

Vail Daily

Recommended tests

Prevent disease by asking your doctor for these tests.

- Have baseline blood work done in your 20s to check cholesterol, liver, kidney, glucose and immune function.
- Get a colonoscopy starting at age 50, and earlier if you have intestinal problems.
- Have a dexta scan starting at age 50 to check for osteoporosis, and earlier if you have osteoporosis in your family.
- Have a mammogram starting at age 50, and earlier if you find a lump.
- Have a pap smear every 1 to 2 years depending on your test results.
- Do regular monthly self breast exams
- Have a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test done yearly after age 50.

Vail Daily column: Simple ways to obtain optimal health

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With the high cost of insurance and health care, people are concerned about what they need to do to stay healthy and live a long life. Chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, some cancers, high blood pressure and high cholesterol can easily be treated with simple lifestyle and dietary changes. Yet, studies show that only eight percent of the Americans actually live a healthy lifestyle. Why is this? Is it because of laziness? Do people not want to change their eating habits? Or, do most people not know what it takes to "be healthy"? Health is about taking responsibility for our

choices. Looking at the research out there, I put together the following steps to optimal health. Following these steps can prevent 30 to 40 percent of all chronic disease, such as heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and many cancers.

1. The ideal diet includes protein with each meal and 5 to 12 veggies a day. You need protein for energy and we get vitamins and minerals from veggies.
2. Reduce your intake of saturated fats and sugar. This includes red meat, dairy products and hydrogenated oil such as corn oil, margarine and vegetable oils. Eliminate most sugars from your diet, especially fructose corn syrup.
3. It's better to bake, broil, steam or stir fry your foods than it is to grill. Grilling meats can increase our risk for breast and colon cancer.
4. Use alcohol in moderation. Many studies show that as little as one alcoholic drink a day can increase a woman's risk for breast cancer by 20 to 30 percent. There are conflicting studies on alcohol and heart disease. Alcohol does cause inflammation in the heart, therefore moderation is key.
5. Maintain a healthy weight. Obesity can increase our risk for heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and cancer. Obese patients have higher insurance premiums.
6. Drink 10 to 12 glasses of filtered water (8 out of 10 brands of bottled water are not filtered) a day. Dehydration can cause fatigue, headaches, low blood pressure, dry skin and hair, wrinkles, high altitude sickness etc.
7. We all need about 3 to 4 grams of omega 3 oils in our diet. Omega 3 oils come from cold water fish (wild cod, salmon, halibut, anchovies and trout) or organic flax seed oil. Omega 3 oils can lower the risk of heart disease, lower cholesterol, blood pressure and prevent cancer.
8. Exercise at least one hour, five times a week. Exercise can reduce stress levels, help maintain a healthy weight and lower our risk for cancer and heart disease.
9. Make sure you are getting eight hours of sleep a day. Insomnia is associated with anxiety, depression, diabetes, heart disease, blood sugar problems and hormonal problems.
10. Reduce stress. Stress initiates the release of a variety of hormones that cause your pulse to race and your blood pressure to rise. The hormone cortisol, released to lessen these effects, also creates problems when it

remains chronically elevated. Try practicing relaxation techniques such as yoga, pilates, meditation, deep breathing, hobbies, physical intimacy, vacations etc. to help manage stress.

11. Eliminate toxins in your environment, including in the air, and in your water and food.

12. Take a good multi-vitamin. A good multiple vitamin can prevent heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis and support your immune system.

13. Do not smoke. Smoking can increase your risk for many types of cancer, heart disease, etc. Plus it causes wrinkles.

14. Get regular checkups to help detect problems early. Prevention can save lives and money.

These simple steps can prevent many health problems as one gets older. The more you know about what it takes to stay healthy, the more control you will have over your medical bills as you get older. I wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday, because your health is priceless!

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