

## Family Holistic Health

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### **Maintenance of the Human Body**

Patients often ask, "What can I do to stay healthy or not injure myself?" Below are some simple suggestions that can help. There is nothing that can insure that we won't be hit with health challenges, sometimes these challenges help us to appreciate though how wonderfully our bodies work most of the time, with very little maintenance.

**Breathe** – Oxygen is essential and one of the most essential nutrients for the body. We need to practice thoughtful breathing. Slow deep "belly breathing" is important for optimal functioning of all the cells of the body. Practice this often during the day for 5-6 breaths each time.

**Water** – Another essential nutrient that we can't live without. We need to provide our body with clean pure water each day, 48 oz. minimum, ideally spread out through the day, and not while eating is the best. (Coffee, tea, etc doesn't count)

**Rest** – This is also an important part of life. Getting good quality and quantity rest is necessary for optimal performance. Don't exercise right before going to bed. Good sleep hygiene requires that we prepare for sleep and try to stay to a regular schedule. Less TV, computer work and avoiding bright lights is a good way to prepare for sleep. Don't have caffeinated beverages in the evening.

**Sunlight** – I recommend that everyone try to get out in the early day sunlight without sunscreens for 15 – 20 minutes per day. Sunlight is good for us in moderate amounts, it helps our bodies to make Vitamin D and helps in other ways, physically as well as psychologically.

**Exercise** – 20 to 30 minutes of aerobic exercise 3-5 times per week will help on many levels. Aerobic exercise means you have to get your heart rate to an appropriate level for those 20 to 30 minutes. (180 minus your age is a rough number of beats per minute that you should maintain. This number plus and minus 5 is the range to be in.) Some form of weight training is also good to include but that has more individualized requirements.

**Stretching** – Observe animals and notice how they maintain their physical frame. Every time they get up even from a short nap, they stretch. They don't need to hold the stretch very long but they are consistent with stretching often 12 to 15 times per day minimum. Balance exercises are also something that you should do everyday. Balancing on one foot with eyes open and eyes closed is great, also balancing on a therapy ball with one foot on the ground with both eyes open and eyes closed.

**Food** – There is much controversy about food and what is best, but the typical American diet doesn't promote long-term optimal health. We can break nutrition into two major groups: macronutrients and micronutrients. The macronutrients are water, proteins, carbohydrates and fats. Micronutrients are vitamins and minerals. A balanced diet is the safest approach. Optimally, each meal (we should eat at least three meals per day) should consist of a low fat protein, filling  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the plate and the rest of the plate should consist of vegetables, whole grain and fruit in that order of volume. An easy check on whether you have a good balance of fruits and vegetables is to measure your first morning urine pH and that will indicate if your body is able to maintain a healthy balance with the food you are supplying. (The pH should be between 6.5 and 7.5). Foods should be rotated so that you are getting your nutrients from various sources, decreasing the likelihood of food intolerances and avoiding building up too many toxins from one source.

**Meditation/Prayer** – Many studies have confirmed that the practice of daily meditation and/or prayer greatly influences the human body with a positive outcome in the physical, psychological and social aspects of human life. The benefits are huge and it costs nothing except an investment of your time.

These are basic guidelines and may need to be adjusted or individualized.