

## Healthy Habits

### **Habit 1: Physical activity**

Be active throughout your day. Take the stairs rather than the elevator, change a meeting into a "walking meeting," or consider a portable stepping or pedalling device that fits at your workstation. Include a 10-15 minute walk in your lunch hour. Take a break from sitting. Try standing, stretching or walking for minimum of 5-10 minutes every hour while at work or sitting at home. Activate your passion for food. Take up gardening, start walking to and from the grocery store, or explore a local farmers market. These are fun ways be more active and explore new foods. Move more, snack less. Instead of snacking when you are bored, go for a walk, dance or try an exercise video. Pick up an activity monitor. A pedometer is a simple tool to track your daily steps.

### **Habit 2: Portion Sizes.**

Most of us eat more than we need to or should. We often have the extras "boxed" to take home and finish, but many times, we just eat it all. Food selection is important, but controlling portion sizes will also control your waistline, and most of us could do with some reduction in this area.

### **Habit 3: Preventive Healthcare screening.**

Regular health screening tests are an important part of your health care. Most of us do not think of immunizations as screening, but they are a part of preventive screening.

### **Habit 4: Adequate Sleep.**

Sleep is vital for good health and well-being. It is an important factor in your own safety, and the safety of others, for example while driving or in the workplace. Inadequate sleep makes a person more irritable and not able to concentrate. What you may not realize is that sleep also impacts your immune system, your weight, and your risk for serious medical illnesses. Seven to eight hours of sleep is needed, and one needs to "stick to a regular bed and wake time."

### **Habit 5: Strength and Flexibility.**

Developing strength and flexibility aids in improving performance, preventing injury, and achieving personal fitness goals. Strength is not just for body builders or elite athletes. Be sure to learn about proper techniques, warm up beforehand, and hold that stretch!

### **Habit 6: Laugh.**

Research shows that laughter offers health benefits in four dimensions: physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. By recognizing the therapeutic benefits of laughter, you can be intentional about bringing more laughter into your life. Enjoy life and don't hesitate to show your joy by laughter.

### **Habit 7: Family and Friends.**

Having close friends and family has far-reaching benefits for your health. A strong social support network can be critical in helping you through the stress of rough times. Family and friends can also encourage you to change or avoid unhealthy lifestyle habits. "Invest you time in those people who matter most to you."

### **Habit 8: Quiet Your Mind.**

"Quiet Your Mind" is about non-reacting, about just being there without judgments of liking or disliking. Mindfulness is about being able to notice and pay attention to what is going on in the present moment without judgment or the need to react: it's about registering with your senses. Cultivate your mindfulness by getting alone in a quiet place, taking ten deep breaths, and doing nothing, all the while observing with your senses, but not reacting. Do this for about five minutes several times a day.