

## Your Health: Tips to Stay Safe and Healthy



It can be hard to predict or avoid some health problems. But there are many small things you can do to help you stay safe and healthy. Remember that you are protecting not only yourself but also those you care about. If you get hurt or sick, you may not be able to work or take care of your loved ones. They may have to take care of you.

### Guidelines for safety

Here are a few easy things you can do to keep from getting hurt at home, on the job, in the car, and when you are having fun.

- **Always wear your seat belt.** This is one of the simplest things you can do to stay safe. You are much more likely to avoid being hurt or killed in an accident if you are wearing a seat belt.
- **Use safety equipment.** Both at work and when you are having fun, safety equipment can keep you from getting hurt and may even save your life. It only takes a moment to put on safety glasses, gloves, or other equipment. Always wear a hard hat or helmet when doing anything that could injure your head.

Brain injuries can kill you or cause long-term damage.

- **Organize your work area.** This is called "ergonomics"-setting up your workstation so your work goes more smoothly and you are less likely to get hurt. This is most important if you repeat certain tasks all day. Making simple changes to the way your work area is set up, or to the way you do tasks, can make a big difference.
- **Never drink and drive.** Driving after drinking even a little alcohol can really slow down your reflexes. This makes it a lot more likely for you to get hurt-or hurt someone else-in an accident. If you are drinking, take a cab or bus or ride with a designated driver.
- **Avoid talking on your cell phone while you drive.** Studies show that even a hands-free model may distract you and make you more likely to have an accident.

### Guidelines for good health

Making good choices every day may be the best way to stay healthy. It can be hard to make lifestyle changes, but if you focus on one thing at a time, you can do it. Pick one small goal you know you can reach. Then when you meet that goal, set another one.

- **Stay active.** Try to do moderate exercise at least 2½ hours a week. One way to do this is to be active 30 minutes a day, at least 5 days a week. But any amount of activity that gets you breathing hard and gets your heart beating can help keep you healthy. If you are older or have health problems, exercise can be even more important. Talk with your doctor about setting up an exercise program that is right for you.
- **Do not smoke or use spit tobacco.** It can be hard to quit, but you can do it. Getting help is the first step. Talk with your doctor about

nicotine replacement products, medicine to reduce cravings, and stop-smoking programs.

- **Stay at a healthy weight.** Being overweight makes you much more likely to have health problems such as diabetes and heart disease. If you have trouble with your weight, talk with your doctor or a dietitian about how you can make changes. Do not diet to lose weight quickly. Learn to make healthy food choices that become habits.
- **Protect yourself from the sun.** If you are working or having fun outside, wear sunscreen, a wide-brimmed hat, or clothes that block the sun. Avoid getting a sunburn. Too much sun makes you more likely to get skin cancer and can wrinkle your skin.
- **Take your medicines as your doctor says.** Always follow your doctor's directions about what dose you should take and when you should take it. If you have any questions, call your doctor or talk to your pharmacist.
- **Keep your stress low.** Stress is a part of life. While some stress is normal and even needed, too much of it can affect your quality

of life and your health. You can reduce stress by finding its causes in your life and understanding and accepting what you can control and what you cannot. You also can learn ways to lower and manage stress.

- **Get help.** There are many places to learn more about staying healthy.
  - See if your job offers professional counseling through an employee assistance program, wellness benefits, safety courses, or other resources.
  - Find out what programs are offered by your health care provider or insurance program, your local hospital, or state health agencies. For example, these may include resources to help you quit drinking alcohol or smoking.
  - If you have Internet access, look for safety information on reliable websites such as the one for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)).