

Backgrounder on the HMSA *go* Campaign 2005

Q: Does good health start with taking personal responsibility?

A: Yes. To stay healthy and contain health care costs, people must take personal responsibility and make smart lifestyle choices.

Here are some simple suggestions

- Get at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week. Regular activity can reduce your risk of developing chronic diseases by lowering blood pressure and cholesterol, maintaining a healthy weight, and increasing your bone and muscle strength and flexibility
- Consider all forms of activity, and select the ones that are right for you. Going to the gym for a workout is one way to exercise. However, there's also walking, swimming, hiking, paddling, jogging, gardening, biking, dancing, climbing, playing tennis, participating in martial arts, and much more.
- Proper nutrition plays a key role in keeping you healthy. Avoid fast foods that are high in fat and sugar. Focus more on fresh fruits and vegetables. Select foods high in whole-grain products, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Eating a balanced diet lowers your risk for heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis.
- Kick the habit, and enjoy better health. Smoking, drinking and drugs may begin as social or recreational activities, but have the potential to become addictive and deadly. They don't just affect the user. Smoking may cause cancer and respiratory problems for nonsmokers. Drunk driving may cause traffic accidents and fatalities.
- Health care costs are rising, partly because people are not taking care of themselves. Living a healthy lifestyle helps avoid or delay many chronic diseases and the expenses of treating them. Take responsibility for your health.

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