



Health Awareness

Eight Keys To Good Health



(NAPSA)—Taking care of your health can be overwhelming, especially considering all the doctor visits, diseases and treatments. But health care is more than just diagnoses and procedures. It's also about building relationships with trusted physicians, engaging in healthy behaviors and taking care of your mind, body and soul.

Only healthy young people take good health for granted. The rest of us know the truth: You have to work at having and keeping good health.

“Dr. Sam” Benjamin, a pediatrician, syndicated radio talk show host and Humana’s corporate medical director for integrative health strategies, suggests eight keys to help manage your health and ultimately help you stave off disease.

Key 1: Be a Smart Health Care Consumer

You shop around for everything in your life, from cell phone carriers to auto insurance. Health care shouldn’t be any different. Look for information on cost and quality to help you make an educated decision. Keep copies of your own health information, and call the doctor to correct errors. Know what treatments or recommendations are based on research, fact or tradition to help you make good decisions. In general, just act like a consumer—just as you would with a car mechanic or a real estate agent—and stay on your toes.

Key 2: Use the Health Care System Appropriately

It’s important that you have a good understanding of the health care system and how to use it. Develop a relationship with your

primary care doctor and ask them for referrals when you need to see a specialist. Get a second opinion for major treatments and investigate your hospital. Take medications appropriately, and as prescribed by your doctor.

Key 3: Actively Prevent Illness

It is up to you to stay healthy, so do what you can now to avoid illness later. There are three aspects to preventing illness:

- Know your family’s medical history and risks, and alert your physician.
- Take preventive measures everywhere in life—eat right, exercise, don’t smoke or drink excessively, visit a doctor regularly, limit your sun exposure, etc.
- Choose a primary care doctor that you have researched and feel confident with.

Key 4: Exercise...at Any Age

Exercise and diet are key to staying healthy. Exercise increases muscle mass and energy, improves your appearance and just gives you something to do, at any age. If you don’t exercise, you place yourself at greater risk for developing heart disease, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease or a stroke. Walking as little as 30 minutes a day or taking the stairs instead of the elevator can have a profound effect on your health and fitness and energy levels.

Key 5: Eat a Healthy Diet

Eating is a source of joy, comfort and nutrition, but we must maintain a level of healthy eating habits to stave off disease and obesity. Ignore the inviting aromas of fast food restaurants and feed your body with what it requires for good health—fresh

fruits and vegetables, lean meats and whole grains.

Key 6: Understand the Mind-Body Connection

Many overlook the mind-body connection, even though research shows a correlation. For instance, the immune system is affected by personal thoughts and feelings, so much so that continual stress predisposes us to colds, infections and headaches. Take a minute to learn a mind-body technique, such as meditation or yoga, to capitalize on this strong partnership.

Key 7: Avoid Environmental Pollutants

Polluted environments—both indoor and outdoor—are some of the greatest threats. In fact, the World Health Organization states that indoor air pollution is one of the top 10 killers in the world. Take a moment to evaluate your environment for pollutants, such as internal gas sources, cleaning products, body sprays and air fresheners, and try to reduce their presence in your home. Become environmentally savvy.

Key 8: Value Spirituality and Religion

Evidence supports prayer as an integral part of the healing process. Whether for you, a relative, a friend or a friend of a friend, prayer can ultimately have a positive impact on a person’s health. Best of all, it does us no harm to use prayer as part of the treatment and prevention of disease and the enhancing of well-being.

For more information on Dr. Sam’s eight keys to good health or on general health and wellness, visit www.dr.samshow.com or www.humana.com.