

# Healthy Life Style—Healthy Habits

How healthy is the life style of your family? It may need to be improved if you understand that “diet” refers to anything we take in through your mouth, see with your eyes and hear with your ears. You become to a great extent what you see, what you hear and what you eat. Also, you become like the people around you.

A family is often known by the life style(s) that they have chosen. Does your life style reflect your core values and beliefs?

Life-style can be defined as “a way of life or a style of living that reflects the values and attitudes of an individual or group”. Commonly used, this term refers not only to values related to the physical and economic aspects of daily life but also to less tangible matters such as use of time, value of relationships, etc. A family is often known by the life-style(s) that they have chosen.

Our chosen life-style reflects not only our attitude towards our **Diet, Exercise, Time Management and Energy Management**, but also how these factors affect the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, relational and economic aspects of daily living. That is, diet affects each of these aspects of daily living as does exercise, time management and energy management.

**Diet:** Refers to anything that we take in through our mouth, see with our eyes and hear with our ears.

**Principle:** We become, to a great extent, what we see, what we hear and what we eat.

**Exercise:** Refers to the use of our mind, our emotions, our will and our bodies.

**Principle:** Without mental exercise the brain will decline from disuse as will the body if there is not physical exercise. Make exercise a family activity.

**Time management:** Refers to our use of this nonrenewable resource.

**Principle:** Manage the present to prepare for the future.

**Energy management:** Refers to being in control of energy expenditure.

**Principle:** Practice “conservation of personal energy”.

## 1) Diet:

- A. Eyes and ears: All of us are exposed, visually and auditorally to things we didn't anticipate and that are beyond our control. So, we're acting wisely to increase the positive and decrease the negative for the things we can control. There is little if anything on TV that children really need to see or hear. The goal for children should be one hour or less of TV per day.

### Television viewing

- Promotes a materialistic lifestyle.
- Reinforces a passive approach to life.
- Fuels aggressive behavior in children and teens.

- Promotes the notion that we deserve to be entertained and that to have been entertained is to have achieved a high goal.
- Can be a thief of our time. We may have nothing to show for the time spent watching TV.
- Puts our brain into neutral and does nothing to preserve or enhance brain function.

Computer: Beware of addiction to the Internet.

Screen video games, movies, TV, tapes, music, books and computer activity to increase positive influences and to decrease negative influences.

- B. Mouth: Eat foods that have a high nutrient/caloric ratio.  
 Chew food slowly and thoroughly to aid in the digestive process and also to satisfy the “taste need”.  
 Decrease or eliminate caffeine, refined sugars and substances with man-made molecules.  
 Make it a priority to eat together as a family as much as possible.

2) **Exercise**: This activity, considering the above definition, is both preventative and restorative. The specifics will need to be developed by understanding how exercise affects the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, relational and economic aspects of daily living. Age and physical health will also need to be considered relative to the physical dimension. A return to individual and family reading is highly recommended.

3) **Time Management**: We really don’t manage time. Rather we manage our use of time. The focus here is not necessarily related to having a schedule. In fact, a person who tends to be rigid in this matter may need to “loosen up a bit”. Balance, prioritizing, synchronizing and flexibility are the core elements for effective and efficient management of our use of time.

4) **Energy Management**: The principle of “conservation of personal energy” holds that each of us begins every day with “X” units of energy. That energy leaves us in a variety of ways: some of it may “erode”; some it may be stolen by another person; some it may be expended foolishly by “spinning our wheels”; some of it may go into useful and productive work. Many “units” of it may leave us through an emotional outburst and so it is possible to use up the full day’s allotment of energy in the first 10 minutes of our waking day and so experience the “empty tank syndrome” the rest of the day. It behooves us to guard our supply of energy so that at the end of the day there is some left for the most important people in our lives.

Twenty-first century healthcare has brought advanced technology to assist with the diagnosis and treatment of many medical conditions. Nevertheless, there is the expectation that each person should increasingly participate in his/her own health care,

particularly in the area of prevention. Healthy habits are important ingredients of prevention.

Nutrition, exercise, rest/relaxation, tobacco use, alcohol use, stress management, periodic examinations, vaccinations and safety are some of the areas where each person can make choices that reflect either healthy or unhealthy habits.

**NUTRITION:** Eating healthy begins with the grocery list and continues at the shopping cart. Did you know that the impulsive shopper is being aggressively “wooded” and being taken advantage of at your local grocery store? If it is not on your grocery list or in your cart, there is a good chance that it won’t make it through your front door. Eat healthy. A diet that includes fiber, is low in fat, sugar and salt is a good place to begin. Avoiding a high intake of caffeine, which is addictive, is also a good choice.

**EXERCISE:** Walking is one of the best ways to exercise and will not stress joints and muscles. The habit of daily walking for 20-30 minutes will benefit a person physically and emotionally.

**REST/RELAXATION:** The sleep requirements of individual persons are quite variable. Each person needs to determine the number of hours of sleep needed for the physical body to repair itself and to have alert daily functioning. Good sleep hygiene, including preparation for sleep and “winding down” prior to going to bed, will contribute to restful sleep. Getting up and going to bed the same time each day will help to set one’s internal clock, and make it easier to get up in the AM and go to sleep at bedtime. Ideally, the bedroom should be a place to sleep and not a place to study or watch TV. Many persons find that they function better by taking one or more relaxation breaks during the work day. The ability to perform one’s job while experiencing a measure of relaxation may very well contribute to enhanced job performance and stress reduction.

**ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO:** Alcohol and tobacco are the two most abused drugs in this country. Both are quite addictive, put chemical poisons into the body, and are well known to cause health problems. The medical conditions associated with these two substances consume healthcare resources in a big way. The practice of healthy habits does not include putting either of these poisons into one’s body.

**STRESS:** Stress which reaches the point of “distress” will negatively impact physical and mental health. The development of stress management techniques such as self-relaxation, etc. are well known to be of benefit.

**EXAMINATIONS, VACCINATIONS, ETC.:** It is recommended that the advice of one’s personal physician be followed in these matters.

**SAFETY:** Safety measures extend all the way from seatbelt use for all to **no** throw rugs on the floor where the elderly live.

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