

The Vibrant Lifestyle

By Glen Schaffer, D.C.

Through my three decades in practice I've found that the cause for the majority of health conditions falls into one or more of six basic categories. I call these categories The Pillars of Health. If you neglect one or more of these five areas your level of health and wellness will eventually suffer.

Here's The Six Pillars:

- Proper Exercise
- Proper Nutrition
- Proper Rest
- Proper Mental or Spiritual Well-being
- Proper Structure
- Eliminate Toxins

Those seem kind of simple and basic and they are. For most people, staying healthy or getting healthy is relatively simple.....follow the basic rules! Most of the top ten health conditions (listed here with the U.S. dollar amounts spent annually on each condition) are directly related to neglect in one or more of the Pillars of Health. Here are some alarming statistics in the 34th annual "Health, United States Report" which was released by Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and reported by The Huffington Post.com on March 6, 2012: "Obesity among kids age 6 to 11 has almost doubled. It's now up to nearly 20 percent of children. American teens are gaining weight, too: 18 percent of all adolescents age 12 to 19 are now considered obese." Additionally, "Overall, the percentage of adults over the age of 20 who are considered obese is up -- from 22 percent between 1988 to 1994 to 34 percent between 2007 and 2008." With all the money spent on negative smoking ads and the bans on smoking in public places, "the percentage of U.S. adult smokers remains largely unchanged from 2008 -- at right about 20 percent." And lastly, "11 percent of all adults over the age of 20 had either diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetes. The number of adults with diabetes increased with age -- from 4 percent of all adults between 20 and 44 years old, to nearly 30 percent of all adults age 65 and older." The United Health Foundation's 2011 America's Health Rankings' came to the same conclusion that obesity and diabetes are on the rise. The United States ranked 14th out of 18 industrialized nations for preventable deaths per 100 thousand in population. Most industrialized nations are improving this area of healthcare at a much faster rate than the United States. We're falling further behind.

Here's what we're spending annually in the United States on what, for the most part, are preventable diseases!!

- Heart conditions (\$76 billion)
- Trauma disorders (\$72 billion)
- Cancer (\$70 billion)
- Mental disorders, including depression (\$56.0 billion)
- Asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (\$54 billion)
- High blood pressure (\$42 billion) • Type 2 diabetes (\$34 billion)
- Osteoarthritis and other joint diseases (\$34 billion)
- Back problems (\$32 billion) • Normal childbirth* (\$32 billion)

Total Expenditure for the Top 10 conditions annually is **\$ 502 Billion!!**

Yes folks, that's \$502 Billion annually, the majority of which could have been prevented!! Staying healthy can actually save you money! In today's economy, that sounds like a winner to me!

Let's take a look at each of these Pillars of Health that make up *The Vibrant Lifestyle*, gain a little understanding and learn a few things that you can do to start down that road to better health.

Pillar #1: Proper Exercise

The human body was designed to be used. If you don't use it enough...you will develop a variety of health related problems. On top of that, there are a number of benefits that go along with regular exercise. The bottom line is that regular exercise prevents many negative things from happening and causes a number of very good things to happen to your body. So my question to you, are you getting regular exercise? Are you doing the right kinds of exercises?

Here's what some well-known institutions have to say about the benefits of regular exercise:

The Mayo Clinic: "7 Benefits of Regular Exercise" 1) Exercise controls weight 2) Exercise combats health conditions and diseases High blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, stroke, metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, depression, certain types of cancer, arthritis and falls. 3) Exercise improves mood 4) Exercise boosts energy 5) Exercise promotes better sleep 6) Exercise puts the spark back into your sex life 7) Exercise can be fun

US NEWS: "5 Mind-Blowing Benefits of Exercise" 1. It reverses the detrimental effects of stress 2. It lifts depression 3. It improves learning 4. It builds self-esteem and improves body image 5. It leaves you feeling euphoric

In addition to helping your heart, cardiovascular system, memory and sex drive; proper exercise will also improve your bone strength, digestion, skeletal system and much, much more!!! Are you interested in getting some exercise yet? You should be!!

What is proper exercise? What's the best exercise for you? How do you get started? Let me answer a few of these questions. Proper exercise is different for each person and therefore difficult to define specifically. Let me explain what proper exercise should try to accomplish. Proper exercise, simply put, is using the many aspects of the body enough to keep, restore or maintain optimal health. A proper exercise routine should use as many muscle groups as possible and be performed on a regular basis, that 3-4 days per week. There are four main things I like to see exercise accomplish: endurance, strength, flexibility and balance. If I had to recommend only one exercise, I'd recommend brisk walking for 20 minutes at least 3 days per week as a minimum. Mixing up walking with other activities that get you moving can incorporate a variety of muscle groups. The more muscle groups used differently the better. Biking and swimming/pool activities are good examples of exercises that add variety to your program. I'd stick with lower impact exercises and try to stay away from running sports.

Here are some suggestions on getting started. First, get a complete physical from your family doctor. This will determine if you're at risk from physical exertion. A physical will also give you your baseline vitals: Blood pressure, pulse rate, weight, cholesterol, blood sugar, etc. This will be your starting point. Secondly, try to find a partner. Having a partner will keep you motivated and you can encourage one another. Lastly, and this is very important, start your exercise program way slower than you think you should. This is especially true if you haven't exercised in a long time or maybe never before. I tell my patients, "start with way less than your brain is telling you, and stick with that level for at least two weeks before you increase anything." When you do increase your workout, only increase by small increments, and stick with the increased amount for at least two weeks before changing or adding to your workout. This last point will help to prevent injuries. I believe it is better to stretch after your workout. This also helps prevent injuries and improve flexibility.

Proper exercise is an important step to better health. Make it your goal to get started today. Don't put it off!! Let's get on to Pillar #2 in *The Vibrant Lifestyle*.

Pillar #2: Proper Nutrition

There's an old saying, "We are what we eat!" And for the most part it is true. The human body requires good quality food in the right quantity. The nutrients we get from food are vitally important to keeping our body healthy and functioning properly. Many of the Top 10 Conditions are related to our poor diets. Therefore, what and how much we CHOOSE to eat will have a direct effect on our ability to enjoy life. Proper nutrition is essential for *The Vibrant Lifestyle*!!

The good news is that a few simple changes in your diet can make a big difference in your health. In most cases, improving your eating habits is not rocket science. You'll need to know a few basics, but once you get the hang of it you can enjoy a wonderful diet and greatly improve your health!!! Let's take a look at pillar #2: Proper Nutrition.

The first step is to evaluate what you're eating. Write down everything you put in your mouth for a two week period. Be descriptive and quantitative. With your current knowledge of nutrition, evaluate

the quality and quantity of the food you're eating. For example, let's say you had a donut and coffee for breakfast, a hamburger and fries for lunch, a salad for dinner and a bowl of ice cream while watching TV in the evening. Once you see it on paper, it becomes obvious that those aren't the best choices. The second step is to clean up what you know needs to be changed in your diet. Here are few things to look for and eliminate; sodas and sweet drinks, alcoholic beverages, heavy sauces, fatty foods, junk food snacks and white breads and an overall decrease in bread consumption. Replace bad food choices with better choices. Thirdly, mildly decrease the amounts of food you're eating. Notice I didn't say go on a diet!!! By definition, going on a diet means at some point you'll go off your diet. Don't starve yourself. Eat somewhat smaller, but healthier meals.

Now you're well on your way to *The Vibrant Lifestyle*you've gotten yourself moving with some mild regular exercise and you're eating a little better! The next step under Pillar #2 is to gain some more knowledge about proper nutrition. The internet is a great source to gain some nutritional information, but I will say it can be a bit overwhelming. Carbs, calories, fats, fiber, proteins, minerals, vitamins.....where to start? There's certainly a lot you could learn, but what do you really need to know?

Again, I believe in keeping it simple. You do not need a degree in nutrition to cook and eat a healthier diet. There are 3 basic food groups you should concern yourself with: carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. Additionally, our bodies need appropriate amounts of vitamins, minerals, and water. The goal is to have a well-balanced diet; the right amount of each of these. Let me briefly explain each one.

Carbohydrates provide energy for your body. It's the fuel that keeps us going. Roughly speaking, about half our intake of food should fall into this category. The best carbohydrates for us are called complex carbohydrates. These are high in fiber and low in fat. They are broken down more slowly and utilized more efficiently by our body. Whole grains, fruits and vegetables are some examples of complex carbohydrates. Stay away from simple carbohydrates such as high sugar items. Those are the sweets that we all love. Roughly 55% of our calories should come from carbohydrates.

Proteins are needed for growth and repair. They're very important to our immune system, that's the mechanism that fights off infection. Protein sources can come from both animals and plants. Meats, fish and poultry, as well as, beans, lentils, nuts and rice are sources of protein. About 15% of our calories should come from protein.

I've mentioned several times now about eating foods "low in fat". Should we avoid all fats? Well the answer is no!! Some types of fat are necessary and actually good for us. Saturated fats should be avoided. These contribute to many of the diseases on that infamous "Top Ten" list I talked about earlier. These are found in many fattier meats, dairy products, cakes and many processed foods.

What about those "good" fats? These are called polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. These can help decrease your cholesterol levels. "Good" fats are found in food such as oily fish, nuts,

seeds, green leafy vegetables, olive oil, avocados, and whole grains, to name just a few. About 20-25% of our calories can come from fats.

I almost forgot one of the most important items in this category.....water. Our bodies are over 90% water. We lose water every day, which means we MUST drink water on a daily basis. We need 6-8 glasses of water on a daily basis for optimal health. Folks, that means water, not coffee, tea, soda, etc.

What do you think will happen to your health index as you start to clean up your diet, eat a little bit less, and start getting some exercise? Your health index will improve, you'll have more energy, and you'll start to feel better!!! All because you made a few small changes. Does that sound good to you?

to the next Pillar in *The Vibrant Lifestyle*

Proper Rest Pillar #3:

Proper Rest

Getting a proper night's rest on a consistent basis is a vital part of your health and well-being. We all know what it feels like to have gotten a poor night's sleep. But did you realize that a number of health related problems are associated with poor rest? Here are just a few: learning problems, moodiness, lowered immunity, difficulty concentrating, memory issues, depression, diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease.

Getting a proper night's rest requires the proper quantity and quality of sleep and the right equipment. Studies indicate that people in different age groups require differing amounts of sleep. How much sleep should you be getting? While there's no "magic number", experts say adults need between 7-9 hours of sleep.

I'm often asked, what is the best position in which to sleep? The best position is on your back or on your side. I recommend a somewhat firm mattress and a cervical pillow. The mattress needs to support your spine properly and the cervical pillow puts your neck and head in the best position. I personally recommend and use an air adjustable mattress.

Do you have trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep? Do you wake up and feel like you haven't rested at all? You might be suffering with any one of a variety of sleep conditions. Some medications can cause you to sleep poorly. Musculoskeletal pain can keep you from sleeping well also. If you're relying on medications to sleep, or simply having difficulty getting a good night's sleep, it's important to find out why. Addressing the cause of your sleep problems is a big step toward getting you feeling better. You can't have optimal health if you're not sleeping well!!!

Here are some other sleep tips. Have a "regular" bedtime and wake up time. Nap to make up for lost sleep. If you start to fall asleep before bedtime, get up and do something. Eat right and get exercise

(Heard that before?) and of course get regular chiropractic adjustments to help keep pressure off your nervous system.

Pillar # 4: Proper Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Well-being

Most of you are probably aware that the mental side of health has a significant and direct influence on the physical aspect of your health. Stress can cause problems, in addition to magnifying any current problems you may have. Stress is also related to most of the Top 10 Conditions. Stress and mental well-being have been linked to such conditions as; headaches, depression/anxiety, Alzheimer's disease, accelerated aging, and premature death. Wow, we need to manage our stress!!

Managing stress and mental well-being can be complicated, but there are a lot of things that you can do. Here are a few tips. Find out what's really stressing you and address the issue. Develop strategies that change how you react to stressful issues. Set priorities; we tend to needlessly stress out over low priority issues. Start your day with 10 minutes of "quiet time" for prayer or meditation. Manage your time better. Eat right and get some exercise!! Exercise releases substances called endorphins, which give you a sense of wellbeing. It elevates your mood!! Discover relational techniques that work for you. If you're struggling to cope, I recommend you seek professional help. Consulting a professional counselor is not a stigma!! It may very well be the best phone call you can make. Most churches either have counselors on staff or on a referral list.

I don't know what your religious beliefs or church affiliation might be, but I firmly believe we are spiritual beings. Additionally, I believe our mental wellbeing is tied to our spiritual wellbeing. Understanding our position in creation and having a relationship with our Creator is undeniably important in dealing with our stress-filled short existence. If you're unclear about this, have questions, or would simply like to discuss this topic, don't hesitate to contact me directly. My personal contact information is in this report. I also have a video on my website entitled "Is This Life All There Is?" that will be of great help to you.

Simplifying Pillar # 4.....Prioritize your life: manage your time better and get to church!!!

On to the next Pillar!!!.....Proper Structural Function

Pillar # 5: Proper Structural Function

The human body is designed for function. Every part has a specific movement and function. This is especially true when it involves our musculoskeletal system. Misalignment and/or improper function will cause problems and eventually pain and disease. When your parts aren't working properly it causes your joints to wear out faster. Therefore, helping to maintain proper function will help prevent your musculoskeletal system from wearing out. You will be able to lead a active lifestyle longer!!!

Chiropractors are uniquely trained to be a tremendous benefit in proper structural function. Chiropractic treatments have been proven to keep joints functioning better. Chiropractic is one of the largest natural healing professions in the world. When I say "natural" that means chiropractors don't

prescribe medication and don't utilize injections or surgery. Don't get me wrong, sometimes those treatments are necessary. Chiropractors must find the cause of the problem and address the cause versus treat the symptom. Simply put, chiropractors have to improve function.

One of the key areas chiropractors focus on is the spine. The spine is vitally important to your health and wellbeing because it houses nerves that connect the brain to all the tissues, organs, and systems of the body. The brain must fully communicate with all the tissue and organs of the body to have optimal health. ANY issues with the spine will have a negative influence on the delicate nerves that exit the spine between the bones of the spine (vertebrae). Pressure on a nerve equivalent to the weight of a dime can reduce the function of a nerve by 60%. The most common issue involving the spine is vertebral misalignment, called subluxation. You might be thinking, well my back and neck don't hurt. Most vertebral subluxations don't hurt until they've been there for a while!! You may have vertebral subluxations and not even be aware of it. You may have nerve interference and not even know it. Nerve interference will lower your health index. If you'd like to find out, call a chiropractor today!! Again, visit my website for more information about nerve interference and chiropractic.

It's a must to keep the joints of the body functioning as normally as possible if you want them to be a healthy as possible. Even if you have arthritis, maintaining as much function as possible will improve the health of the joint and help it to last longer. Don't believe the lie that there's no help for you!!

Pillar # 6: Eliminate Toxins

I've included this category as one of my pillars to optimal health because it only makes sense. If we are doing a lot of positives for the body such as; exercising, eating better and maintaining the structure, but not doing something to eliminate toxins from the body, we could be greatly decreasing are chances for optimal health. Let's take a look at what some of common and not so common toxins are and what can be done to start eliminating them.

So what are these toxins that can and do have a negative impact on our health? The Nemours Foundation describes body toxins as, "A toxin is a chemical or poison that is known to have harmful effects on the body. Toxins can come from food or water, from chemicals used to grow or prepare food, and even from the air that we breathe. Our bodies process those toxins through organs like the liver and kidneys and eliminate them in the form of sweat, urine, and feces." The truth is, we can come across toxins multiple times during an average day and not even be aware of it. And as is the case, we can be consuming many of these toxins and not be aware of it. As mentioned above, toxins are just about everywhere, even in items and products that society has deemed 'healthy'.

Articles and even entire books have been written on this topic, so I'm going to cover a few common sources and hopefully open your thinking to doing a little investigating on your own. There are some practical steps that we can take in the process of eliminating toxins. Let me start with the air we breathe. The first thing that comes to my mind is cigarette smoke. If you are a smoker, here's one area you could greatly improve your health. Stop smoking today!! Second-hand smoke is just about as bad, so steer clear of smokers. Fumes from cleaning chemicals or other industrial chemical that

contact the skin or are breathed in should be avoided. Toxins can also be found in what we drink, even in water, which I've spoken about as being very important to optimal health. For example, most tap water contains chlorine, a known toxin. Caffeine and alcohol are drugs found in many of our drinks. Aspartame is a sweetener used in soft drinks that has a list of over 50 negative effects on health. More and more research is coming out about the toxins associated with process and genetically modified foods, not to mention food additives. Not to be over looked are over-the-counter and prescription medications, chemicals we put in the body in the name of better health.

As you can see, this is a vast topic that occurs frequently in our daily lives, most of the time without us even being aware. Here are a few practical steps to eliminating toxins and just as with my other pillars to optimal health, for the best last results this should be a process that is not "rocket science". If you smoke, stop as quickly as possible. Do you consume large quantities of soft drinks, caffeinated beverages or alcoholic beverages? If so start cutting back with the goal elimination. I will mention there are some studies out that indicate small amounts of alcohol may have health benefits, but many people consume more than small amounts. Do you take -the-counter and prescription medications on a regular basis? If so, investigate more natural methods of treating your condition, with a goal of decreasing the amount of medication you're taking. All medication have what are called side effects, and the list is usually long for every medication. Take as little medications as possible, I cannot stress this enough. Eat lean, clean and fresh foods, preferably organic. Drink lots of water, which will help flush the body. There are numerous methods and systems available to detox the body. Periodic fasting is also helpful, but again, do your research before undertaking a detox regime. Regular chiropractic care and massage therapy are also helpful in this regard.

Odd and Ends

- Stay away from fatty or fried foods as much as possible
- Smaller meals with healthy snacks in-between is generally better than our typical 3 large meals per day
- Start your day with a good breakfast
- Minimize late evening eating and snacking
- Not all exercise is good for you. Avoid high impact exercises. Avoid twisting exercises. If you have a joint or area that is continually sore following exercise you're probably doing something you shouldn't be doing.
- Make it a priority to improve something in each category every month.

Summary

Staying healthy is actually easier and more cost effective than trying to regain your health once you've lost it. Little health problem tend to become big health problems if you ignore them. Get regular checkups from your family doctor and a spinal checkup from your chiropractor. Each of the 5 Pillars are important. If you ignore any of these vital areas of health, your health index will be lower. Make it your goal to gradually work on each area, making small improvements each month. After

several months you'll be noticing improvement in how you feel and you'll be on your way towards *The Vibrant Lifestyle!*

American Public Health Association (APHA)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/02/22/us-health-statistics-_n_826171.html#s243767&title=Heart_Disease

http://www.allcountries.org/ranks/preventable_deaths_country_ranks_1997-1998_2002-2003_2008.html

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/exercise/HQ01676>

<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/diet-fitness/fitness/articles/2010/06/30/0630healthexercise>

<http://www.helpwithcooking.com/nutrition-information/introduction-nutrition.html>

<http://caloriecount.about.com/percent-calories-fat-protein-carbs-q184>

<http://ezinearticles.com/?The-Positive-Effects-Of-Church-Attendance&id=1781347>

<http://kblog.lunchboxbunch.com/2009/09/what-are-toxins-in-my-body-detox-101.html>