

# A Healthy Lifestyle: Care Instructions

## Your Care Instructions

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A healthy lifestyle can help you feel good, stay at a healthy weight, and have plenty of energy for both work and play. A healthy lifestyle is something you can share with your whole family.

A healthy lifestyle also can lower your risk for serious health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes.

You can follow a few steps listed below to improve your health and the health of your family.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

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- Do not eat too much sugar, fat, or fast foods. You can still have dessert and treats now and then. The goal is moderation.
- Start small to improve your eating habits. Pay attention to portion sizes, drink less juice and soda pop, and eat more fruits and vegetables.
  - Eat a healthy amount of food. A 3-ounce serving of meat, for example, is about the size of a deck of cards. Fill the rest of your plate with vegetables and whole grains.
  - Limit the amount of soda and sports drinks you have every day. Drink more water when you are thirsty.
  - Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. It may seem like a lot, but it is not hard to reach this goal. A serving or helping is 1 piece of fruit, 1 cup of vegetables, or 2 cups of leafy, raw vegetables. Have an apple or some carrot sticks as an afternoon snack instead of a candy bar. Try to have fruits and/or vegetables at every meal.
- Make exercise part of your daily routine. You may want to start with simple activities, such as walking, bicycling, or slow swimming. Try to be active 30 to 60 minutes every day. You do not need to do all 30 to 60 minutes all at once. For example, you can exercise 3 times a day for 10 or 20 minutes. Moderate exercise is safe for most people, but it is always a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.
- Keep moving. Mow the lawn, work in the garden, or clean your house. Take the stairs instead of the elevator at work.
- If you smoke, quit. People who smoke have an increased risk for heart attack, stroke, cancer, and other lung illnesses. Quitting is hard, but there are ways to boost your chance of quitting tobacco for good.
  - Use nicotine gum, patches, or lozenges.
  - Ask your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines.
  - Keep trying.

In addition to reducing your risk of diseases in the future, you will notice some benefits soon after you stop using tobacco. If you have shortness of breath or asthma symptoms, they will likely get better within a few weeks after you quit.

- Limit how much alcohol you drink. Moderate amounts of alcohol (up to 2 drinks a day for men, 1 drink a day for women) are okay. But drinking too much can lead to liver problems, high blood pressure, and other health problems.

## Family health

If you have a family, there are many things you can do together to improve your health.

- Eat meals together as a family as often as possible.
- Eat healthy foods. This includes fruits, vegetables, lean meats and dairy, and whole grains.
- Include your family in your fitness plan. Most people think of activities such as jogging or tennis as the way to fitness, but there are many ways you and your family can be more active. Anything that makes you breathe hard and gets your heart pumping is exercise. Here are some tips:
  - Walk to do errands or to take your child to school or the bus.
  - Go for a family bike ride after dinner instead of watching TV.



### Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.healthwise.net/ed>

Enter **U807** in the search box to learn more about "**A Healthy Lifestyle: Care Instructions**".

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