Healthy Habits for 2017

Studies have shown that healthier lifestyle choices will help us live longer & healthier lives. Below are the top 15 healthy habits & why we should adopt these practices, as stated by doctors and dietitians.

1. WRITE IT ALL DOWN
Writing down what you eat as well as your physical activities keeps you honest. There’s no way to pretend you didn’t eat those M&Ms if you’re keeping a food log! Plus, writing down what you eat makes you more aware of exactly what and how much you’re eating, which helps you make smart food choices and control portions. Sharing that information with a friend means you’re held accountable, plus you get support. Studies show that keeping a food journal and buddying up increase weight-loss success.

2. EAT BREAKFAST EVERYDAY
Starting the day with a healthy breakfast means more energy, a calmer, more focused mind, and a healthier body. Plus, skipping meals drains your energy and leaves you feeling run-down. When you do get around to eating, you’re extra hungry, which means a greater chance that you’ll (a) overeat and (b) reach for unhealthy foods.

3. EXERCISE WITH FRIENDS
Numerous studies show that social support from a significant other or meaningful friend is highly associated with sticking to an exercise routine. Another big adherence motivator is seeing how exercise improves quality of life, which is easy to see when you’re enjoying physical activity with a friend. Studies show that taking this kind of time gives busy moms a sense of serenity and control over their lives.

4. PRACTICE DEEP BREATHING
The quality & rhythm of your breath affects your nervous system, including the portion of the brain that influences your feelings of calm or stress. A conscious, calming breath can offset the experience of anxiety & other stressful emotions. When we breathe fully & deeply, our lungs & chest send signals to our brain & we begin to feel calmer. Deep breathing, aka diaphragmatic breathing, also has physical benefits, such as improving posture & helping to ease pain. The diaphragm is a large muscle that separates your chest from your abdomen. To deep breathe, place one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your rib cage. Breathe in slowly through your nose. You should feel your stomach move out against your bottom hand while the hand on your chest remains still. As you exhale through your mouth, allow your belly to fall inward again. Repeat.

5. GET ENOUGH SLEEP
Adequate sleep is essential for your body to perform routine maintenance. Sleep allows your brain to better process new experiences and information, which leads to increased understanding and retention. In addition, sleep helps immune system functioning and your ability to fight infection and stay healthy. This may be due to the immune system’s increased production of certain proteins during sleep.

6. LAUGH WITH FRIENDS
While there’s some controversy surrounding the claim that laughter improves health, it’s clear that laughter does have some very real, positive benefits. Laughter buffers you against the negatives of life that could lead to depression. It brings people together, thus stimulating social support, which has been proven to help combat stress. Some research shows that when you laugh, there is an increase in oxygen-rich blood flow in your body, possibly due to the release of endorphins, which create a chemical rush that counters negative feelings and stress. In general, studies show that people who laugh a lot tend to be in good health & feel well.

7. SCHEDULE IN EXERCISE
Scheduling time for exercise helps you stick to it: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services currently recommends that adults engage in at least 150 minutes per week of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity, and that exercise should be spread out over the course of the week. Strength-training exercises should be performed at least twice a week. And while more
exercise brings even greater health benefits, less exercise is still much better than nothing, as a recent study demonstrates. After tracking more than 400,000 adults for 8 years, the researchers concluded that just 15 minutes a day of moderate exercise results in improved health and life expectancy.

8. SPICE UP MEALS
Spices such as cinnamon, turmeric, ginger, rosemary, sage, cloves, mustard seed, cumin and oregano have concentrated amounts of antioxidants in them that help with decreasing your risk for heart disease, stroke, certain cancers, overall inflammation and even bacterial infections. Plus, they pack a flavorful punch — without added fat or sugar.

9. GET OUTDOORS
The sun contributes significantly to the daily production of vit D. As little as 10 minutes of exposure between the hours of 10 am & 3 pm is thought to be enough to prevent deficiencies. Vit D aids in the absorption of calcium, helping to form and maintain strong bones. Recent research also suggests that vit D may provide protection from hypertension, cancer and several autoimmune diseases. Data also show that spending just 10 minutes outside will increase your feelings of wellness and vitality as long as you’re paying attention to nature and your natural surroundings.

10. MAKE STAYING FIT CONVENIENT
Not surprisingly, studies show that easy access to exercise facilities enhances exercise adherence. When it comes to strength training, researchers are constantly finding new reasons to do it. For starters, building — and maintaining — muscle is necessary for all of us, especially as we age. Strength training stops bone loss and can even build new bone — reducing, down the road, the risk of fractures from osteoporosis. It improves balance, boosts energy, builds confidence, combats depression and improves appearance.

11. MAKE TIME FOR FRIENDS
Research shows that your friends may be the key to good health and longevity. In fact, the results of a study from Brigham Young University showed that people with adequate or high social relationships had a 50 percent greater likelihood of survival than their friendless counterparts. In addition, say experts, people with social support have fewer cardiovascular and immune problems, as well as lower levels of stress.

12. EAT COLORFULLY
To get a wide range of health-promoting compounds, your best bet is to fill your plate with a rainbow of foods. Reds are rich in lycopene, an antioxidant shown to have cancer-protective effects. Oranges & yellows contain beta-carotene, which your body converts to vitamin A. Greens are rich in healthy nutrients like vitamin C & indole-3-carbinol, which may help prevent some kinds of cancer, & jam-packed with antioxidants, & phytonutrients. Blues & purples contain anthocyanins, which show promise in reducing the risk of cancer, heart disease & stroke. Whites & browns contain isoflavones, indoles & the heart-healthy compound allicin.

13. COOK WITH KIDS
Cooking with kids has both immediate & lasting benefits. In the short term, kids are encouraged to try healthy foods (and more likely to eat it if they help prepare it). It also allows parents to spend quality time with their kids. In the long term, you’re setting a good example for your kids, which can make all the difference in raising healthy eaters.

14. GET YOUR HEALTHY FATS
“Good” fats play a huge role in health, wellness and longevity. It aids in the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, is used for energy, to cushion organs & aid in normal growth & development. The key is focusing on the good fats (mono- and polyunsaturated) and eliminating the bad fats (trans & saturated). A few ways to tell the good from the bad: (1) If it walked before it arrived on your plate, it’s probably chock-full of saturated fat (red meat, dark-meat chicken, bacon, etc.); (2) If it swam before it hit your plate, you’re probably getting some good fats; (3) If it’s solid at room temperature, it’s probably bad fat; and (4) If it’s liquid at room temperature, it’s probably good. Some good fats to include in your diet: almonds, avocados, olive oil, walnuts, wild salmon, tuna and flaxseed oil.

15. EAT NEW FOODS
As long as you’re eating foods from all the food groups, it’s not necessarily unhealthy to eat a monotonous diet. Health effects of eating the same thing daily are highly personal. Some people have more cravings when eating monotonously; others fewer. For dieters, boredom can lead to reaching for forbidden foods. Your body needs a variety of vitamins & minerals. If you eat the same foods every day, you may be missing some of these very important nutrients. Adding new foods to your diet not only offers a good nutritional mix, it makes eating more interesting, which can make it easier to stick to a healthy eating plan.
HEALTHCARE CONSUMER SMARTS

Do your best to practice good health every day. Eat well, exercise, avoid tobacco, and limit stress. A sure way to cut back on healthcare costs is to be healthy!

Food Smarts

Change up your proteins and commit yourself to at least one meat-free day a week. Try recipes with beans or tofu as the main protein source.

Safety Smarts

Wash your hands before and after handling food, and prevent foodborne illness by cleaning and cooking food properly. Ensure that utensils and countertops are cleaned well, especially after contact with raw meats.

Foods From A to Z – “S” Foods (Part 1)

**Seeds** – such as sunflower or pumpkin seeds, contain healthy omega-3 fats, vitamins E and K, as well as minerals that help reduce inflammation, prevent osteoporosis, and improve bladder function.

**Soybeans** – were first grown in northern China. They are the vegetable powerhouse, delivering lots of protein for growing bodies and helping to make hair, teeth, and nails strong.

**Spinach** – is native to southeastern Asia and Persia. It is one of the important greens, delivering many of the minerals, vitamins, and other nutrients that help strengthen muscles and prevent high blood pressure, heart attacks and caracacts.
**Recipe of the Month**

Black Bean Dinner Salad with Pico de Gallo Vinaigrette

½ c. brown rice (uncooked)
2 beefsteak tomatoes, diced
1 jalapeño, chopped
¼ c. chopped fresh cilantro
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
1 head romaine lettuce, shredded
2 carrots, sliced into rounds
1 red bell pepper, sliced
1 ear of corn, kernels shaved from cob
15-oz can black beans, drained and rinsed

Inl saucepan, combine rice with 1 c. water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover, & cook until rice is tender & the water is absorbed, 40 - 45 minutes. Fluff with fork and let cool. To prepare the vinaigrette, combine tomatoes, jalapeño, cilantro, lime juice, oil, and salt in a medium bowl. Divide the lettuce evenly among 4 bowls. Top with carrots, bell pepper, corn, beans, and rice. Spoon the vinaigrette over the top of each bowl just before serving.

**January Birthdays**

Jan 8 – Maryam Afshar
Jan 15 – Sandra Herrera
Jan 17 – Maly Yang
Jan 19 – Philip Rosales
Jan 26 – Sara Rodriguez
Jan 29 – Rosie Lopez
Jan 30 – Alice Ochoa

**January**

Cervical Health Awareness Month

National Birth Defect Prevention Month
[www.nbdpn.org](http://www.nbdpn.org)

National Glaucoma Awareness Month
[www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org)

National Stalking Awareness Month
[www.stalkingawarenessmonth.org](http://www.stalkingawarenessmonth.org)

**Run/Walk Events**

Resolution Run
Jan 1 ~ Woodward Park
[https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Fresno/ResolutionRun](https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Fresno/ResolutionRun)

Winchell Cove 10K
Jan 14 ~ Milerton Lake Recreational Area
[https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Friant/WinchellCoveTrailRun](https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Friant/WinchellCoveTrailRun)

Got Miles 5k Birthday Race
Jan 15 ~ Alluvial and Peach
[https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Clovis/GotMiles5kBirthdayRace](https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Clovis/GotMiles5kBirthdayRace)

Fresno Valentine Run
Feb 12 ~ Woodward Park

Chocolate Run Rotary
Feb 18 ~ Woodward Park
[https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Fresno/RotaryTenChocolateRun](https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Fresno/RotaryTenChocolateRun)

Blossom Trail 10k
Mar 4 ~ Sanger, CA
[https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Sanger/SangerBlossomTrail10kRun](https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Sanger/SangerBlossomTrail10kRun)

Mud Factor – Fresno
Mar 5 ~ Sanger, CA
[www.mudfactor.com](http://www.mudfactor.com)