# 6 WAYS TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF Lifestyle Medicine

Lifestyle medicine is the therapeutic use of six lifestyle pillars—a whole-food, plant-predominant eating pattern, regular physical activity, restorative sleep, stress management, positive social connections, and the avoidance of risky substances—to prevent, treat and put into remission chronic conditions such as heart disease, type-2 diabetes, obesity and more.




LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

## 1 NUTRITION

Extensive scientific evidence supports the use of a whole-food, predominantly plant-based diet as an important strategy in prevention of chronic disease, treatment of chronic conditions and, in intensive therapeutic doses, remission of chronic illness. This eating pattern is fiber-filled, nutrient-dense, and antioxidant-rich. It consists of a variety of minimally processed vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds.

## 2 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular and consistent physical activity combats the negative effects of sedentary behavior. It is important that adults engage in both general physical activity as well as purposeful exercise on a weekly basis as part of overall health and resiliency. Aim for at least 150 minutes per week.

## 3 RESTORATIVE SLEEP

Sleep is necessary for human life. Adults with chronically insufficient or fragmented sleep can experience impaired memory, cognitive processing, mood, reaction time, a high risk of dementia onset, weight gain, glucose dysregulation, and cardiovascular issues. Most adults should get 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night.

## 4 STRESS MANAGEMENT

The chronic stress of modern society has made it more difficult to practice healthy lifestyle habits and can exacerbate health issues such as cardiovascular disease, insulin resistance, sleep deprivation, depression, anxiety, weight gain, and more. Recognizing and replacing negative stress responses with healthy coping mechanisms and stress reduction techniques leads to improved wellbeing.

## 5 SOCIAL CONNECTION

Positive social connections affect our physical, mental and emotional health. Leveraging the power of relationships and social networks can bring meaning and purpose to life, while also helping to reinforce healthy behaviors.

## 6 AVOIDANCE OF RISKY SUBSTANCES

Use of tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption have been shown to increase the risk of chronic diseases and death.  Treatments often take time, different approaches and many attempts. Patience and support are an important part of breaking risky substance habits.

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