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Restore and Preserve Your Health

Health Ministries
Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
adventistontario.org/ministries/health/





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INTRODUCTION

According to Statistics/Statistique Canada, in 2022, the top two leading causes of death were malignant neoplasms (cancerous tumours) and diseases of the heart.¹ The main risk factors for these diseases are related to lifestyle practices, which include eating habits, physical activity, body weight, the use of harmful substances, such as alcohol and tobacco, and levels of stress.



Over the years, many have viewed that healthful habits are not interesting and are hard to implement, and practicing and maintaining a lifestyle conducive to good health involves a lot of restrictions.

The good news is that pursuing and achieving good health and healthy habits can be gratifying, enjoyable, and rewarding. The advantages of practicing good health habits are life-changing and not something out of a nightmare. As Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), an English lawyer, philosopher, and statesman, puts it:

"A healthy body is a guest. A sick body is a jailer."

A Canadian physician in the late 1800s, Sir Williams Osler, who was also known as the primary architect of America's first modern medical training program at the Johns Hopkins University Hospital,² contends that the prognosis or outcome of patients with tuberculosis had more to do with what was on their minds rather than what went on in their lungs. Because our thoughts control our actions, if we are determined to maintain or start a journey to a healthy way of life, then our behaviours will follow what we have committed to in our minds.

A healthful lifestyle is more than just a matter of eating right; there are seven other ingredients to attaining good health, which you will find in this booklet. To apply them is simple, yet with profound benefits to the maintenance, preservation, and restoration of your wholistic health.

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REST



Between 2007 and 2011, researchers at Carnegie Mellon University, the University of California San Francisco, and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center recruited 164 volunteers to learn how sleep affects the body's response to a real infection. They discovered that people who only have six hours or less of sleep a night are **more than four times** more likely to catch a cold when exposed to the virus than those who have more than seven hours of sleep each night.¹

LACK OF SLEEP

Aside from affecting the body's ability to ward off diseases, lack of sleep also contributes to cognitive impairment, which may lead to the inability to think logically, concentrate, control emotions, be productive, and have a sense of safety. This is why sufficient rest is essential to carry out daily living activities. When we get **at least seven hours** of sleep each night, our minds and bodies are prepared to face the next day and perform tasks well.

WEEKLY REST

During the French Revolution in 1793, the French government adopted a 10-day week called "décades" to avoid Christian associations. This change forced its citizens to work for nine days and rest on the tenth day; however, it was eventually abandoned.² The Bible tells us that God instituted a seventh-day, weekly rest at Creation. He knew that we needed a well-balanced rest from our labour, which is why He created the **seventh-day Sabbath**³ for us to commune with Him and fellowship with one another.



EAT — WHOLESOME FOOD

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The 5th Century B.C. Greek physician Hippocrates was quoted as saying, “*May your food be your medicine, and your medicine be your food.*”



PLANT-BASED, WHOLESOME DIET

Eating plant-based, meat-free wholesome food not only nourishes the body but can also help prevent and lower the risk of chronic lifestyle diseases, such as cancers, heart diseases, and strokes. The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) in 2023 published a study of 126,394 UK Biobank participants, in which the researchers found that participants who adhere to a **healthful** plant-based diet have a lower risk of mortality, cancer, and, in particular, cardiovascular disease. They defined a healthful plant-based diet as a diet that is low in animal products, sugary drinks, desserts and snacks, refined grains, potatoes, and fruit juices.

Interestingly, a higher risk for mortality and major chronic diseases was observed in those who adhere to an **unhealthy** plant-based diet.¹

NUTRIENTS

Just like any complex machinery needing the right kind of fuel to work properly, our body needs proper nutrition for it to function to its optimum level and provide the energy needed for life. The nutrients that the body needs to produce energy and maintain structure and system are called *macronutrients*, and they come from the following:

Carbohydrates: Found in whole grains, legumes, tubers, fruits, and vegetables;

Proteins: Found in legumes, nuts, milk, eggs, and other animal products; and

Fats: Found in olive oil, seed oil, fish, and other animal products.

Vitamins, minerals, and trace minerals are nutrients that are also essential for health, healing, and growth, though needed in smaller quantities, which is why they are called *micronutrients*.

Antioxidants and **phytochemicals** are produced by all plants, such as fruits, beans, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts, and they protect our bodies from the effects of aging and diseases like cancer, bone loss, and cardiovascular disease.² Choose daily to eat a wholesome diet.



SUNSHINE

Life and health are sustained wherever sunshine enters. The energy produced by the Sun, known as solar radiation, is the primary source of energy for planet Earth. Without it, plants will not be able to grow, and without plants, there will be no life-sustaining oxygen.

Exposure of the skin to solar ultraviolet B (UVB) triggers the production of Vitamin D3 in the body. Vitamin D is important for bone health and development, and studies in laboratories found that it reduces inflammation and cancer cell growth and helps control infection. Deficiency in Vitamin D can increase the risk of cancer and chronic diseases.¹

VITAMIN D AND COVID-19

Scientists from Italy carried out a meta-analysis and trial sequential analysis, which was published in the National Library of

Medicine, in which they concluded that the data suggests there is a **definitive** association between the **protective role** of vitamin D and the risk of death and admission into intensive care units (ICUs) in patients with COVID-19.²

MENTAL HEALTH

In the Northern Hemisphere areas, such as Siberia in Russia and Greenland, the lack of sunlight in winter times causes a condition known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which has similar symptoms to depression. When exposed to bright light, the symptoms will resolve. This is because bright light, like sunlight, increases in the brain the mood-enhancing neurotransmitter, **serotonin**.³

A **30-minute brisk walk** in the morning sun and allowing an ample amount of sunshine through our windows can be highly beneficial for our mental and physical health.

Overexposure could lead to sunburn, which should be avoided.





TRUST IN DIVINE POWER

A wise king once counselled, *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In **all** your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."*¹

In a published study in 2022, researchers from the University of Madrid, University of California San Diego, and Harvard Medical School examined 177 men and

women in Spain who were diagnosed with cancer. Their objective was to test the relationship between trust/mistrust in God, social support, and emotions in the individuals. They observed that those who trusted in God and had social support gained a positive impact on their affective well-being in contrast with those who mistrusted in God. Based on their observation, they believe that addressing religiosity and spirituality in health contexts is **necessary** because of their **beneficial** effects on health.²

A PROMISE

A wonderful promise is guaranteed to those who put their trust in the Lord and acknowledge Him in all their ways, in that He will direct their paths. The promise does not only encompass the leading and direction to physical health but to all aspects of life, which include mental, spiritual, social, emotional, and environmental health, as well as finances, relationships, education, ministry, and labour.

This does not mean that problems will not arise for those who put their trust in God, but that the direction to find the rescue path will be provided. They will then be enabled to live a life that is filled with **peace, joy, and hope** (Romans 15:13) amidst disappointments and other storms of life. Make the decision today to put your trust in the Lord.



OXYGEN

People can survive up to three weeks without food as long as they have water. Without water, the human body can last no longer than four days.¹ However, permanent brain damage will occur after only **four minutes** of oxygen deprivation, and death will follow four to six minutes later.²

DEEP BREATHING AND POSTURE

Practicing and developing a habit of good posture and controlled, slow, deep breathing is beneficial for our health as it leads to improved levels of oxygen in the blood, which our cells, tissues, and organs critically need to function properly. To facilitate proper breathing, the upper torso should be kept **straight** and **upright**. Slow, deep breathing also helps in reducing blood pressure and stress, while low levels of blood oxygen due to improper breathing may trigger headaches, breathing difficulty, increased heart rate, and bluish discoloration of the skin.³

PURE VS. POLLUTED AIR

The best air to breathe is in outdoor nature, such as in mountains, oceans, rivers, lakes, near trees and green plants, or after a rainstorm, where the air is pure and not contaminated with air pollutants, such as smog, cigarette smoke, or indoor gas fumes from gas stoves and poor ventilation. If a person smokes in a confined room, everyone in the room who breathes the same air is essentially smoking, too. This is called **second-hand smoke**, and it poses a serious health risk. Cigarette smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, and at least 70 of them are known to be carcinogenic or cancer-causing.⁴

Take the time to go outdoors, then take slow, deep breaths, and maintain good ventilation in your home.





RESTRAINT / SELF-CONTROL



Achieving health involves making the right decisions on a daily basis, including restraining or controlling ourselves from taking in anything that can be harmful to our bodies, whether through ingestion, inhalation, or injection, while using **moderately** that which is good.



The brain is the command centre of the body, and keeping it protected from toxic substances that can alter its mechanisms is **paramount**. After all, in order to have a healthy and strong mind, we have to have a healthy and strong brain.

Stimulants, such as nicotine, methamphetamine, caffeine, marijuana, and cocaine, cause the brain to work under a forced state, leading to two major changes: one is **neurotoxic**, causing damage to nerve cells, and the other is **addiction**, causing the erosion of free will. Long-term exposure to stimulants, in particular cocaine and methamphetamine, may cause persistent brain damage.¹

ALCOHOL

According to the World Health Organization, the harmful use of alcohol leads to 3 million deaths every year, which represents 5.3% of all deaths worldwide. Furthermore, it has been established that alcohol use is a causal factor in more than 200 diseases and injuries, including liver cirrhosis and some cardiovascular diseases and cancers.²

TOBACCO USE

A report presented by Health Canada showed that tobacco use is known to cause or probably cause more than 40 diseases of the lungs, heart, and other organs, and they are often fatal. Data taken from 2017 revealed that approximately 48,000 people in Canada die each year from tobacco use. People who smoke have a higher risk of premature death compared to those who do not smoke.³

As the Greek philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras wisely said, *“Choose what is **best**; custom will soon render it easy and agreeable.”* Choose to say **“no”** to harmful substances.

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EXERCISE

To thrive in life, the body has to engage in physical activity. **Designed** to move, the body will undergo deterioration with low levels of movement. This is evident with astronauts stationed in the International Space Station. Due to the weightless space environment (zero gravity), very minimal efforts to contract the muscles are needed by the astronauts to move around and do their work. Because the duration of one mission in space may take up to six months at a time, it is imperative that the astronauts engage in regular physical exercise to maintain their health and prevent their muscles from deteriorating, a condition called **atrophy**. The Canadian Space Agency

reported that several studies showed that on spaceflights lasting from five to eleven days, astronauts experience up to 20 percent muscle mass loss.¹

GREAT EXERCISE

Walking is a great cardiovascular exercise as it increases our heart rate, which then improves blood flow and may lower blood pressure, bump up energy levels through the action of the hormone endorphins, and increase the delivery of vital oxygen throughout the body.

Unlike high-impact physical activities, **brisk walking** is a moderate-intensity, low-impact, and low-injury exercise because it does not put too much pressure and tension on the joints prone to injury, such as the hip, knees, and ankles.²

Other benefits of exercise are weight management, increased lung capacity, strengthening of the immune system and bones, reduction of stress and bad cholesterol levels, improvement in metabolism, and promotion of sleep naturally without the adverse effects of drugs.

For maximum benefit, engage in a **daily** exercise routine of **at least thirty minutes**. Stop and consult with your physician if you experience discomfort while exercising.



DRINK WATER

Called the “**universal solvent**” due to its ability to dissolve more substances than any other liquid, water makes up between 50 - 75 percent of the human body weight.¹ Without water, life on this planet will cease to exist.

INTERNAL PROCESSES

The human body utilizes water for mechanical and chemical processes, such as the movement of the joints, the heart’s action of pumping blood, the elimination of toxic wastes by the kidneys, digestion, management of body temperature, and many more. To stay healthy and firm, the skin needs adequate water, as well.

Dehydration occurs when the body loses more water than it is supplied with. Perspiration, urination, illness, and fever are some of the ways that cause the body to lose water. Prolonged dehydration can be dangerous because it puts a strain on the organs due to its contribution to the sluggish flow of blood and a decrease in the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to the organs.

EXTERNAL USE

Water use in personal hygiene is important for health as it helps to cleanse away dirt, grime, and waste products from the skin. The external use of water also has great healing properties, which have been known since ancient times. In his work, “*De is, a quiz at loci,*” Hippocrates describes the benefits of hydrotherapy or water therapy and the effects of hot and cold baths on the human body.²

SUGARY BEVERAGES

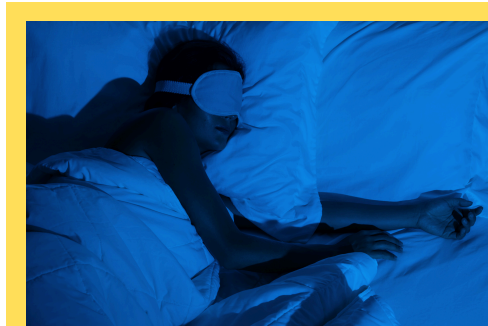
Many beverages contain artificial additives and high levels of refined sugars or artificial sweeteners. These can contribute to increased blood sugar levels and weight gain and place a burden on the liver and kidneys. The **best** liquid for the body is plain, clean water. Drink between **six to eight glasses** of water each day for good health.





*"A merry heart
does good,
like medicine,
But a broken
spirit dries the
bones."*

Proverbs 17:22, NKJV





"Disease is an effort of nature to free the system from conditions that result from a violation of the laws of health."

Counsels on Health, p.77





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CREDITS

RESTORED LOGO DESIGN

Donated by: John Philip Habaradas

STOCK IMAGES

Canva

Author

Edith Missah-Habaradas, BSN, MPH

*Director, Health & Prayer Ministries,
Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*

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Ontario Conference of
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905-571-1022

1110 King Street East
Oshawa, ON L1H 1H8
Canada

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