

Spring Into Health

As we march into spring, how's it going thus far? January's snow days were not too bad. Kind of cold, but kind of nice. February brought us through alright.

Now that March is here, things are waking up for spring. We can give ourselves a quick health check-up to see how we are doing health-wise.

Good health starts with the individual. In our dysfunctional health system, the average spending per capita is nearly twice as high as that of other countries. Yet, these nations have a longer life expectancy than in America. Why?

Presidents since Roosevelt have dreamed of a national health plan. Bill Clinton said to change the health system was too complex and too hard to project health care costs. And also, most Americans like what they have. No one said it would be easy to change, and it hasn't been. First sentence in the previous paragraph states that "good health starts with the individual."

There might not be a fountain of youth, but there are things that we can do to add years to our life. First of all, eat healthy. I know what you're thinking, "Here we go again. Another health nut telling you to exercise and what to eat and what not to eat." Well, good food keeps your weight down and your mind and body healthy.

Read on.

Focus on fruits and vegetables. Also, eat whole grains, nuts and plant proteins, like beans. No TV dinner eating. Eat meals and even snacks at the dinner table. That way, you won't be distracted and overeat.

Switch to smaller plates, say 10 inch plates. Smaller plates make normal portions look larger. This makes it easier to eat less. Weigh yourself daily. You'll be more likely to lose extra pounds, or you might not gain in the first place. Say "Hara Hachi u" twice. It's Japanese, which means to stop eating when you are 80% full. It takes 20 minutes for your brain to recognize a full stomach. So, wait before reaching for seconds. You don't have to speak Japanese, just stop eating before you get too stuffed to move easily. Get away from the table and say, "I've had enough of this meal."

It's spring-time. Time to get out in the yard. Time to clean up the winter mess. Almost garden time. Gardening is very good exercise. You can enjoy nature and make the world around you more beautiful. Plant flowers, fruits and vegetables, then make new friends in the neighborhood by sharing your extra health

boost. Volunteering can add years to your life also. Lending a helping hand can



extend and improve your own life, as well as the ones you are helping. It can make your community stronger. It can make the world stronger. It might make a difference in the world. It will make a difference in your health.

According to Dr. Linda Wright, M.D., "Wellness is

created in the way our immune system interacts with our environment based on our genetics and modified by our behavior or lifestyle." You probably know that heart disease, cancer, diabetes and even depression can run in families. Rare conditions, like cystic fibrosis and sickle cell anemia, may also be passed down. Americans and their families need quality health care they can afford.

As we enter this new year, poised to achieve affordable quality health care for all Americans, a stronger Medicare for seniors and future generations, lower drug costs, and improvement of our long-term care, we should be aware that we need to health ourselves. Begin with a good laugh. Laugh-

ing takes the edge off of stress.

Some things that can help are: Cut health care cost with pill-splitting. Get regular health screenings. Early detection of problems can save money. Control blood pressure by getting enough potassium in your daily diet. Protect your eyes from cataracts with sunglasses and wearing a full hat. Things that prevent heart attacks will also lower your risk for strokes. Yearly flu shots and one time pneumonia shots for people 65 and over. Adequate calcium to build and keep bones strong in teenagers and women. Hand washing is the best way to avoid spreading germs and sickness. Talk to your doctor about getting bone density screening for osteoporosis. Rowing is an ideal workout to give the body strength and flexibility. For better protection for your teeth and gums, brush for two minutes. Get

Take time to be Health Conscious



by B J Armstrong

enough sleep. If you don't, it will weaken your immune system.

Health and wellness should be everyone's desire. It's on everybody's mind these days as we strive for reforms that Americans need. We need to educate ourselves on prevention and protection against diseases and sicknesses. As an individual, we need to take preventive action for our own health and wellness.

"Wisdom consists of knowing what to do with what you know." Unknown

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