

## Tips for Getting and Staying Healthy

Our health is a commodity that none of us should take for granted. In order to get healthy and stay healthy, we need to dedicate ourselves to healthy lifestyles and to make healthful choices. Individuals need to be their own health advocates, but your doctors should play an active role in your health as well. Below are some recommended tips for getting and staying healthy:

### Be Proactive, Not Reactive

If you smoke, quit. If you don't smoke, don't start. According to the [American Lung Association](#), close to 342,000 Americans die from lung disease each year; this is responsible for 1 in every 7 deaths. For smoking cessation information and incentive, start by contacting your doctor.

Always wear your seat belt in the car. Children need to be properly buckled into a child car seat that fits your child by weight and height. If riding a motorcycle or bicycle, always wear a helmet and protective and reflective gear.

Make an appointment to get regular physical exams and preventive check-ups and screenings. Follow the cancer screening guidelines for breast, colon, and prostate cancer from the [American Cancer Society](#).

Have your blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked regularly. Keep your vaccinations updated. You should also get a flu shot once a year, especially if you're in a high-risk group.

Wash your hands regularly, especially during flu and cold seasons!

Never, ever drink and drive. Plan to have a designated driver or call a cab.

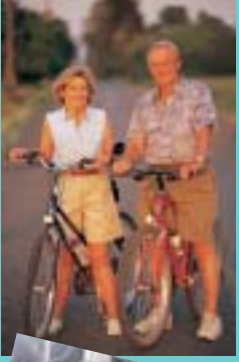
### Go Green

If you're not eating the recommended, daily servings of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, make an active choice to put more color on your plate. The [USDA](#) provides a wonderful web tool that will customize a [food pyramid](#) based on your individual information and get you well on your way to a healthy diet.

When you are eating a healthy and balanced diet, you understand the benefits of plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and a minimal intake of fats. (Think high fiber/low fat.) You'll not only feel and look better, but help reduce your chances of many different types of cancers. To learn more about cancer prevention, visit the [American Cancer Society](#).

Eating a proper diet is also good for your heart. Know if you are at risk for heart disease and know the warning signs of a heart attack or stroke; to learn more visit the [American Heart Association](#).





### **Keep Moving**

A proper diet and exercise go hand-in-hand to getting and staying healthy. To maintain a healthy weight, all of us need to keep moving and get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day. This can be accomplished by taking three 10 minute walks or using the stairs instead of the elevator; staying active must be a daily event! Keep moving throughout the seasons with different activities, such as bike-riding, walking, running, swimming, and hiking when weather permits; or snow-shoeing, downhill or cross-country skiing, sledding, and ice-skating in the winter months, or working out in a gym setting. Discover different activities that you enjoy and keep moving!

### **Safety Matters**

Make sure that your home is equipped with smoke detectors and that you change the batteries annually. Your home and work place should have fire extinguishers in easily accessible locations. Practice fire drills with your family and work out an escape plan so that every member of the family knows what to do in the event of a fire. The [National Fire Protection Association](#) can help protect against possible fire hazards and make your home and work safer places.

Keep a list handy of important telephone numbers, whether pre-programmed into your cell phone or next to your home phone; you should have: your doctors office, poison control center, fire department, sheriff department (if non-emergency), and school number.

### **Practice Common Sense**

Keep all medications out of reach of young children.

Have a well-stocked first aid kit.

Avoid heavy lifting, or do so in a proper manner to protect your back and prevent injury.

Wear sunscreen and avoid over-exposure from the elements.

Keep emergency provisions in your car during the winter months.

Keep all firearms locked up.

Get plenty of sleep.

Avoid stress.

Stay mentally active and involved with self, family & community.

Keep a sense of humor about life!

