

Adolescent-Young Adult Medicine
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Feel Healthy, Be Healthy

Adolescents and young adults (our esteemed patients) are extremely busy people, who generally are blessed with excellent health and lots of energy. However, many of you will at times, or often, feel sluggish, suffer from headaches, abdominal pain, muscle aches, or low mood. Optimizing the three health basics, **nutrition, sleep and exercise**, goes a long way to help us **feel** healthy and **be** healthy now and in the future.

15 Health Tips for Everyone

Nutrition

What to eat:

- Eat mainly foods that grow on trees or in the ground: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds; have animal products in moderation.
- Eat mainly foods that do **not** come in a box, can, jar, or plastic container: avoid processed foods so you know exactly what you are eating.
- Eat home-cooked meals so ingredients are known; limit ordering-in and restaurant meals (and try to save or take home ½ portions for the next day).
- Drink 8 cups of fluids per day, mainly water.

How much to eat:

- Eat relatively small amounts (size of your fist) of meat, chicken, fish, tofu (4-6 oz per serving) and **larger** amounts of green vegetables, salads and fruits; limit carbs to ½-1 cup per meal .
- Pay attention to when your stomach feels **comfortably** full and not overly stuffed; eat slowly and then stop eating when there is a gentle pressure just below your ribs right in the middle of your upper belly.
- Continues...

When to eat:

- Do have breakfast every day, even if just a yogurt or fruit; also have lunch and dinner and allow 1-2 snacks.
- Have a well-timed, healthy snack (such as fresh or dried fruit , small bag of seeds/nuts, yogurt, hummus with carrots) between lunch and dinner and after dinner to help avoid excess hunger and overeating; regular meals and snacks will keep your metabolism high, and help you feel more energetic, think more clearly, and be in a better mood.

Sleep

- Aim for 8-9 hours per night.
- Avoid stimulating activities (such as texting, internet, serious homework) for at least ½-1 hour before bedtime; to help you fall asleep more easily, do something **relaxing** instead, such as listening to music, reading a magazine, taking a bath or gentle stretching.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages if you have trouble falling asleep and do **not** use alcohol to help you sleep.
- Try to go to bed and wake up at approximately the same time each day; it's OK to allow a few hours of difference on weekends, but not too many!

Exercise

- Set a reasonable and attainable goal for the amount of exercise you are likely to do, such as ½ an hour three times a week; then try to increase gradually.
- Keep moving! When possible and reasonable, avoid elevators, escalators, buses and subways and **walk instead**; bend to put things away in low places and stretch to reach high places.
- Choose activities that are also fun and social, such as a yoga or spinning class, or jogging/biking in the park with a friend.

Even when all (or most or some) of these health tips are followed, some of you may still want to talk with us about specific concerns you may have regarding your **nutrition, sleep, and exercise**. We certainly welcome such a conversation to help you to **feel** healthy and **be** healthy!