

Lowering Your Risk for Disease

Did you know that according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics eating a healthier diet is one of the first lines of defense in the prevention of Type 2 diabetes and heart disease?

March is National Nutrition Month and OAOHN would like to encourage you to care for yourself, and your loved ones, by reminding you of the importance of healthier eating, spiritual wellness and preventive care.

The American Diabetes Association says that eating healthy is one of the most important things we can do to lower the risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Additionally, research by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) shows that following a healthier diet can help prevent high blood pressure and may lower blood pressure that is already over the normal range.

Below are some tips from the NIH to help you make healthier food choices every day:

- Keep healthier snacks, such as fruit and vegetables, at home and at work
- Pack healthier lunches for you and your family
- Choose low-fat dairy products
- Eat whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, brown rice, pasta or oatmeal
- Select lean meats and poultry
- Choose more fish, beans, peas, nuts and seeds as protein sources

Another great way to reduce your risk of developing disease is by maintaining spiritual wellness. According to Mental Health America, there is a connection between spirituality and health. Spirituality can reduce the stress that often drives disease. Below are some suggestions to keep your good health:

- Discover and rediscover what makes your life meaningful. Find what brings your life purpose and align your choices with it. Wherever your passion is, there you'll find your purpose.
- Nurture your connection with God/your Higher Power through regular spiritual practices. Some people choose prayer, others meditate, some read Scripture, others walk through nature. Whatever helps you in your relationship with the Divine, make time to foster your awareness of the Sacred.
- Connect with others who share your values. Having meaningful relationships with others, which focus on what is important to us, reminds us that we are not alone and can often bring joy to our lives.
- Find opportunities to serve. Helping others in need, either through volunteer work or some other means, nurtures our spirit when we feel our actions make a positive difference for other people.

Last, but not least, getting annual physicals and tests from your doctor is key in sustaining your health and preventing diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure. Having a Primary Care Physician (PCP) who can coordinate your care is vital to your good health. A PCP typically specializes in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine or General Practice.

If you don't have a PCP, finding one is easy! Just visit your insurance carrier's website, look for the "find a doctor" area and follow the instructions.