

Weiser Signal American's guide to...

Healthy Living



Featured Stories:

- Reading Helps Exercise the Brain
- Youth Sports Long-term Benefits
- Four Pillars for Healthy Living
- Enjoy the Great Outdoors
- Mental and Physical Health
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The love for books and reading starts at a young age. Weiser Public Library offers a story hour every Thursday where a volunteer will read to the youngsters. Reading benefits both physical and mental well being. Studies have shown that reading can also help prevent age-related cognitive decline. So go to the library or your favorite book store and enjoy a good book. Photo by Nancy Grindstaff

Can reading a book be good for your emotional and physical health?

by Philip A. Janquart

It's not hard to understand how a book, depending on the subject matter, can be good for your mental health, but what can it do for us in the physical sense?

Unless you lift crates of them on a regular basis, they won't build a bigger set of biceps; more likely you'll develop back problems.

It turns out, however, that reading does more for the body than you may think.

Reading books benefits both your physical and mental health well being, the benefits lasting a lifetime, a fact backed up by science, according to a medically reviewed article written by Rebecca Joy Stanborough, MFA, a freelance author who contributes to Healthline.

First, reading strengthens your brain as shown by a growing body of research that indicates reading literally changes your mind.

Researchers cited MRI scans that showed reading involves a complex network of circuits and signals in the brain. As your reading ability matures, those networks also get stronger and more sophisticated.

Reading also helps prevent age-related cognitive decline. The National Institute on Aging recommends reading books and magazines as a way of keeping your mind engaged as you grow older.

According to Kristeen Cherney, PhD for Everyday Health, while reading can help children's cognitive skills as part of their healthy development, the same benefits can be extended to older adults.

"Research suggests that regular cognitive-related activities throughout childhood and adulthood may slow down cognitive decline as you age," she writes.

"Reading is a cognitive activity that works your brain and prevents memory loss," added Holly Schiff, PsyD. "Reading is a mentally stimulating activity that increases the flow of blood, oxygen, and nutrients to the brain."

Schiff also noted that reading may help prevent beta-amyloid deposits from developing in the brain. These are characteristic of Alzheimer's.

"Mental stimulation can also slow Alzheimer's progression as keeping the brain active is thought to build reserves of healthy brain cells and connections between them," she said. "By building this brain reserve, it can help compensate for the damage caused by Alzheimer's, and because the brain is able to compensate and continue to function, the onset of dementia may be delayed."

There are many ways we can learn to reduce stress. Researchers have found, however, that 30 minutes of reading lowered blood pressure, heart rate, and feelings of distress as effectively as yoga and humor.

Doctors at the Mayo Clinic suggest

reading as a part of a regular sleep routine. For best results, choose a print book rather than reading on screen, since the light emitted by your device could keep you awake and lead to other unwanted health outcomes. Doctors also recommend that you read somewhere other than your bedroom if you have trouble falling asleep.

Overall, reading is very good for you.

The rundown includes, improved brain connectivity, increased vocabulary and comprehension, empowers you to empathize with other people, aids in sleep readiness, reduces stress, lowers blood pressure and heart rate, fights depression symptoms, prevents cognitive decline as you age, and contributes to a longer life.

Yes, a longer life: a long-term health and retirement study, published by PubMed Central under the National Institutes of Health, conducted a long-term health and retirement study. The study, following a cohort of 3,635 adult participants for a period of 12 years, found that those who read books survived around two years longer than those who didn't read.

The study also concluded that people who read more than three and a half hours every week were 23 percent likely to live longer than those who didn't read at all.

So, when considering overall wellness and balance, don't feel lazy or guilty that you are sitting and reading. You are actually working out and didn't even know it.

Weiser Public Library

The Weiser Public Library is a great source for books to checkout and through Libby, patrons can check out audio books through the Idaho Digital Consortium.

The library hosts book clubs for adults, third through fifth grade, middle school, and high school students. This is an opportunity to read and socialize. The book clubs run through the school year and has started with the adults reading "The Keeper of the Hidden Books," third through fifth grade children reading "Grump," middle school reading "The Giver," and high school students reading "The Reading List."

The library is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. On Tuesday and Thursday, they are open until 8 p.m. and on Saturday the library is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Every Thursday they have a volunteer reader come in to read to youngsters for story time starting at 10:30 a.m.

Librarian Timbra Long also has special programs throughout the year. A let's talk about it, scholar-led book discussion series has started with the first book "The Best We Could Do" by Thi Bui. A scholar from Boise State University will lead the conversation about the book on Oct. 19 at 6:30 p.m.



A body in motion stays in motion and that helps keep out\r bodies physically fit and also helps our mental state. Weiser has a lot of fun activities to help keep our bodies moving. The Weiser Recreation Department offers many athletic programs for youth to adults. A new feature that has recently been added is two pickleball courts at the Weiser tennis courts. Two gyms are available to work out, there is an outdoor gym in Weiser City Park and the Weiser River Trail is a great place to walk. Enjoy the upcoming fall weather, the fall colors and keep active to feel better. Pictured above is the fifth and sixth grade soccer team coached by Eddie Favela playing their first game of the season. *Photo by Sarah Imada*

Youth sports participation produces long term benefits

Local youth opportunities are close to limitless

by Nancy Grindstaff

There’s no doubt Weiser’s youth sports offerings start early, with something for everyone at nearly any age. And, as our kids advance through their elementary and high school years, they find multiple sports to learn and play.

Currently at Weiser High School, nearly 36 percent of the student body is participating in one of five fall sports options, and that doesn’t include those in cheer. In addition, there are a number of students playing on a variety of club teams down the valley.

For the fall season, Weiser’s Recreation Department has 95 children signed up in three age divisions for soccer, spread across six teams. Recreation Director Ken Anderson said there are three teams in the third and fourth grade football division, consisting of 15 players per team, and two teams in the fifth/sixth grade division with a total of around 44 players.

“I’ve noticed over the last couple of years our numbers in football have gotten bigger,” Anderson said. “Unfortunately, football is the most expensive sport.”

As the use of technology has become more and more prevalent in nearly everyone’s lives over the past 30-plus years, the important thing is to get kids (and adults) up and moving.

“Giving kids a variety of choices,” Anderson said. “Football for one kid might not be it. It might be soccer, tennis, golf, or swim team. We’ve got different activities for different seasons. We even have some great community businesses (gyms) who put on things like wrestling programs for kids.

“Some of the expense of registration fees might take the place of some doctor fees down the road,” Anderson said. “You just never know. Our main objective is to keep

kids active, give them a variety of options in a safe environment. This is the time of their lives where they will decide the sports they’ll want to play in junior high and high school.”

A Weiser High School graduate, Anderson talked about sports that weren’t school-sanctioned during the 1990s, now “exploding” in popularity.

“Soccer didn’t even exist, and even when I first took this job, tennis wasn’t very big, and now it’s exploded, which is good,” he said.

Pickleball seems to be growing in popularity in the area, as well.

“I saw some people out playing earlier this week,” Anderson said. “They said there’s some pickleball courts at the LDS church that they’ve used, but they said, when the weather’s really nice, why not get outside and enjoy it. I think it’s going to start getting busier. I saw some people out there yesterday, and I’m hoping as the word gets out, people start utilizing it more. It’s exciting to see people use all of our facilities. I wish we had more.”

As it all turns out, the time spent participating in any number of sports as a child and teen has proven to have ongoing health benefits well into later adulthood.

A study from 10 years ago, published in the journal BMC Public Health and reported in the Huffington Post, indicated that elderly men who had played high school sports visited their doctors fewer times per year. That study, which included over 700 WWII veterans who were physically fit as young men, also found that neither personality traits nor where they had lived were strong predictors of their physical activity in elderly age, but playing high school sports did predict being physically fit and fewer doctor visits as they aged.

Writing for the National Federation of High School Associations

in 2020, Dr. Steve Amaro, CMAA, points out students continue to benefit from sports participation after graduating. Three of those benefits are: a stronger sense of self-confidence in building relationships with others and having an expanded capacity for empathy; developing a better understanding of self and in so doing understanding how their actions affect others; and, building foundations for lifelong fitness habits.

Amaro lays the responsibility for those benefits at the feet of school leadership.

“These takeaways do not happen without purposeful oversight. All school leaders have a role in maintaining safe environments that allow students to experience meaningful, positive participation. To impact students so they can apply what they learn in athletics to post high school life, adult coaches and mentors need to value character education more than wins and losses. When coaches understand they can start students on a path to reach their unfulfilled potential, they can help students set the foundations for a lifetime.”

A 2020 publication found at Health.gov indicates that 73 percent of adults who play sports participated when they were younger. As well, adolescents who play sports are eight times more likely to be physically active at 24 than those who do not play sports.

The paper goes on to describe a positive economic and community impact from a physically fit population. “The benefits of youth sports extend beyond the field and even beyond the participant. Participating in sports and physical activity can lead to: a decrease in direct, indirect, and personal health care costs (collectively, up to \$28 billion per year); and, a stronger long-term labor market.”

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Living a healthy lifestyle doesn't have to be a daunting task. By simply eating better, exercising, getting plenty of sleep and drinking water can help relieve aches and pains, give us more energy, and improve our mental state.



Four pillars for a healthy life

by Crystal Linn

Most people wish to have a healthy life, yet the available data from experts can be overwhelming.

To simplify matters, here are four areas where we can improve our health. These are food, water, exercise, and sleep.

Food

There are over 100 different diet plans to choose from. In addition to the popular ones like Keto there are less well-known diets such as proper food combining or the acid-alkaline diet. After much research and experimenting, I concluded the Mediterranean diet is the perfect choice. This eating plan is the most balanced of all, and within its parameters you can follow other diets, such as Paleo, if you choose to do so.

Water

We know the importance of drinking quality water, the challenge is how much. A person who is six feet tall, weighing 300 pounds needs more than a five foot tall person, weighing 125 pounds. Follow your intuition, knowing your body will need different amounts of water at different times.

Lemons have many electrolytes so a slice in your water is beneficial.

Purchasing small bottles of water is more expensive and uses more plastic. Consider purchasing water by the gallon or investing in some form of water filter.

Examine the water which goes on your body. Hard water dries the skin, allowing more harsh minerals to penetrate into your body, potentially causing health issues. Water purifiers for sink and shower are now affordable.

Exercise

As a beginner, it does not matter what you do, as long as you do something for exercise. It is common knowledge that exercise strengthens the heart and muscles, and it allows more blood and oxygen to flow throughout the body.

Our bones also need exercise. Bones have two groups of helpers, osteoblasts which builds new bone and osteoclasts which breaks down old bone. If we do not exercise the osteoblasts say, "Our person is not exercising. We do not need to build more bones." Meanwhile, the osteoclasts continue to remove old bone pieces, causing a loss of bone density.

Walking outside for ten minutes a day or standing by your desk doing a 5-minute tai chi routine several times a day is better than nothing.

Sleep

The Centers for Disease Control released a report stating 33 percent of Americans do not get enough sleep. Other statistics show 17 percent of motor vehicle fatalities were caused by sleep deprivation.

Lack of sleep has contributed to vertigo, obesity, and mental illness – and other ailments including infertility.

Sleep is critical for one's overall health. In the non-dreaming sleep stages the body regenerates itself and in the dreaming sleep stages the brain cleans itself while organizing thoughts and memories.

Here are three steps which can contribute to better sleep.

One – Tweak your eating habits. It is better to have a smaller evening meal with a light protein and green leafy vegetables. For a bedtime snack try cheese, nuts, or celery. These foods contain relaxing nutrients like vitamin B-1 and potassium. If insomnia is an issue have your nutrient levels checked.

Two – Revise your evening routine. Turn down the lights and engage in quiet activities. These give your brain time to begin its shutting down process.

Three – Examine your bedroom. The ideal bedroom is dark and quiet with moderate room temperatures. Experts say 68 degrees F (20 degrees C) is the ideal temperature for quality sleep.

Other options are to add houseplants or calming essential oils, like lavender, to your room. Listening to calming nature sounds is helpful.

Small improvements can go a long way towards better health. Gradually make any necessary changes to create a healthier lifestyle for yourself and your family.

We at the *Weiser Signal American* love reader comments. Feel free to email us at either info@signalamerican.com or info@wellnesswithage.com.



Mental well-being can play a big role on physical health. Depression is a major concern in the health field. It can cause chronic illness which then leads to challenges dealing with the illness. Family Medical Center in Weiser has a behavioral health department within its facilities to help with behavioral and mental health needs. Psychiatrist Dr. Melissa Smith, Melissa Hathhorn, psychiatric nurse practitioner, Ali Capurro a licensed professional counselor and Stephanie Gallegos who is a social worker are available to help patients with their needs.

The effects of mental health on physical health: what is the connection?

by Philip A. Janquart

The mind and body are traditionally viewed on separate terms, but these days the connection between the two is becoming clearer and more widely understood.

The wall separating physical and mental health is being dismantled, brick by brick.

Your mental health plays a significant role in general well-being, and being in a good mental state will help you prevent serious health conditions, according to studies.

Depression has been linked to chronic illness, including diabetes, asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and arthritis. And mental health conditions can also make dealing with chronic illness more challenging.

People who suffer from mental health conditions are more likely to suffer from sleep disorders like insomnia or sleep apnea, which can lead to breathing problems, causing you to wake up frequently. And not sleeping can also make existing mental health conditions worse.

Those suffering from mental health issues may also be less active, potentially leading to physical health problems.

So, the connection between mental and physical health has become clearer over time.

“There is a lot of literature, a lot of studies out there that talk about how your mental health can directly affect your physical health, and vice versa,” said Madora Albertson, Director of Primary Care and Mental and Behavioral Health Operations for Weiser Memorial Hospital Family Medical Center in Weiser.

“If you have chronic pain, it can affect your mental health, but your mental

health can affect your physical health; it’s a big circle,” she said.

It’s why many healthcare providers have been transitioning to integrated care.

“I’d say about 20 years ago, healthcare in general started paying attention to the studies and the literature and decided that they can’t just treat the physical health, it has to coincide with treating mental health as well,” Albertson said. “The nice thing about that, is back in the ‘old’ days you would be referred to a psychiatrist, a counselor, or therapist for a mental health or behavioral health issue.”

That has changed at Family Medical, the clinic now able to treat patients with both mental and behavioral health issues.

And there is a difference between mental and behavioral health.

Mental health is about how your psychological state affects your well-being, while behavioral health is about how actions affect your well-being.

Albertson described Family Medical’s process for dealing with behavioral health:

“What we do, if someone comes to see their primary care provider and, say, even if it’s about high blood pressure or diabetes, if there are immediate lifestyle changes that we could address during that visit, we call in what we call our behavioral health consultant, immediately on-site; we don’t have to refer you out,” she said.

“We immediately address the issue right then and there. The primary care provider steps out, they consult with our behavioral health consultant, and gives some objectives, like, ‘Hey, I would really like to see this patient lower their A-1C. Could you go in and talk to them

about maybe some things they can do at home?’ And then, instead of following up with the primary care provider, we follow up with our behavioral health consultant maybe a week or so later, and say, ‘Hey you made these small changes what do you think, how is that working out?’ Little things like that.”

Family Medical is also capable of helping individuals with mental health issues.

“We do have some limitations because we are a rural health center, so every patient has to be an established patient; that’s one of the requirements,” Albertson explained. “We have our psychiatrist, Dr. Melissa Smith, and then we have our psychiatric nurse practitioner, who is Melissa Hathhorn, and then we’ve got Ali Capurro, she is a licensed professional counselor, and we’ve got Stephanie Gallegos who is our social worker, so those are the four main behavioral and mental health specialists that we have in the building.

“There are some gaps in care that we just haven’t been able to cover yet, like substance abuse and things like that. We would love to start doing some of those things as well. I’m always trying to include more services in our area, so people don’t have to go far away, but for substance abuse in general, there’s a lot of requirements for that and we are kind of out of space, actually.”

Despite the “limitations,” it is rather unusual to have the services Family Medical offers available in most rural communities.

“We are pretty lucky that way,” she said. “I don’t know that there is another rural health center or critical access hospital in Idaho that has these services.”

For those that are going through a mental crisis, there is the emergency

department at Weiser Memorial Hospital where patients have access to Telehealth.

“One of the things that we have going on for the emergency department is essentially a social worker on call,” Albertson explained. “So, if somebody comes in, in crisis, into the emergency department, we have availability to basically call Telehealth, to a social worker who can do an assessment with that patient, face-to-face, through an iPad.

“And they can maybe help with a safety plan or risk assessments, things like that. The intent is always to try and keep someone here and not have to transport them out for a higher level of care. And if we can bring services into the community so we can keep people close to home, that is always more beneficial for someone versus sending them far away.”

There are plenty of gyms in the area for keeping physically fit, but it’s important for people to know what is available to them on the mental and behavioral fronts. Keeping both sides of the machine working is important in maintaining a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

The services provided in Weiser give residents in a rural community of approximately 5,500 the opportunity to do just that.

“In the beginning I thought, ‘Man, are we doing the right thing? Is this something that is going to be beneficial to the community?’ And it has been,” Albertson said. “It’s really been support for our primary care providers so that they have some collaboration with people who specialize in mental health, not just relying on a medication; maybe we’ve got some tools at home or with Telehealth services that we can be providing. It’s good care.”



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Unconditional love goes a long way in the stressful life most people live in. Coming home from a long day at work to an animal that is so excited to see you can melt the stress away. Pets are also a good source for our physical health. Take your dog for a walk or play ball in the back yard. The fresh air and exercise will go a long way to a healthy life.

Dogs can be the key for physical and mental health

by Philip A. Janquart

It's a phenomenon that, unless you are an expert, is hard to explain.

Have you come home and had a family member say that Rex began pacing in front of the door and looking out the window about 10 to 15 minutes before you come home?

It's as if your best friend has some sort of sixth sense that alerts him that you are on your way.

And it happens to more people than you may think.

Surveys showed that 46 percent of dog owners in England and 45 percent of dog owners in California noticed this ability in their dogs. And in both surveys, dogs were capable of detecting their owner's arrival less than five minutes prior to when the person arrived home.

Though it is only anecdotal, it is nevertheless testimony to this seemingly uncanny ability.

Turns out there is something to it, though it may not involve a sixth sense.

Dan Harjes of Melba runs a business called "Dog Trainer Dan." He works with dogs who have behavioral issues and is all too familiar with this particular behavior.

So, can dogs really perceive your impending arrival?

"Oh, yeah. Absolutely," said Harjes, who has worked under the famed Dog Whisperer, Cesar Milan. "They have an internal clock, definitely, but they can also sense things that we can't."

Some research suggests that dogs have been around humans so long, they are hard-wired to pick up on human cues, and they can sense cues that we don't even know we're

giving out. Environmental cues can tip them off, like a spouse cooking dinner 30 minutes before your arrival or feeding the cat 10 minutes before you get home.

It also has to do with scent. The book "Being a Dog," by Alexandra Horowitz, says that your dog knows that your scent, or odor, is strongest in the morning and gradually disappears throughout the day. She suggests that when the scent fades to that level, the dog knows it's time for their owner to come home.

There are other theories, however they do it, it's another characteristic that makes our dogs all the more endearing. And it's something that can positively affect both your mental and physical health.

"Dogs can actually help you emotionally, physically, and spiritually," Harjes said. "They help you connect with the instinctual world, where people can really get wrapped up in the conveniences of modern society, you know, computers, phones, work, and everything."

"You can really bond with a dog, and they can take a lot of stress off. I think walking everyday is good for the dog, but good for humans too. It's good mental exercise and to get outside and see things, get in touch with nature, get your heart rate up a little, interact with the community can really make a difference in your life."

Some of the physical benefits of dog ownership were released in a study that showed animal interaction or owning pets reduces cortisol, heart rate, and blood pressure. Another study, by the University of California San Francisco and the University of Michigan, showed

that children who grow up with dogs from the time they are infants have a lower risk of developing allergies, reduced asthma, and are protected from some respiratory infection.

Mentally and emotionally, according to Harvard Health Publishing, having a pup in your life is a good reminder to live in the moment, a point Harjes agrees with.

"Dogs really do just live in the moment; they do what they do and that's it," he said. "They teach us not to get so wrapped up in the working world, worrying over the news and other things."

Dogs can also reduce stress and depression. A Time Magazine article says that dogs provide social support, making you feel less lonely. They can also instill confidence, according to a 2011 study in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, which showed that in addition to having higher self-esteem, dog owners "were more extraverted, tended to be less fearful, and tended to be less preoccupied than non-owners."

They can also teach empathy. That same study found that greater attachment to an animal in teen years leads to that person being more empathetic later on.

"Something that has actually helped me when potentially getting in a bad mood, I notice how my dog is perceiving me," Harjes said. "The vibes you are putting out into the world, whether you realize it or not, are affecting other people, including your dog. But if you are aware of it, you can work on it and make the world a more positive place for people and animals."



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Enjoy the great outdoors for the many wholesome benefits for a robust life

by Crystal Linn

In 1982 the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries coined the term shinrin-yoku. This term can be defined as “making contact with the forest” or “taking up the atmosphere of the forest” or “forest bathing.” Forty years later shinrin-yoku continues to be a part of Japan’s national health program.

In 2018 NHS Shetland, a government-run hospital in Scotland, began allowing certain physicians to write nature prescriptions. These prescriptions allowed for outside activities to become part of a patient’s routine care. This concept spread and physicians in many states are now writing prescriptions for patients to get outside and into nature.

In 2017 Dr. Robert Zarr, a pediatrician in Washington, D.C., founded Park Rx America. He writes an average of 10 prescriptions a day for patients to go to a local park because of the health benefits.

Apparently there is a need for this because studies show most Americans spend 93 percent of their time indoors or in their vehicles. That means most Americans spend a mere 7 percent of their time outside.

Countless research projects have proven how being outdoors is healthy for the whole person:



physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Here are a few examples as there are too many benefits to share in this brief column.

Studies show that a lack of vitamin D can lead to osteoporosis, cancer, heart attacks, and strokes. Receiving enough of this essential vitamin is critical for bone growth, regulating the immune system and in helping to battle depression.

Deep breathing of fresh, clean

air clears the lungs which creates more energy, reduces asthma symptoms and lowers blood pressure. A few other benefits of being outside are improved vision, lowered blood pressure, reduced anxiety, and even reduced pain levels.

The Journal of Aging and Health shared a study of adults over 70-years old who were outdoors frequently. These people slept better, had fewer aches and pains, and enjoyed improved mo-

bility.

A dear friend of mine, Joanne, is now in her 80s and continues to ride her bike several hours a week. She does not need hearing aids and only uses reading glasses.

Another area in which the great outdoors is beneficial is socialization. In the “good old days” farmers would help each other and in the evenings everyone sat outside on their front porch, visiting with their neighbors.

In our generation walking in a city park or exploring a forest trail allows us the opportunity to meet others who also enjoy God’s beautiful creation.

From what I learned, a person does not need to be physically active to receive the health benefits of the outdoors. Relaxing activities are considered healthy, such as a leisurely walk, gardening or sitting on a bench. The two main contributing factors are deeply breathing in fresh air and absorbing the sunlight’s vitamin D.

Some research has shown how bringing nature indoors can improve a person’s wellbeing. This includes house plants, miniature waterfalls and even paintings of nature scenes.

If you live in climates with more cloud cover do not despair. The sun’s light filters through the clouds as I personally have seen the results of this phenomena.

The most ideal times to be outside are early-to-mid mornings, and late afternoons to early evenings. These times allow us to absorb sunlight and fresh air without the sun’s hot rays beating down on us, or us breathing in hot, dry air. As always, remember to use appropriate sun protection.

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Dealing with chronic inflammation

by Crystal Linn

When the human body encounters a foreign substance, such as a virus, or if it suffers an injury the immune system is alerted which in turn sends out inflammatory cells to trap the offending agent, or to begin the healing process.

Chronic inflammation happens when the body sends out inflammatory cells when there is no invasion or injury. The two main causes of this are lifestyle factors and certain health conditions. Examples of both are:

- Autoimmune diseases like lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, or multiple sclerosis.
- An unhealthy diet including processed foods, refined carbohydrates, and sugar-laden foods.
- No exercise or too much exercise.
- Obesity.
- Sleep issues.
- Smoking or being around too much smoke.
- Stress.
- Too much alcohol consumption.

• Too many drugs such as antibiotics, antacids, and NSAIDs.

Chronic inflammation is painful and can be debilitating. The problem is that not all pain is the same because of the strong bond between the body and the mind, and many experts are still researching this connection.

One school of thought says once the inflammation is reduced or eliminated the pain



Chronic inflammation can cause many health problems. The joint pain can be so debilitating that it hurts to do daily activities. A change in lifestyle can help reduce the pain. Processed foods, refined carbohydrates, and sugar laden food can make the inflammation worse. Eat wisely, try to control stress and get plenty of sleep can be your first step to reducing inflammation.

itself will either be reduced or eliminated.

Few people are aware of how the body cannot distinguish between returning pain and new pain. When a pain pill wears off and the pain returns the body believes this is a new pain, a new attack so it creates additional pain receptors to alert the brain of the new invasion. As a result, pain is more intense after the pain pill wears off than it was before the pill was even taken.

The human body was created with a pH balance of seven which is neutral. An unhealthy American diet is highly acidic causing the body to pull nutri-

ents from within itself, especially the bones, to reestablish the correct pH balance. This creates many health problems including osteoporosis and increased inflammation.

The simplest way to reduce, or even eliminate, chronic inflammation is to change ones lifestyle, beginning with diet changes.

Many medical facilities including the University of Washington and Harvard Medical School recommend the Mediterranean diet because it includes mainly anti-inflammatory foods such as leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables, and healthy fruits as well as nuts and seeds.

Also, the Mediterranean diet is more alkaline which enable the body to better maintain the correct neutral pH balance which reduces the risk of future health concerns. Here is a list of additional activities for overcoming inflammation.

- Appropriate exercise.
- Drink more tea, both green and black contain polyphenols which reduce inflammation.
- Intermittent fasting.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Massage or acupuncture.
- Obtain quality sleep.
- Practice stress management.
- Reduce or eliminate alcohol beverages.
- Stop smoking or being

around unnecessary smoke.

• Take anti-inflammatory supplements like vitamin D and Omega 3.

• Use anti-inflammatory herbs such as cinnamon, rosemary, and turmeric.

The ideal way to prevent future chronic inflammation is to engage in the same activities required to reduce or eliminate it.

As always, it is wise for a person to check with health care providers before making any major lifestyle changes.

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