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As Seen on Dr. Oz...

Dr. Oz's 10 Ways to Live Healthier

During your first visit, there are key questions to consider. "When you go to their office, do the other patients ... look like you? Are they board certified? Do they get along with the staff?" Dr. Oz says. "If you get along with them, that person becomes your health coach. Because, remember, the word 'doctor' means 'teacher,' so it's a two-way street. If you come up with the right person, you're on the right path."

Even if you're one of 50 million Americans without health insurance, Dr. Oz says it's important to take this step. "There are free clinics. There are community health plans. If you really don't have enough money to afford a doctor, usually you'll qualify for Medicaid," he says. "But ... I don't want to let people off the hook either. Half the people in America who don't have health insurance have some money. They just make the economic decision to not buy it because it's so expensive."

Dr. Oz says the key is to choose the *right* physician.

To make your diet more healthy, Dr. Oz says to remember his "rule of fives." Look at the labels of the foods you eat. If you see one of these five ingredients listed as one of the first five things used to make it, don't eat it.

High fructose corn syrup

"We most commonly get this in soft drinks," Dr. Oz says. "It's an inexpensive sugar, which means we're getting a lot of it in our diet."

Sugar

Dr. Oz says when you eat sweets, your brain receives schizophrenic messages. "It says: 'I got calories, but I didn't get any nutrients,'" he says. Your body will keep craving food until it gets those nutrients.

"Enriched"

Also watch out for products made with "enriched" flour, like white bread. "Why would they take bread and have to enrich it? Because they take all the important vitamins out of it, and they sprinkle just a little bit back in there," Dr. Oz says.

Trans fat

Also known as hydrogenated fat, these are fats that were once in liquid form but have hydrogen added to make them solid at room temperature. "It extends the shelf life of the product," Dr. Oz says. "But it shortens the human life."

Saturated fats

These fats come from four-legged animals like pigs and cows.

Dr. Oz suggests starting with foods that don't need a label, like fresh fruits and vegetables. "If they're coming out of the ground looking the way they look when you eat them, they're good for you in general," he says.

Antioxidants

You should also fill your grocery cart with items that are high in antioxidants, such as tomatoes, broccoli, kidney beans, blueberries, artichokes and prunes. "Whatever has that deep color like a blueberry, you know it's rich in antioxidants," he says. Try to eat five to seven servings of these foods every day.

Omega-3 Fats

Increase your intake of omega-3 fats to 3 grams a day. "Remember, 80 percent of our brain is fat," Dr. Oz says. "We need to have the right kinds of fats in our body to make sure our brain is the most resilient to stress and can learn the fastest." Some good sources include ground flaxseeds, walnuts, salmon, scallops, soybeans and squash.

Fiber

Dr. Oz says the average American gets about 12 grams of fiber a day, but he recommends double that amount. Oatmeal, 100 percent whole grain bread, lentils, pine nuts, peas and raspberries are all great sources of this nutrient.

Olive Oil

The last item to add to your shopping list is virgin or extra-virgin olive oil. Ideally, Dr. Oz says you should consume about a tablespoon every day. One nutritious—and delicious—way to eat olive oil is with tomatoes, made into a pasta sauce. "If you get that into your diet a couple times a week, you're getting these nutrients naturally."

With so many variations to choose from, how do you what vitamin is right for you?

If you're a young, premenopausal woman, Dr. Oz says to look for a multivitamin that contains iron. "If you're menstruating, you'll need the iron to make new red blood cells," he says. "And you don't want more than 5,000 units of vitamin A."

If you're a postmenopausal woman or a man, Dr. Oz suggests a multivitamin without iron and no more than 2,500 units of vitamin A. "You don't need the iron, because you're not bleeding every month," he says.

Before you add this step to your daily routine, consult with your doctor. Dr. Oz says people who are taking medication to lower their cholesterol may need a different dosage.

Waist Size

Suck in and measure your waist at your belly button. It should ideally be less than half your height—about 40 inches for men, 37 inches for women.

Blood Pressure

The ideal blood pressure is approximately 115 over 75. "If the systolic or first number is 140 or above or if your diastolic or second number is 90 or more, alert your doctor," he says.

Cholesterol

This ratio is the third number you need to know. "You want your LDL, or lousy cholesterol, to be less than 100," Dr. Oz says. "You want your HDL, or healthy cholesterol, to be greater than 40."

Resting Heart Rate

Take your pulse when you get out of bed in the morning and strive to get it as close to 60 as possible.

Blood Sugar

A simple finger stick can help you discover your blood sugar levels. "When your blood sugar is

high, it's like if I take [a] glass and crack it on the ground and take the glass shards and scrape the insides of your arteries," he says. "That's what those sugar molecules do inside of you."

Vitamin D

You should also know your vitamin D levels—more Americans are deficient in vitamin D than any other vitamin. Vitamin D can help a person prevent cancer, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, autoimmune ailments and thyroid problems. You can get enough through 15 minutes a day of sun exposure during the summer or a daily vitamin D supplement with 1,000 units.

C-Reactive Protein

This is a way to tell if your body is full of inflammation and irritation. "If you've got gingivitis, prostatitis, vaginitis—if you've got any of these inflammations in your gut—they can elevate the C-reactive protein," he says. "C-reactive protein tells us how much of a battleground there is inside of you."

Thyroid Stimulating Hormone, or TSH

As Oprah learned the hard way in 2007. "If you have unexplained weight gain. If your hair has changed. If you don't have the get up and go. If your libido's off, the number one thing that we check is thyroid stimulating hormone," Dr. Oz says. "It tells us whether your thyroid gland is functioning normally."

Dr. Oz says a health advocate can be anyone—your spouse, child, relative or friend. "Bring someone who's actually going to pay attention and understands the process and takes notes," he says.

When you are under stress from doctors' diagnoses or are too sick to speak up for yourself, it's crucial to have someone helping you. "Get someone who you trust and make them your partner in this process."

Make sure you get an updated copy of your medical file before you leave the doctor's office. In case you need to see another physician, he or she will be able to make a diagnosis more quickly and accurately.

While this can be intimidating, Dr. Oz says you need to get over that intimidation. "Here is the reality. You want to know your family history. You want to know immunizations. You want to understand what your doctor's been thinking and doing with you," he says. "Because when you go to the next doctor, you don't want them being Columbo, trying to figure out what's going on with you. Why make it hard for them?"

First things first, Dr. Oz says everyone should get an annual checkup, see their dentist every six months and get an eye exam every two years.

The rest of your health test schedule depends on your age and gender. Check with your doctor to find out which tests you may need.

There are four main exercise goals you should be aiming to achieve this year.

Start Walking

Your goal is to get up to 10,000 steps a day, but Dr. Oz says it's okay to start by walking for 30 minutes a day. This will make for 3,000 steps. Get your steps in with a pedometer and simple changes like taking the stairs instead of the elevator. "Societies that have 10,000 steps under their belt every day don't have much under their belt," Dr. Oz says. "It's one of the best ways to stay thin."

Get Your Heart Rate Up

Besides walking, you need some more strenuous exercise as well. You should work out hard enough to be sweating for at least 60 minutes a week.

Flexibility

Stretch for at least five minutes a day. "If you're not flexible, you'll get hurt and you'll stop exercising," Dr. Oz says.

Strength Training

You need to do some kind of weight lifting or resistance training for at least 30 minutes a week. "If you don't rebuild those muscles, you get frail," Dr. Oz says. "And that's what aging is all about."

While steps 1 to 9 are important, you could lose all of the benefits if you skip sleep. "If you don't get sleep, you'll crave other things like carbohydrates," Dr. Oz says.

If you are one of the 70 million Americans who don't get enough sleep, there is help.

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