



HEALTHY LIVING

Nutrition & Lifestyle

A good way to rejuvenate your health is by eating nutritiously and becoming more active. In fact, even a few simple changes in your diet and lifestyle can have a positive impact on your health—and may prevent a variety of chronic health problems in the future. As part of their extensive education, chiropractors are trained in nutrition and wellness promotion, and they can offer you dietary counseling as well as lifestyle tips to get you moving in the right direction.

Start today to make better choices that will fuel and strengthen your body. The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) offers some simple suggestions:

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

- Exercise at least 20 to 30 minutes up to five days a week.
- Eat out more sparingly. Food preparation methods in restaurants often involve high amounts of fats, sugar and salt.
- Brown-bag your lunch to control your fat, salt and sugar intake while adding nutritious fruits, vegetables and grains.
- Limit alcohol and quit smoking. Drinking alcohol excessively and/or smoking hinder your body's ability to absorb nutrients from your food.
- Research shows that smokers suffer from back pain more than nonsmokers do.¹
- Practice mindfulness on a daily basis. This could come in the form of yoga, meditation or journaling.
- Aim to sleep 6 to 8 hours a night. When possible, sleep on your side with a pillow between your legs rather than on your back.



Research shows that among adults with chronic low back pain, treatment with mindfulness-based stress reduction resulted in greater improvement in back pain and functional limitations.²

DIETARY CHANGES



- Eat more raw foods. Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables always have more natural vitamins and minerals.
- Select organically grown foods when possible because they have lower amounts of toxic elements, such as pesticides and heavy metals.
- Consume 25 to 35 grams of fiber a day. Whole-grain breads and cereals, beans, nuts and some fruits and vegetables are good sources of fiber.
- Be sure to hydrate your body through adequate fluid intake, with water and other beverages that do not contain added sugars or chemicals. Juicy foods such as many fruits and vegetables can also help you meet your fluid requirements.
- Limit your sugar intake. Eating/drinking added sugar (i.e., sodas, fruit drinks, desserts, candy, ready-to-eat cereals, etc) leads to weight gain and obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.³

Research shows that a good vegetarian diet as part of a comprehensive health program can help prevent heart disease, cancer and other diseases. If you are considering a vegetarian diet, keep the following tips in mind:

- Don't rely on fruits and vegetables at the expense of grains and legumes. Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables to consume a wide range of nutrients.
- Tiredness, malaise, and anemia can be signs of deficiencies. Have your B12 and iron levels checked at least once a year.
- Consume fortified foods or take supplements to obtain the nutrients you no longer get from animal-based products, such as vitamin B12 and vitamin D.
- Before eliminating animal products from the diet, learn to do it right. Children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and people recovering from illness should consult their health care practitioners before making such a change.



» **For more information on prevention and wellness, or to find an ACA chiropractor near you, visit www.acatoday.org/patients, or follow us @ACAtoday.**

REFERENCES:

1. Ditre, J. W., Brandon, T. H., Zale, E. L., & Meagher, M. M. (2011). Pain, Nicotine, and Smoking: Research Findings and Mechanistic Considerations. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(6), 1065-1093. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025544>. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21967450>
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3. "Know Your Limit for Added Sugars (2016). CDC. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/data-statistics/know-your-limit-for-added-sugars.html>



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