Total Body Care

Wellness versus Sickness:

"The doctor of the future will give no medication, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet, and in the cause of prevention of disease." - THOMAS EDISON

"If I'd know I was gonna live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself." - EUBIE BLAKE, (jazz composer at age 100)

Too many are only concerned with their health when they get sick. We enjoy sharing ways that people can prevent sickness and maintain their resistance to avoid problems before they occur.

Many Health Professionals today are encouraging their patients to:

a) Eat healthy foods,
b) Exercise regularly,
c) Manage Stress,
d) Use supplements.

They want us to do all we can to prevent sickness by taking proper care of ourselves.

Staying Healthy: [Four basic categories]

- A healthy diet
  - *Consultation with a Health Professional can be life saving. It is important that any nutritionals you use come from natural sources and not chemicals because they are absorbed best by your body. Natural sources are cost effective and beneficial since your body absorbs them and much less is excreted as waste.*
- Regular exercise
  - *Most health professionals today say that regular exercise is essential for good health. It is important to exercise at least 3 to 5 times each week cannot be overstressed. Exercise is valuable and advantages for every facet of good health and often enhances a cure for many diseases. Why don't people exercise more? There are many reasons – to name a few:*
    - *Time consuming*
    - *Boring*
    - *Not always convenient*
    - *Lonely*
    - *You may add other reasons!*
- Clean air
  - *Good air quality is obvious because air is so essential for life. We cannot survive without oxygen beyond 5 minutes. Obviously any pollution in our air destroys it ability to give proper support to our bodies. Often there is more pollution in our homes than in some of the worst areas outdoors. Air filtration for your home may be an important consideration for living well.*
- Pure water
  - *Good nutrition depends on good water to be properly utilized by our bodies. Exposure to chlorinated water, including the many impurities in our water supply today, contribute to a host of health problems over time. Remember: "either you use a good filter system, or you are the filter". Drinking pure filtered water is essential to maintaining good health.*

Our life's work has always been involved in the concern and care for people in body, mind, and spirit. Now that we are retired does not lessen our concerns. This is only a basic outline of what each person should be aware of and must be attentive to if the desire for maintaining good health is sincere.

We believe that it is important for everyone to be connected to a team of informed and experienced health care professionals whom you will need for your personal guidance. In our world today no one person can have all knowledge and information necessary.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL of MEDICINE®

12 Guides to Health, Happiness, and Longevity (with Apologies to P.J. O'Rourke)

Patients are always asking me for strategies to enable them to live longer and feel happier during their journey to old age. I have constructed the list below as an answer to this request. The flavor of this essay is somewhat tongue-in-cheek (hence the apology to P.J. O'Rourke), although I am willing to defend any of the 12 guides as being reasonable and likely to succeed.

Guide #1: Try to be born into a family with a history of longevity. There is no replacement for good genes. This is the single factor that one cannot influence with a change in lifestyle or attitude. Nevertheless, disobeying the other 11 guides can negate any hereditary propensity for long life.

Guide #2: Never smoke! If you are unlucky enough to be a current smoker, quit the moment you finish reading this article.

Guide #3: Only exercise on the days that you eat. In other words, exercise everyday. The form of exercise is not the most important aspect of this guide, nor is the intensity of your workout. Exercise for 40-60 minutes each day at a level that produces sweating. Don't bother to count your heart rate unless you are training for competition.

Guide #4: Avoid extreme diets such as the transiently popular starvation diet. This diet has never been shown to prolong life in human beings. It works for inbred mice in the setting of laboratory experiments, and, in my opinion, is not a good strategy for humans.

Guide #5: Eat a healthy diet, low in saturated (animal) fats and high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats with 5-8 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.[1] Hold back on the "white carbohydrates" (ie, sugar, white flour, white rice, white potatoes).

Guide #6: Don't get fat.[2] It is okay to be a few pounds (and only a few pounds) over your ideal weight. If you are 15 pounds or more over your ideal body weight, start a program of dieting and exercise. Consult your doctor or nutritionist about a reasonable program, and check out the reliable, online resources on weight management and fitness.[3] Avoid fad diets—see Guides #4 and #5.

Guide #7: Be moderate in your use of alcohol. Some studies have demonstrated improved longevity with moderate alcohol consumption. However, the benefit disappears at more than 2 drinks per day. So drink moderately. Whether or not red wine is the healthiest form of alcohol to drink has not been definitively decided unless you work for the French or the California winegrowers association!

Guide #8: Periodically consult your doctor for preventive health measures such as cholesterol, blood sugar, and blood pressure checks; cancer screenings; and flu vaccinations. If you are a woman, get regular Pap smears, mammograms, and bone density scans once you are in the age range for these to be useful.

Guide #9: Cultivate family and friends. Enjoy conversation, dining, and recreation with people whom you like (for example, your spouse). Spend as little time as possible with folks you don't like or who make you uncomfortable.

Guide #10: Cultivate an avocation that occurs away from your work day. For example, play a musical instrument alone or with someone; engage in sports such as golf or tennis; read interesting books, etc. If you can do this with someone who you like (see Guide #9), so much the better.

Guide #11: Be informed, but try not to be overwhelmed by current events as portrayed by the popular media (ie, television and newspaper news reports). Remember the part of your high school US history course that discussed "yellow journalism" in the US in the 19th century? In my opinion, nothing has changed since then except the subtlety of the media's messages. Most of the daily news is comprised of stories of murder, rape, terrorism, pollution, vandalism, and other acts of violence—along with celebrity updates. If you don't believe me, watch Fox News for 5 minutes (if you can stand it) and see how much of what is portrayed pertains to the topics just enumerated. It is far better to spend the time doing what is suggested in Guides #3, #9, and #10; also, watching less television can help you with Guide #6. If you are watching television and the daily news comes on, change the station!

Guide #12: Do your best to avoid being irritated by little things. Every one of us experiences small daily irritations that can eventually lead to surprising degrees of anger and depression. Try to put things into perspective. As one of my patients recently told me about some minor irritations occurring at his home, "At least it is not cancer!"

Very few of us can consistently adhere to every one of these 12 guides. However, the person who manages to achieve success with 8 or 9 of them should increase the likelihood that her/his life will be longer, happier, and healthier.

Joseph S. Alpert, MD
Professor of Medicine
University of Arizona College of Medicine
Tucson
Editor-in-Chief, The American Journal of Medicine

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HEALTH DISPARITIES: A MORAL ISSUE

Disparities in health often mean earlier death and increased morbidity for one group of people versus another. Groups can be defined by race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability status, geography (urban vs. rural), or socioeconomic status. In the case of health disparities defined by race and ethnicity, non-Hispanic Whites tend to experience better health than African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics and specific segments of the Asian population. Differences can also be found within groups and by health indicator. For example, the rate of low birth weight infants for the Hispanic population as a whole is lower than that of non-Hispanic Whites, while the same rate for Puerto Ricans, a subgroup of the total Hispanic population, is 50% higher.

Regardless of the health indicator being examined - whether it is heart disease and stroke, diabetes, low birth weight, HIV/AIDS, or obesity - disparities in health usually point to inequalities in income and education. So, it is no wonder that marginalized groups in the U.S. carry a higher burden of disease and disability.

Even our individual health behaviors - for example, whether we exercise regularly or eat healthily - are influenced by such underlying factors as income and education, which in turn predict our access to quality goods and services. To illustrate, low-income neighborhoods are less likely to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables, sidewalks, walking trails and bike lanes. And even in those low-income areas where such resources *are* available, residents might not take advantage of them due to neighborhood crime and the relatively high price of fresh foods.

Various groups are working to eliminate the problem - the American Medical Association, in an effort to ensure quality health care for all, is encouraging physicians to examine their own practices; the American Public Health Association is pushing for comprehensive federal legislation to address the underlying causes of disparities in health status and health care access; and *Healthy People 2020*, the latest set of 10-year national health objectives put forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will integrate "social determinants of health" - a term which describes those socioeconomic factors that increase or decrease our risk for disease - across all objectives.

The North Carolina Council of Churches, a statewide ecumenical organization that promotes social justice and Christian unity, regards the issue of health disparities as a moral one. The Bible instructs us to "learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:17, NSRV). When certain groups are treated unfairly, it insults our Maker. It honors God when we plead their cause (Proverbs 14:31).

To learn more about the elimination of health disparities, please visit the NC Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities' website at http://www.ncminorityhealth.org/omhhd/.