



Joe's Tips – Module 7

For a Healthy Lifestyle

Source: Many of these tips are adapted from the American Heart Association.

- GET PREVENTIVE SCREENINGS

Ask your doctor if you're due for any **preventive screenings**. Make sure your doctor knows about any family history of disease (like diabetes, cancer and heart disease) as that may change the scheduling of when you should have certain type of screenings.

- MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

For starters, check out all the resources on the **Learn More** page. Also, check if your health plan's website offers a **health risk assessment** that you can take online. It's confidential and helps identify your high-priority areas for lifestyle change and prevention. Answer all the questions honestly, and urge your spouse to take the assessment, too (if eligible). **Ask your doctor for guidance** in making healthy lifestyle changes. Be honest about your eating and drinking habits, physical activity levels, and other lifestyle factors when talking with doctor. It's the only way he or she can accurately assess your risk factors, so you can manage them and stay healthy.

- BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Aim to get at least **30 minutes of moderate physical activity** on most, if not all, days of the week. If you are trying to lose weight, aim for 30 to 60 minutes on most days. Consider seeing your doctor before beginning an exercise program, especially if you have existing health issues or haven't been active in a long time. Start out slow and build up. If you're sweating, you're working your heart.

- LIMIT TV-COMPUTER TIME

Cut down on your **"screen" time**, including watching television, surfing the Web and playing computer games. After dinner, go for a walk around the block instead of watching TV. Or, exercise while watching TV.

- CHOOSE NUTRITION

To get the **nutrients you need**, choose foods like vegetables, fruits, whole-grain products and fat-free ($\leq 1\%$) or low-fat dairy products. Study nutritional labels and don't be fooled by misleading marketing, for example, candies labeled as "low-fat" or "lite" cookies. While they may have fewer calories than other candies or cookies, it's still better to choose fruits, yogurt,

and other healthier choices when you crave something sweet.

- **EAT FISH**

Eat baked, grilled, boiled **fish at least twice a week**. Recent research shows that eating fish containing omega-3 fatty acids (for example, salmon, trout and herring) may help lower your risk of death from coronary artery disease.

- **CHOOSE LEAN MEAT**

Choose **lean meats and poultry** without skin and prepare them without added saturated and trans fat.

- **LIMIT TRANS FAT**

To **reduce trans fat** in your diet, cut back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Trans fats are a common ingredient in commercial baked goods — such as crackers, cookies and cakes — and in fried foods, such as doughnuts and French fries. Shortenings and some margarines also are high in trans fat.

- **AVOID SUGAR/SALT**

Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars. Choose and prepare foods with **little or no salt (sodium)**. Aim to eat less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day.

- **WATCH THE ALCOHOL**

If you drink alcohol, **drink in moderation**. That means one drink per day if you're a woman and two drinks per day if you're a man.

- **DON'T USE TOBACCO.**

Smoking is responsible for nearly **1 in 5 deaths** in the United States. In addition to cutting short your life, smoking **harms nearly every organ of the body** and is a major cause of heart disease, aneurysms, bronchitis, emphysema, and stroke. Tobacco damages women's reproductive health and has been linked to a variety of other health problems. (Source: American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org.)

- **AVOID SECOND-HAND SMOKE.**

The EPA classifies secondhand smoke as a **known cancer-causing agent**. The 2006 U.S. Surgeon General's Report concludes that second-hand smoke **causes premature death and disease** in children and adults who do not smoke. Along with shortened lifespan, second-hand smoke causes coughing, phlegm, chest discomfort and reduced lung function. Each year in the U.S., second-hand smoke is responsible for up to 300,000 respiratory infections in children under 18 months and increases the number and severity of asthma attacks in up to 1 million children. (Source: American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org.)