



Choose

Making Wise
Lifestyle Choices

*E*ating well, exercising regularly, quitting smoking and limiting alcohol consumption all have positive impacts on your health. These same lifestyle choices also affect your health care costs.



South Carolina

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Wellness is more than just seeing a doctor when you're sick. While there are risk factors that we can't change — who our parents are or how old we are — there are risk factors we can change. We have the power to give ourselves the best chance for good health by everyday choices we make in the ways we live, what we eat and our general outlook on life.

Making Wise Lifestyle Choices

Regular, moderate physical exercise (like taking a brisk, 30-minute walk three times a week) can help prevent:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Arthritis
- High blood pressure
- Colon cancer
- Obesity
- Osteoporosis

Other Smart Choices:

- Follow a healthy diet by eating a variety of foods including fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Limit your intake of foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Don't smoke or use tobacco products.
- Take a daily multivitamin.
- Get enough sleep and follow a regular sleep schedule. Chronic late nights and sleep-ins on weekends and holidays take a toll on your health. Stick to a regular schedule and you will have more energy and better health.
- Practice good dental hygiene.
- Wear sunscreen when outside.
- Learn how to deal with stress. Identify your stressors and reduce or eliminate them.
- Develop personal relaxation habits. Studies show that relaxation techniques such as daydreaming, yoga, meditation, free writing and prayer combat the effects of stress and anxiety. A warm bath, shower or swim can also be effective. Warm water relaxes muscles and relieves tension in the body, thus lessening stress.
- Find a purpose. Be involved. Cultivate personal interests and activities you can enjoy with a passion.
- Participate in a creative outlet or hobby.
- Consistently have and enjoy leisure time.
- Take an annual vacation from work.
- Have three or more close friends. Regularly spend and enjoy time with family and friends.

- Look for ways to bring humor into your life. Laughter can change mood and reduce stress.
- Reach out and touch someone. Physical contact is an excellent way to alleviate stress. Just by hugging someone, holding hands or stroking a pet, you can greatly reduce stress.
- Be happy and think positively. This doesn't happen accidentally. You need to work at it!

Practice Prevention

It costs less to prevent illnesses and injuries than it does to treat them. Taking simple preventive steps can make a significant difference in your health, and in the cost of your health care.

- Get annual medical and dental checkups for every member of your family.
- Stay current with immunizations and well-child care for infants and children.
- Participate in wellness programs.
- Know your health risks and how to prevent or control chronic disease like diabetes, asthma, heart disease and high blood pressure.
- Take medicines as prescribed and ask when in doubt.
- Practice prenatal care.
- Always wear seatbelts as a driver and as a passenger.
- Store guns and household poisons in secure locations.
- Drive cautiously, avoiding speeding and accidents.
- Wear a helmet when you ride a bike.
- Do not choose aggressive or dangerous animals as family pets.
- Make sure children use proper sports equipment.
- Never drink and drive or ride with a driver who has been drinking.
- Use smoke detectors in your home.
- Avoid dangerous activities, use of illegal drugs, unprotected sex and excessive use of alcohol.

