



Health is Everything

We all know that taking care of our health is important, but not many people actively pursue a healthy lifestyle day in and day out. Our bodies are essentially machines and when they are not taken care of, they begin to break down. This occurs naturally over time with old age, but many millions of people face health issues that are not normal to have and often accelerate the aging process or cause a premature death.

It is important for all of us to consider what our health means to us and what we can do to improve it.

Health Issues

While many people believe we are healthier than ever before because life expectancies are at an all-time high, the quantity of years lived does not exactly equal quality of health. With improvements in medicine and a great understanding of the human body there should be lower cases of disease and sickness, but this is not the case.

A few alarming disease statistics in the United States:

- More than 36% of Americans are considered obese ([CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov))
- 29 million people in the United States have diabetes

and another 89 million are considered pre-diabetic ([CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov))

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. ([CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov))
- There is an average of 735,000 heart attacks each year. ([CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov))
- Cancer claims an average of 1,630 lives every day. ([Cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org))

These statistics are not meant to strike fear in anyone.

The chance of suffering from any of the above diseases and problems is greatly reduced when you make the choice to live a healthier lifestyle.

There are many small changes you can make today that can have a huge positive difference over the rest of your life.

Choose a Healthier Lifestyle

Here are a few recommendations:

- Get more sleep. Most studies recommend at least 6 hours.
- Stop **smoking**, using tobacco, or alcohol in excess.
- **Eat less fast food or processed foods.** Choose whole grains, vegetables, and lean cuts of meat.
- **Stop drinking sugar-filled drinks and choose water instead.**
- Stress less. Eliminate the stressors in your life or find productive ways to cope with them.
- Get active. Our bodies are not built to sit around!

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These are just a few basic things we all can do to live a healthier life.

It is easy to disregard this advice or stick to bad habits because it can be hard to make changes. Bad habits can be broken. Think of someone you know who is in bad health and is very limited in what they can do. No one wants to live like that. Think about the last time you had the flu and how much you appreciated how great you felt once you got over it. But, unlike the flu, heart attacks can cause permanent damage and will affect your health for the rest of your life. Be proactive and make changes today for a healthier tomorrow.

If you do not have your health, you have nothing.