

Ask the Expert at Stony Brook University Hospital

I am a 57-year old man beginning to feel the signs of aging. My joints hurt when I get up in the morning. I've gained weight. My blood pressure is rising and I'm frequently tired. To make matters worse, I have a family history of diabetes, prostate cancer and heart disease. What should I be doing to get better?

There are universal principles of maximum health and there are specific recommendations for you given your symptoms and family history. Good nutrition, exercise, rest, adequate social support and emotional balance are the pillars of health.

At Stony Brook University Hospital, we recommend a healthy diet that can help prevent a range of diseases including diabetes, heart disease and cancer. It includes:

- Seven servings of vegetables and two servings of fruit
- High fiber (35 grams or more) from fruits/vegetables, beans/lentils, buck wheat or kasha, high fiber grains/cereals, nuts and seeds
- No more than 2500mg of salt
- Whole grains (brown rice/whole wheat)
- Moderate intake of healthy fats from nuts, seeds, avocado, extra virgin olive oil and fatty fish
- High calcium intake from green leafy vegetables, fish, yogurt (plain) and/or milk
- Eat several meatless meals each week



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- An occasional glass of red wine (do not drink to excess)
- Dark bittersweet chocolate is a good dessert choice
- Avoid sweet drinks, trans fats/partially hydrogenated oils and processed foods

Exercise is crucial to physical well-being; it lowers blood pressure, raises good cholesterol (HDL) and decreases cardiac risk. Exercise improves cognitive skills, delays the onset of dementia, combats mild depression, improves sleep and diminishes fatigue. An ideal routine should include stretching,

strengthening and aerobic exercises. Strengthening quadriceps (thigh muscles) is crucial along with weight loss to treat your knee pain. Strength exercises should be done with lower weights and slow repetitions to avoid injury. Pilates is a great body conditioning technique to improve core muscle strength. Please be sure to consult your doctor before beginning an exercise program.

The Department of Family Medicine at Stony Brook University Hospital offers wellness, dietetic and nutritional medicine consultations, as well as mental health counseling and sports medicine. For additional information, please call 631-444-4000.

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