mg of calcium and 100 IU of vitamin D. Estimate the amount of calcium in your diet and make up the difference with vitamin supplements. For example, if you should be taking in 1500 mg of calcium but you drink only one glass of milk per day, then you need 1500 mg minus 300 mg. That equals 1200 mg of calcium through vitamins. Calcium is better absorbed in smaller doses. So you should split your dose, taking one half of it in the morning and the other half at night. To make your bones stronger, you should do weight bearing exercise (such as walking, health riders, etc).

33. Taking **Low Dose Aspirin** every day helps lower your risk for heart attack and stroke. You should consider aspirin therapy if you are:
- a. A male greater than 40 years of age
 - b. A postmenopausal female
 - c. A younger person with one of the following risk factors for heart disease:
 - 1) Cigarette smoking
 - 2) Hypertension
 - 3) Diabetes
 - 4) High Cholesterol
 - 5) Obesity
 - 6) A family history of heart disease in your father (less than 55 years of age) or your mother (less than 65 years of age)

Ask your doctor before you start aspirin to determine if it is appropriate for you. The recommended daily dose is 81 mg (that is, one baby aspirin). A coated aspirin is best because it can prevent irritation and bleeding in the stomach. Aspirin should be avoided if you have a history of bleeding ulcers or other serious gastrointestinal disease. Taking a regular adult aspirin (325 mg) has been shown to thin your blood more than is necessary and may result in a higher frequency of cerebral hemorrhage (bleeding into the brain).

34. Woman in the childbearing years should take **Folic Acid** 400-800 micrograms per day to prevent neurologic birth defects. Take 1000 micrograms per day if you are actually trying to get pregnant.
35. We offer the **flu vaccine** every Fall. You should get a flu shot every Fall (beginning approximately October 15th) if you are over age 65 or have one of the following medical problems:
- a. Asthma
 - b. Diabetes
 - c. Lung disease
 - d. Heart disease
 - e. Cancer
 - f. Anemia
- *h. If you are a household member of a patient with one of these diseases

36. The **Hepatitis B Vaccine** is recommended for all adolescents (age 12-24) if you were not immunized as an infant. Hepatitis B can be transmitted through bodily fluids, including sexual contact. This vaccine is important if you have multiple sexual partners, have had a sexually transmitted disease, if you are a health care worker or if you are homosexual.
37. You should get the **Pneumonia vaccine** if you are over age 65 or have one of the following risk factors:
 - a. Asthma
 - b. Diabetes
 - c. Lung disease
 - d. Heart disease
 - e. Cancer
 - f. Anemia
 - g. HIV
38. The **Meningitis Vaccine** may be a good idea, especially for college students. We do offer this vaccine at our office.
39. **Teenagers** should be counseled by their parents or physician about smoking, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, drugs, alcohol and drunk driving. We also recommend vaccinating all teenagers with Gardasil to protect against cervical cancer.
40. You should be screened for **sexually transmitted diseases** if you are sexually active and have had more than one partner. This is especially true if you are in the age range of 15-30 years old. This includes screening for human papilloma virus (HPV), chlamydia, gonorrhea and HIV. These germs can affect your fertility and can cause some cancers.
41. The issues in this handout are **guidelines**. If you are too strict with yourself, you may not be able to adopt a consistent and long-term good lifestyle. Therefore, allow yourself some holidays to “cheat”. You need long-term changes that you can stick to. Avoiding frustration and misery can help you stick to your long-term goals. Be reasonable but allow yourself times to “treat” yourself.
42. **Miscellaneous recommendations**
 - a. Eat breakfast. Fasting overnight puts your body on “emergency” and breakfast takes you off “emergency”
 - b. Drink at least 6-8 glasses of water per day
 - c. Always wear your seatbelt
 - d. Have emergency telephone numbers available
 - e. Have dental check-ups every 6 months and floss daily
 - f. Keep all firearms unloaded and locked away, especially if you have children
 - g. Get adequate sleep (7-8 hours per night)
 - h. Get smoke detectors for your home
 - i. Have a PPD skin test for tuberculosis every year if you are a health care worker
 - j. If you ride a motorcycle, always wear your helmet
 - k. If you have small children, post the Poison Control Center phone number in a visible spot. The National Poison Hotline number is 1-800-222-1222.
 - l. Have your vision checked annually after age 40. Do this at an earlier age if you have vision problems. Yearly, if you are diabetic, or have hypertension or hyperlipidemia.
 - m. You should have a blood test for Hepatitis C if you have any tattoos, or if you had a blood transfusion prior to 1992.
 - n. Notify us if your spouse or partner observes irregular breathing patterns during sleep. This could indicate a sleep apnea disorder.