

Staying Healthy, Fit and Eating Nutritiously As We Age

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Easter Seals, Out and About Program

What is currently the number one preventable disease in America that affects all ages? **Obesity.** How is this disease prevented and conquered? Through little decisions made each day that chose health. Obesity is defined as weighing more than 20% of your optimal body weight. Obesity can contribute to heart disease, diabetes, strokes, and respiratory difficulties and can lead to a more sedentary life. When we make smart daily choices about what we eat and our activity levels, we can fight this disease. Following are the top ten tips for staying health through exercise and nutrition choices.

1. Exercise at **all ages** can help you to lower your blood pressure and strengthen your heart and lungs. This can help prevent strokes, high blood pressure, and diabetes.
2. Exercise at **any age** can help build muscle and bone mass, decrease osteoporosis which can help **prevent falls**.
3. Any physical activity is beneficial. Just starting an exercise program such as walking 5 minutes at a time, gradually increasing time each week and building in rest breaks, can have a significant positive effect on your health.
4. Physical activity and exercise can help boost your immune system, improves sleep and can lift your spirits as well as increase stamina.
5. Just passing on second helpings of dinner, can help prevent a 9 pound weight gain per year.
6. If you are a fast eater, slow it down by taking a few sips of water in between bites. This will slow your eating down and help you feel full faster.
7. If you have trouble with portion control, use smaller plates to give the illusion of more food. Always put food on a plate or in a bowl, don't eat out of a bag or container since it is harder to visualize what you have eaten.
8. Brush your teeth in the evening after dinner to signal that you've finished eating for the night.
9. Stop sabotaging yourself with appetizers and bread before restaurant meals. Eating appetizers at a restaurant 1x week can add 30 pounds a year.
10. **Do not skip breakfast.** Your body needs refueling after going eight to twelve hours without food. Not eating breakfast leads to cravings later on and it leads your body to think you are starving. Your body then conserves its energy and you need fewer calories to function.

You can take control of your weight and life and avoid being one of the millions of Americans who are now considered obese and are suffering the consequences of obesity. It's never too late to start taking charge of your health!

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