

# Taking care of the basics

**B**eing healthy starts well before you ever get sick and need a doctor. Preventative health care can go a long way toward keeping your immune system strong and helping you physically and mentally cope better with stress.

## Eating right

Everyone knows to eat a balanced diet, but it's still one of the most important factors in good health. Eating lots of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, while avoiding too many rich and heavy foods, can help you have more energy and feel better. A healthy diet can also help stave off conditions like diabetes, heart disease and obesity or help you in controlling those conditions.

## Exercising

Regular exercise can also help you feel better overall, in addition to managing long-term health conditions such as diabetes. Your joints last longer and hurt less if you're exercising regularly, plus getting outside and working up a sweat is good for your mental health. Find physical activity that you enjoy and can do regularly. This can be high-intensity exercises like running, hiking, kickboxing or weightlifting, or low-intensity

exercises like walking, yoga and pilates.

## Sleeping enough

The CDC suggests seven to nine hours of sleep a night for adults. Simply being in bed for that long isn't sufficient, though; you need good quality sleep at night. If you're waking up after eight hours of sleep and still feeling tired, waking up multiple times a night or if you snore or gasp for air while you sleep, you're probably not getting enough deep sleep. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day and cultivate other good sleep habits, including reducing screen time right before bed; having a quiet, dark room; keeping screens out of the bedroom; and not eating large meals or drinking caffeine right before you go to bed.

## Getting regular health care

See your doctor for an annual physical to get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked and get any tests you may need (such as for mammograms and pap smears for women and prostate exams for men). Make sure you're up to date on vaccines, and take this chance to talk over any concerns or ask questions. You should see a dentist twice a year and see an eye doctor regularly as well.



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