

Fourth Edition

# Invitation to **Holistic Health**

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A GUIDE TO LIVING A BALANCED LIFE

Charlotte Eliopoulos



Fourth Edition

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A GUIDE TO LIVING A BALANCED LIFE

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# Preface

There has been a steady evolution of holistic health since the publication of the first edition of this book. Therapies that were viewed with curiosity and suspicion have gained respect as credible approaches to healing. It now is recognized that health and illness are affected by all components of an individual—body, mind, spirit—and that efforts to promote health and treat illness benefit from an integration of conventional Western medicine with complementary and alternative therapies. Consumers increasingly desire and are using options beyond conventional Western medicine. Optimum holistic health has become a desirable goal in the health-care system.

With his statement, “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” the philosopher Aristotle laid the foundation for our understanding of holism. When applied to health, holism implies that the health and harmony of the body, mind, and spirit create a higher, richer state of health than would be achieved with attention to just one part, such as physical functioning. A synergy is created in which  $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$  or 5 or more. Although some people equate it with the use of complementary and alternative therapies, holistic health is a philosophy of care in which a wide range of approaches are used to establish and maintain balance within an individual. Complementary and alternative therapies may be part of the approach to holistic health promotion, but so can healthy lifestyle choices, counseling, prayer, conventional Western medical treatments, and other interventions.

While a holistic approach to health may seem unquestionable, we need to recognize that historically it has not been reflected in the U.S. health-care system that has functioned within the biomedical model. Rather than a health-care model, the biomedical model has more resembled a sick care model, built upon certain tenets, highly valued by scientific minds, that include:

- *Mechanism*. This belief advanced the concept that the human body is much like a machine, explainable in terms of physics and chemistry.

Health is determined by physical structure and function, and disease is a malfunction of the physical part. Malfunctions and malformations are undesirable. Disease is treated by repairing the malformed or malfunctioning organ or system with physical or chemical interventions (e.g., drugs, surgery). Nonphysical influences on health status are not considered, and healing, dysfunction, and deformity serve no purpose.

- *Materialism.* Within this thinking, the human body and its state of health is influenced only by what is seen and measurable. Physical malfunction is the cause of illness; therefore illness is addressed by concrete treatments. Emotional and spiritual states are considered to have no impact on health and healing.
- *Reductionism.* This perspective reduces the human body to isolated parts rather than a unified whole. Treatment of a health condition focuses on the individual organ or system rather than the whole being. Good health is judged as having body systems that function well, despite one's feelings or spiritual state.

The first major challenge to the biomedical model occurred in the 1960s, when the relationship of body and mind began to be discussed. In retrospect, it is difficult to believe that the medical community was skeptical that the mind could cause illness, yet the resistance to accepting the body–mind connection was real. Similarly, recognition of the role of the spirit in the cause and treatment of illness has met similar skepticism. As the dust settles, however, health-care practitioners are understanding the profound, dynamic relationship of body, mind, and spirit to health and healing and moving toward a holistic model of health care.

Holistic health recognizes that the human being is comprised of integrated, interacting components of body, mind, and spirit. Growing numbers of practitioners are recognizing this and expanding their approaches to health promotion and disease management. In addition, consumers are adopting more practices that impact their total beings. The meaning of health and the measures used to achieve it certainly have undergone a transition.

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## About This Book

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*Invitation to Holistic Health* offers guidance for the journey to whole person health. There are no special formulas provided that guarantee eternal youth and freedom from illness. There is no revolutionary diet or plan that will change your life in 30 days or less. No exotic substances that you can use to develop a new you will be found among the pages of this book. Instead, solid principles

for building a strong foundation for optimal health are presented with practical, evidence-based advice that you can easily adopt and integrate into your life.

The book is divided into four parts. In the first part, “Strengthening Your Inner Resources,” practices that can build your body’s reserves and help it to function optimally are discussed. You will be guided through a self-assessment of your health habits so that you can determine areas that may need special attention. The realities of good nutrition are examined along with an in-depth look at dietary supplements. Exercise is approached from a body, mind, and spirit perspective. Likewise, the important activity of enhancing your immune system is considered from a mind–body framework. Methods to flow with the inescapable reality of stress are discussed.

“Developing Healthy Lifestyle Practices” is the second part of this book. The many complex factors that influence your health status as you interact with the world beyond your body are addressed in chapters on topics such as growing healthy relationships, family survival skills, spirituality, humor, touch, and the environment. In recognition of the significant impact of work on our lives and our changing attitude toward it, a chapter is dedicated to balancing work and life.

The third part of this book, “Taking Charge of Challenges to the Body, Mind, and Spirit,” offers information to equip you to be proactive in keeping yourself in balance. The hidden meaning of symptoms is explored to help you learn about the factors behind your health conditions. Practical advice is offered on how you can work in partnership with your health-care provider to ensure you get the best care possible. Transitions associated with menopause are examined, along with a wide range of approaches to manage the symptoms that may be experienced. Interesting insights into gambling, drugs, overeating, and other addictions are shared. Skills for being an effective, healthy caregiver are presented.

With the growing use of nonconventional therapies, the fourth part of this book, “Safe Use of Complementary and Alternative Therapies,” offers a review of these therapies based on scientific evidence. The purpose, benefits, and related precautions of the major types of therapies are presented to promote the sensible use of these products and practices. Chapters discuss the use of alternative medical systems, nutritional supplements, herbal medicine, aromatherapy, mind–body therapies, manipulative and body-based therapies, and energy therapies to offer practical insights into the safe, effective use of these popular therapies. The validity of these therapies based on current research is included to guide safe, effective use. There is emphasis on the importance of an integrative approach to health care, in which the best of conventional Western medicine and complementary and alternative therapies are utilized together.



The appendix offers extensive resources that can aid you in being an informed health-care consumer.

A useful approach to using this book is to give it an initial fast read from cover to cover. This can be followed by a focus on chapters that address specific interests and needs. Although some of the chapters may not pertain to you directly (for instance, if you're not a caregiver, you may not have a keen interest in the "Surviving Caregiving" chapter), you may find that a quick review of the chapter could acquaint you with its content so that you'll recall it in the future if you or people you know are faced with this issue. You'll probably find that the rich facts and resources provided make this book a great reference for your personal library.

This edition includes updates of scientific evidence supporting, as well as debunking, specific therapies and products. Each chapter contains a "Tip for Practitioners" that offers considerations to those assisting people in their holistic health journeys. Recommended readings and resources are included with each chapter to assist in exploring the topic deeper and obtaining more information.



# Acknowledgments

When the first edition of *Invitation to Holistic Health* was written, comprehensive books on this topic were rare. At that time, a group of professionals who were carving new paths in the holistic health arena shared their expertise and assisted in laying the foundation for this book. Appreciation is given to these individuals for their contributions:

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PART I

# Strengthening Your Inner Resources



# Introduction to Holistic Health

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## OBJECTIVES

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This chapter should enable you to

- Identify basic human needs and factors that enable them to be satisfactorily met
  - List at least six features of an ideal health profile
  - Perform a comprehensive self-evaluation of holistic health status
- 

*Chronos* or *kairos*... Which view directs how you care for your health?

*Chronos* and *kairos* are words that originated with the ancient Greeks to describe time. *Chronos* is the term describing time that is measured by the clock and calendar. It is quantitative and beyond our control. *Kairos* refers to the significant events by which we measure our lives and is qualitative.

There are those of us who primarily live in the *chronos* world in which we go through the motions of life without considering, planning, or taking actions that could influence our health. *It's winter so we shouldn't be surprised by getting the flu. Having aches and pains accompanies midlife. Doing little else than watching television all weekend isn't all that unusual after working all week.* Time passes and we accept its effects on our body, mind, and spirit.

Not everyone shares that perspective, however. There are those who live with the expectation that life will hold significant experiences for them and is not defined by a clock or calendar. They recognize that life holds opportune moments that they can take advantage of to positively impact their body, mind, and spirit. Their days consist of 24 hours, but there is a difference in how that time is viewed and lived.

When you take charge of your life to achieve optimum holistic health you are functioning in the *kairos*. Rather than passively accepting that there are anticipated changes and conditions that occur at certain ages, you instead are actively engaging in practices that can redefine those experiences and provide a high quality of life. You are on your journey of holistic health.

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## What Is Holistic Health?

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Often, health is thought of as the absence of disease. While that certainly is an important aspect of health, it is hardly complete. A comprehensive consideration of health includes all facets of an individual: physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual. This *whole person* view of the individual is what holistic health is all about.

As you most likely have experienced yourself, when one facet of your life is not functioning satisfactorily, your total well-being is affected. For example, you may eat nutritious foods, exercise regularly, and ace a physical exam with no abnormal findings. However, if you just lost a relationship with someone significant to you, you may feel fatigued, have a poor appetite, experience insomnia, be unable to focus, and, generally, feel poorly. Such situations remind us that a disruption to any one aspect of ourselves impacts general health and well-being.

*Self-care* is a term that is used to describe the active role people take in maintaining or improving their health. It is an aspect of health that is often

### KEY POINT

Americans have come to accept the World Health Organization's definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease. There is a broader view in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). TCM is based on the belief that the human being is composed of and surrounded by an energy system or field. This energy system is understood to resemble an electromagnetic field, expressed on the minute level as the behavior of electrons and neurons and on the gross level as the experience of vitality. The energy system is made up of energy pathways, often referred to as meridians. The pathways are believed to carry energy and information throughout the human organism to unite body, mind, and spirit. Health is seen as having a sufficient amount of energy circulating freely in the organism.

overlooked when health care is discussed. Even in the arena of preventive medicine, which aligns close to the idea of self-care in modern medicine, the emphasis is more on the early detection of disease than the active promotion of health. Although there is a focus on health screening, less attention is given to educating people about healthy living habits, such as exercise, stress management, and nutrition and on the factors affecting the ability to achieve them.

Making minor adjustments in health practices to prevent diseases is easier than caring for diseases after they have developed. Prevention starts with taking stock of health habits and comparing them with those consistent with optimum health. By identifying the behaviors that lead to poor health, individuals can address those unhealthy practices and sources of imbalance and begin taking steps to change.

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## Basic Human Needs

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To maintain a healthy state, people need to assure they are meeting basic human needs, which include the following:

- Respiration
- Circulation
- Nutrition
- Hydration
- Elimination
- Rest
- Movement
- Comfort
- Safety
- Connection with significant others, culture, the environment, and a higher power
- Purpose

Although these needs appear straightforward and simple, their fulfillment depends on some complex factors, such as:

- *Physical, mental, and socioeconomic factors.* A person who is paralyzed and unable to lift a utensil to her mouth or someone who has Alzheimer's disease and cannot remember what to do when food is placed before him may be able to chew, swallow,



and digest food, but lack the ability to get food into his or her mouth due to physical or mental impairments. Likewise, an older adult on a fixed income may omit the medications that her body needs to function normally, because she lacks adequate funds to pay for the prescriptions.

- *Knowledge, skills, and experience.* A pregnant woman who is unaware that alcohol can be dangerous to her baby may continue drinking and threaten the safety of her child. A person who lacks an understanding of the significance of a relationship with a higher power may experience hopelessness and depression in an existence without spiritual meaning.
- *Desire and decision to act.* An individual could describe the recommended dietary intake and list foods that are harmful, yet continue to consume junk foods. A person may know that an adulterous relationship is loaded with problems and risks that could destroy health, job, and family, yet be unwilling to terminate the affair.

Exploring the factors that impact one of the basic needs—nutrition—demonstrates the complexities at play. To maintain a healthy nutritional state, an individual needs to do the following:

- Know what constitutes a healthy diet
- Have the cognitive ability to plan, prepare, and consume meals
- Have the money to purchase food
- Be physically able to shop for, handle, prepare, and consume food
- Know how to properly cook or have access to someone who can
- Be motivated to eat properly
- Have an emotional state that is conducive to proper food intake
- Make sound dietary choices
- Organize activities to have the time to eat

When deviations from health are identified, it is useful to consider what factors could be contributing to the problem so that appropriate plans of correction can be developed. For example, someone with an obesity problem who eats too much of the wrong foods may do so because he or she is depressed. Although classes that review healthy foods could be beneficial, behavioral changes may be more likely to occur if the person receives counseling and other treatment for depression.

**TIP FOR PRACTITIONERS**

When assessing a client, it is important to explore information beyond physical status as there are many factors that impact an individual's health and contribute to symptoms. In addition, factors that could influence the person's compliance with the plan of care (e.g., motivation, belief system, finances, ability to follow instructions) can be identified through a holistic assessment.

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**Self-Assessment**

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An overall evaluation of health begins with a review of the current health status and health practices. An ideal health profile is one in which an individual:

- Consumes an appropriate amount of high-quality food.
- Exercises regularly.
- Maintains weight within an ideal range.
- Has effective stress coping mechanisms.
- Balances work and play.
- Looks forward to activities with energy and enthusiasm.
- Falls asleep easily and sleeps well.
- Eliminates waste with ease and regularity.
- Has meaningful relationships.
- Enjoys a satisfying sex life.
- Feels a sense of purpose.
- Feels safe.
- Is free from pain and other symptoms.

When the ideal is not being met, there needs to be an exploration into the reasons so that strategies to improve health habits can be identified and implemented.

An important first step to your journey to optimum holistic health is to take stock of your current status. This process takes time, effort, and serious evaluation of your current status and function. The following pages offer a comprehensive assessment tool to help you gain insight into your health status. Try to answer the questions as thoroughly as possible as they will help you later when you consider habits that you can acquire to improve your health in a holistic manner.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH

---

Age\_\_\_\_\_ Marital status\_\_\_\_\_ Children\_\_\_\_\_ Occupation\_\_\_\_\_

Height\_\_\_\_\_ Current weight\_\_\_\_\_ Weight range\_\_\_\_\_

#### Diet

Describe your food intake in a typical day:

*Check all items present and describe:*

\_\_\_\_\_ Indigestion, heartburn

\_\_\_\_\_ Regurgitation

\_\_\_\_\_ Use of antacids

\_\_\_\_\_ Poor appetite

\_\_\_\_\_ Nausea, vomiting

\_\_\_\_\_ Chronic halitosis

Condition of teeth:

Do you fast? If so, describe:

Nutritional supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, enzymes) used:

Give amount and type:

Please check the frequency of intake of the following foods and fluids:

	<i>Daily</i> <i>(amount)</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Comments/Related</i> <i>Factors</i>
Fruit	_____	_____	_____	_____
Fruit juices	_____	_____	_____	_____
Vegetables	_____	_____	_____	_____
Vegetable juices	_____	_____	_____	_____
Red meat	_____	_____	_____	_____
Poultry	_____	_____	_____	_____
Fish	_____	_____	_____	_____
Milk	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cheese	_____	_____	_____	_____
Pasta	_____	_____	_____	_____
Bread, rolls	_____	_____	_____	_____

Cereal	_____	_____	_____	_____
Beans, peas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Coffee	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tea (caffeinated)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Soda	_____	_____	_____	_____
Candy	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cakes, pies	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ice cream	_____	_____	_____	_____
Chocolate	_____	_____	_____	_____
Salty snacks	_____	_____	_____	_____
Table salts	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sugar	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sugar substitute	_____	_____	_____	_____
Beer	_____	_____	_____	_____
Wine	_____	_____	_____	_____
Hard liquor	_____	_____	_____	_____
Water	_____	_____	_____	_____

**Comments:**

### Activity

Type and frequency of exercise:

*Describe all checked:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Difficulty walking or moving
- \_\_\_\_\_ Joint pain or stiffness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Muscle cramps, pain
- \_\_\_\_\_ Muscles too loose, too tight
- \_\_\_\_\_ Frequent fractures, sprains
- \_\_\_\_\_ Brittle bones, osteoporosis
- \_\_\_\_\_ History of falling

### Breathing and Circulation

*Describe all checked:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Allergies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nasal stuffiness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Chronic runny nose
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shortness of breath

- \_\_\_\_ Cough
- \_\_\_\_ Wheezing, asthma
- \_\_\_\_ Frequent colds
- \_\_\_\_ Chest pain
- \_\_\_\_ Palpitations
- \_\_\_\_ Numbness
- \_\_\_\_ Dizziness, light-headedness
- \_\_\_\_ Leg cramps
- \_\_\_\_ Varicose veins
- \_\_\_\_ History of smoking

**Sleep Pattern**

Usual bedtime\_\_\_\_ Usual wake-up time\_\_\_\_

Napping pattern:

Awaken refreshed?

Insomnia? Describe:

Fatigue? Describe

Sleep aids:

Quality of sleep:

Factors interrupting sleep:

**Elimination Pattern**

*Describe all checked:*

- \_\_\_\_ Urination difficulty, dribbling
- \_\_\_\_ Pain or burning with urination
- \_\_\_\_ Voiding during night
- \_\_\_\_ Inability to pass urine, hesitancy
- \_\_\_\_ Incontinence
- \_\_\_\_ Blood in urine
- \_\_\_\_ Regular bowel elimination
- \_\_\_\_ Constipation
- \_\_\_\_ Diarrhea
- \_\_\_\_ Gas (flatus)
- \_\_\_\_ Irritable bowel syndrome
- \_\_\_\_ Blood in stool
- \_\_\_\_ Hemorrhoids
- \_\_\_\_ Laxative use
- \_\_\_\_ Enema use, colonic irrigations

Frequency of bowel movements:

Date of last colorectal cancer screening:

**Skin and Hair**

*Describe all checked:*

- ☐ Rashes
- ☐ Itching
- ☐ Unusual sensations
- ☐ Foul body odor
- ☐ Dry skin
- ☐ Oily skin
- ☐ Unusual marks or moles
- ☐ History of shingles
- ☐ Hair loss, breakage
- ☐ Dry scalp
- ☐ Unhealthy-looking hair
- ☐ Brittle nails
- ☐ Soft nails
- ☐ Other problems:

**Reproductive**

Female

*Describe all checked:*

- ☐ Vaginal discharge
- ☐ Vaginal dryness
- ☐ Hysterectomy
- ☐ Problems with sexual function
- ☐ Describe:
  - ☐ Change in sex drive, interest
  - ☐ Pain during intercourse
- ☐ Breast abnormalities

Perform monthly self-exam of breasts? ☐

Date of last mammogram:

Date of last gynecological exam:

*If menopausal:*

Year began:

- ☐ Symptoms:
- ☐ Hormonal replacement therapy

*If menstruating:*

- ☐ Regular menstruation
- ☐ Painful menstruation
- ☐ PMS

Male

- ☐ Prostate exam
- ☐ PSA
- ☐ Problems with sexual function
- Describe:

**Sensory**

*Describe all checked:*

- ☐ Wear eyeglasses
- ☐ Poor vision
- ☐ Cataracts
- ☐ Glaucoma
- ☐ See halos around lights
- ☐ Cloudy vision
- ☐ Pain in eyes
- ☐ Dry eyes
- ☐ Watery eyes
- ☐ Poor hearing
- ☐ Excess ear wax
- ☐ Unusual sensations, tingling
- ☐ Tinnitus, ringing in ear
- ☐ Numbness
- ☐ Paralysis
- ☐ Decreased taste
- ☐ Unusual taste in mouth
- ☐ Inability to smell
- ☐ Smell unusual odors
- ☐ Sensitive to scents/odors

Date of last eye exam:

Date of last hearing exam:

**General Symptoms**

*Describe all checked:*

- ☐ Frequent colds, infections
- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Pain
- ☐ Unusual fatigue
- ☐ Swelling
- ☐ Other

**Emotional and Spiritual***Describe all checked:*

- ☐ Depressed
- ☐ Anxious
- ☐ Moody
- ☐ Mood swings
- ☐ Hyperactive
- ☐ Suicidal
- ☐ Episodes of confusion
- ☐ Inability to focus
- ☐ Easily cry
- ☐ Never cry
- ☐ Feel hopeless
- ☐ Paranoid, suspicious
- ☐ Argumentative
- ☐ Passive
- ☐ Difficulty maintaining relationships
- ☐ Marital conflict, problems
- ☐ Difficulty coping
- ☐ High level of stress in life

Measures to manage stress:

- ☐ Belief in God, higher power
- ☐ Connection with faith community
- ☐ Feel spiritually empty, distressed
- ☐ Feel worthless
- ☐ Feel life has no meaning

Changes I would like to make in my life:

Known Health Conditions/Diagnoses	Treatment/Management
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



***Prescription and Nonprescription Medications Used***

Medication	Dosage	Frequency Taken	Reason Used
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

**Complaints**

List major complaints you have about your health in order of importance:

**Landmarks in Your Life History**

Often, significant events, positive and negative, can provide an understanding of your current health status and needs. Divide your life into decades and remember the significant occurrences during each decade. These can include the loss of a significant person, change in school or job, relationship started or terminated, illness of self or significant others, period of spiritual growth or distress, etc.

List the occurrences in the appropriate decade.

**Age in Years      Description of Significant Occurrence**

1–9

\_\_\_\_\_

10–19

\_\_\_\_\_

20–29

\_\_\_\_\_

30–39

\_\_\_\_\_

40–49

\_\_\_\_\_

50–59

\_\_\_\_\_

70–79

\_\_\_\_\_

80+

\_\_\_\_\_

You may feel that completing an assessment such as this one is a tedious process. Perhaps you've never had to participate in such a comprehensive assessment of your health status. Unfortunately, the realities of our health-care system are that many practitioners are too busy to spend time getting to know the minds, bodies, and spirits of their clients, and insurance reimbursement favors the treatment of symptoms and diseases rather than the nurture and care of the whole person. This presents a challenge for you to be an informed, proactive health-care consumer so that you will be able to:

- Understand the many influences on your health.
- Identify problems and relationships among your mind, body, and spirit that may not be readily apparent to your health-care provider.
- Be able to seek the assistance you need from the source best able to help you (e.g., physician, clergy, nutritionist, counselor, etc.).
- Achieve the highest level of holistic health.

Go through your self-assessment and highlight or circle signs, symptoms, and unusual or abnormal habits. Now, think about the specific need that is affected by the signs and symptoms and write them under the appropriate heading in column A on the form that follows. Some signs and symptoms can affect several needs. For example, "Use of antacids" can be listed across from *Food and water* and *Safety*; "Unusual fatigue" can be listed across from *Movement and activity*, *Sleep and rest*, *Connection*, *Safety*, and *Normality*.

Now, examine the signs, symptoms, and habits and try to consider the underlying reason(s) that could be responsible, such as eating a lot of fried foods for use of antacids and eating poorly and having a stressful job for unusual fatigue. Jot down what you believe the underlying reason to be in column B. In some circumstances, you may not know the underlying reason; it is fine to put a question mark in the column.

Last, in column C, write an action you can take to change or reduce the sign, symptom, or habit, such as "reduce meals at fast-food restaurants to once a week" or "discuss excessive workload with supervisor." For some signs, symptoms, and habits, your action may need to be to obtain a medical evaluation, seek the counsel of a professional, or pray for insight and guidance into the situation.

Following the blank action plan for your use is one that shows some options to consider under each category. As you progress in this book, you will find additional suggestions to assist you in developing your actions.

**YOUR ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH**


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<i>Need</i>	<i>A Sign/symptom/ habit</i>	<i>B Underlying reason</i>	<i>C Action</i>
Respiration/ circulation			
Food and water			
Elimination of wastes			
Movement and activity			
Sleep and rest			
Comfort			
Safety			
Connection with significant others, culture, environment, higher power			
Safety			
Purpose			

**SAMPLE ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ACTION PLAN**

<i>Need</i>	<i>A Sign/symptom/ habit</i>	<i>B Underlying reason</i>	<i>C Action</i>
Respiration/ circulation	Chronic cough Shortness of breath when climbing >15 stairs	Smoking Poor physical condition	Enroll in smoking cessation program Begin exercise program Do deep breathing exercises several times throughout the day
Food and water	Frequent heartburn High intake of snack food	High intake of fried food Eat while working → stressed mealtime Don't have time to go to cafeteria at lunch time; rely on vending machine items	Eliminate fried foods Increase fresh foods, broiled and baked items Schedule time to eat in cafeteria Keep healthy snack foods in office
Elimination of wastes	Frequent constipation	Low fiber and fluid intake Low activity level	Include bran cereal at breakfast Eat at least five fresh fruits daily Eat a salad at lunch Adhere to exercise program

*(continues)*

**SAMPLE ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ACTION PLAN (CONTINUED)**

Movement and activity	Stiff joints in morning Difficult to walk and engage in physical activity	Lack of exercise	Get physical exam to determine safety of exercise program Begin exercise program Park car in farthest space from building Perform yoga stretches several times each day
Sleep and rest	Poor quality of sleep Awake tired, difficult to get out of bed Nod off after meals	High consumption of caffeine Spouse snores loudly Consume high amount of sweets	Eliminate caffeine after 4 p.m. Suggest spouse get evaluated for snoring Sleep in separate room every other night Change diet
Comfort	Stiff joints	Insufficient exercise	Adhere to exercise program Stretching exercises Heat application
Safety	Overmedicating with pain medications	Try to find quick and easy means to control joint pain	Engage in exercises to keep joints flexible Use heat, massage

**SAMPLE ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ACTION PLAN (CONTINUED)**

Connection with significant others, culture, environment, higher power	Often neglect prayer life	Allow worldly demands to take priority	Discuss with friend and ask friend to hold accountable
Safety	Take higher than recommended doses of medications for headaches Overuse antacids	Fail to manage stress and eat well	Eat healthier diet Practice stress management techniques daily Identify and eliminate foods that trigger heartburn
Purpose	Don't feel inspired or excited by anything	Working at job that is not challenging and that I do not feel good about	Begin to explore other jobs that use more of my skills and that offer meaningful work

**SUMMARY**

In Western medicine, self-care primarily implies preventing illness and recognizing symptoms early; however, from a holistic perspective self-care refers to the active role individuals assume in maintaining and improving their physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health. From that perspective, an ideal health profile is one in which a person consumes an appropriate quality and quantity of food, exercises regularly, maintains weight within an ideal range, has good stress-coping skills, balances work and play, looks forward to activities with energy and enthusiasm, falls asleep easily and sleeps well, eliminates

waste with ease, enjoys a satisfying sex life, feels a sense of purpose, and is free of pain and other symptoms. When deviations from the norm are experienced, factors that may be responsible must be explored, and, again, the approach must be holistic. For example, a physical symptom such as chest pain could be due to a medical condition of the heart or lungs, but it could also be related to stress, fatigue, guilt, a dysfunctional relationship, or other nonphysical causes. An understanding of underlying factors affecting the health state is essential to developing individualized, effective health plans. Other chapters in this book will offer guidance in this process.

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## Suggested Readings

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# Healthful Nutrition

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## OBJECTIVES

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This chapter should enable you to

- Define nutrition
  - Discuss factors related to the emotional, psychological, cultural, and traditional aspects of food
  - List the components of a food journal
  - Describe a healthy style for meal intake
  - Outline recommended dietary intake according to MyPlate
  - Describe the information that can be found on nutrition facts labels
  - Define macronutrients and micronutrients
  - List at least six tips for good nutrition
- 

Sensible nutrition is a primary factor in leading a life that will allow for ample energy, productivity, and overall health. The old commonsense adage, “You are what you eat,” is now more in line with scientific-based fact. Each year brings new information and scientific research in the areas of nutrition and nutritional supplementation. The results continue to demonstrate that the foods we eat determine health, well-being, and longevity and that some foods offer medicinal qualities—something our foremothers and forefathers knew hundreds, even thousands of years ago!

Consumers are increasingly aware of the importance of nutrition to their health, and growing numbers are working to improve this area of their lives; nevertheless, many people believe eating nutritiously will mean sacrifices, such as having to invest more time and money and forfeit good taste in order to eat healthfully. The overload of nutrition information from the media can be so overwhelming that many people simply give up thinking about their nutrition



and diet altogether. Moreover, food companies run 60-second commercials that promote 60-second meals. The focus keeps us eating certain foods for their taste, texture, and quick preparation time rather than their nutritive value. Americans have lowered their fat and salt intakes yet continue to have a considerable gap between recommended dietary patterns and what they actually consume.

### KEY POINT

The idea that balanced nutrition is directly related to health, wellness, longevity, and the ability to heal the body is ageless. During the Stone Age, plants were used for medicinal purposes; the Chinese have used food for prevention and cures for centuries. Hippocrates was at the forefront of holistic health and wellness by suggesting that diet and nature should be taken into account when treating illness. Florence Nightingale also believed that “selecting and preparing healing foods, in addition to fresh air, quiet, and ‘punctuality and care in administration of diet’” were necessary to keep the body working properly and for healing in times of injury or illness (Nightingale, 1860, p. 2). Samuel Hahnemann, the father of homeopathy, believed that including foods that were most medicinal was integral to health and wellness (Hahnemann & O'Reily, 2013). These great minds had an innate understanding that nutrition was directly related to health, wellness, and healing.

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## What Is Nutrition?

Nutrition refers to the ingestion and utilization of foods and the relationship of food to human health. Sensible nutrition requires the intake of nutrients from good quality, wholesome foods that support and maintain health throughout the life span. The need for sensible nutrition is essential throughout life because all humans require the same basic nutrients regardless of their stage of life. What varies is the amount of nutrients needed at each growth stage. There are also special needs because of growth and development, pregnancy and lactation, age, and disease or injury.

Proper nutrition works primarily through sound food choices. In order for proper digestion, absorption, metabolism, and elimination to take place, you must have high-quality food that contains optimum nutrients.

Nutrients are not immediately available as your food is eaten but must be broken down by the digestive process and transported by the blood and lymph

to be used as needed; finally, their waste must be eliminated. The food you put on your plate must be transformed into proper condition and shape for use by the body. In other words, it must be digested. This begins the process; then it must be further assimilated, metabolized, and finally eliminated.

### KEY POINT

Nutrients are substances the body needs to provide you with energy, allow you to maintain your health, and repair and regenerate your tissues and cells.

Eating slowly and with few distractions, masticating (chewing) the food thoroughly, and drinking (any beverage) minimally during meals will allow the gastric juices to accomplish their proper function, and healthy digestion can occur. If food is swallowed nearly whole, a longer time will be required for its digestion and assimilation.

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## Refuel, Reload, Rejuvenate

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Energy is the most important reason to keep the body nutritionally sound. Each day, you must refuel the body so that it can move and function. The body is continually undergoing changes; worn-out tissues and cells are constantly being repaired and renewed. The elimination of digestive waste continually requires new supplies of energy, vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that are derived from food. Other reasons for proper diet and nutrition include fighting infection, balancing hormones, assisting in better quality sleep, and keeping the body running smoothly in times of stress. Sensible and proper nutrition is important in fulfilling these demands.

Paramount to the value of nutrition in your life are the emotional, psychological, spiritual, cultural, and traditional aspects of food. How food is presented, its smell, taste, and the emotional climate as a meal is eaten all have a connection to how food is digested. Many people use food to help ward off anxiety, tension, depression, or boredom. Certain negative feelings can cause a physiological (bodily) response in which the hypothalamus (the brain's appetite control center) sets up a chain reaction in the autonomic (self-controlling) nervous system. Additionally, the meaning food has for each individual, from early childhood experiences to the present, and how that impacts nutritional and digestive habits must also be considered.

---

## REFLECTION

**How do your food preferences and eating patterns relate to your childhood experiences?**

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All of the senses are stimulated when you eat through the

- Visual presentation of the food.
- Surroundings in which the food is consumed.
- Aroma or odor associated with the food.
- Texture and taste of the food.
- Conversation and environmental sounds that are present while the food is being consumed.

The chemical reactions that take place in the body differ according to the combination of experiences. A delicious meal with friends that is filled with beautiful sights and sounds will elicit calmness and ease of the digestive process. Relaxing, enjoyable meals are a goal to work toward for health and wellness.

Consistency in your life, whether positive or negative, usually reigns. If food is consistently eaten quickly, poorly, and under stressful conditions, then the body, mind, and spirit will be quickly depleted, lack energy, and eventually become stressed, unhappy, uncomfortable, and diseased.

The gathering, preparing, eating, and sharing of food offer more than just nutritional value. Food and diet have social and cultural aspects. Traditions, family gatherings, and religious ceremonies that include food probably have been part of your life on a regular basis. These activities help you to carry on tradition, culture, and values. Food is considered an expression of your individuality, history, values, and beliefs. Nutrition then is much more than what food group is eaten on any particular day at any particular meal.

### KEY POINT

#### From June Cleaver to Mickey D's

As late as the 1950s, many people were consuming food that was grown locally, bought fresh, prepared in their own kitchens, and eaten in a mindful, respectful, and unstressed atmosphere. Today, you may find yourself eating in your car, on a bench at a sporting event, standing at the kitchen counter, or sitting in front of a computer. The demand for convenience in eating has skyrocketed to the point that nearly 50% of our food expenditure is for food prepared outside the home (USDA, 2016).

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## A Healthy Diet

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Recognizing that each individual is unique, some general recommendations can be followed to promote health and well-being. First, it is important to consider the times of day that food is eaten. It is generally not a good idea to skip breakfast, as it provides the foundation for the day. Eating a hot breakfast such as oatmeal or any other warm cereal or toast in the morning creates a warming and nourishing effect and supplies necessary energy to sustain daily activities. It is best to eat the heaviest meal in the middle of the day when the digestive energies are the strongest. Eating while in a rush or while conducting business is not a good practice; taking the time to eat in a relaxed manner without being engaged in any other activity is more healthful. In general, fresh organic foods (foods not treated with pesticides, hormones, and antibiotics) are good choices. A basic food guide is provided in Table 2-1. Natural vitamins and food supplements can provide additional benefits.

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**TABLE 2-1    BASIC DAILY FOOD PLAN**

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### **BREAKFAST**

- Warm cereals, whole-grain muffin, or toast
- Fresh fruit
- Herbal tea, coffee, or a grain beverage such as Postum, Cafix, or Bambu

### **LUNCH**

- Fresh organic salads
- Homemade soup or a sandwich made with organic turkey, chicken, hard-boiled eggs, or nut butter on whole-grain bread
- Fresh fruit

### **DINNER**

- Protein, such as organic poultry, fish, beef (not more than once a month), or beans
- A complex carbohydrate, such as a vegetable, whole grains, peas, and beans
- Organic vegetables (meaning they are free of contaminants, synthetic pesticides and herbicides, hormones, preservatives, and artificial coloring)
- Fresh fruit

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## A Nutritional Evaluation

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In order to assess how nutritional habits impact health, eating habits need to be evaluated for a period of time. Factors to consider include not just the type of foods consumed, but also the following:

- *When food is consumed.* Late-night eating puts extra stress on the digestive system. According to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), at night, the yin (which is associated with rest, darkness, and stillness) predominates, and consequently, the digestive system slows down. The circulation slows down as well, conserving the amount of blood circulating to all of the digestive organs. Clearly, nighttime—when the body is supposed to be resting and preparing for restoring and repairing tissues—is not a good time to offer the body the challenge of digesting a big meal. Viewed from within the context of TCM, this behavior can lead to stomach yin deficiency, which is a condition in which the fluids of the stomach diminish, causing a sensation of heat in the stomach, manifesting as heartburn and indigestion. When this condition is allowed to persist, more serious stomach problems, such as a hiatal hernia or ulcer, may develop.
- *What one does while eating.* When there is emotional tension while eating, energy is diverted and less available for digestion. When stressed by heated conversations or upsetting news on the television, a person's energy is drawn away from the digestive system, causing indigestion. For optimum digestion, adequate supplies of enzymes, co-enzymes, and hormones are needed, and in order for these substances to be available, adequate amounts of blood must be circulating. Free-flowing energy, or qi, promotes blood flow. (In TCM, qi is considered the vital life force or energy that circulates throughout the body.) This emphasizes the importance of relaxing during mealtime so that there will be sufficient resources for digestion.
- *The amount that is consumed.* When too much food is consumed during a meal, the stomach gets stressed. This kind of behavior not only leads to indigestion, but also creates an energy deficit as energy is pulled from other areas to meet the demands of digestion. Between-meal nibbling creates the same kind of energy deficit, as energy is constantly required by the digestive organs to digest and not enough energy is available for other activities. Each time food is being

consumed, blood is routed to the digestive organs, and less is available for other physiological activities, creating an imbalance in the body. In addition, the many muscle layers of the stomach need to rest for a certain amount of time.

Table 2-2 provides some questions for you to consider in assessing your nutritional status.

**TABLE 2-2 NUTRITIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT**

- How would you rate your general health status?
- What are your height and weight? Are they within normal limits? Has there been any recent change in height or weight?
- What health conditions do you presently have?
- Do you have any problems with your blood sugar? Elevated cholesterol or triglyceride levels? High blood pressure? Osteoporosis? Irritable bowel syndrome?
- Are you aware of any food intolerances or allergies?
- Do you consume adequate amounts of protein, fruits, and vegetables?
- Do you limit your intake of saturated fats and simple carbohydrates?
- Are you taking nutritional supplements, and if so, which ones?
- What is your pattern of eating? How many meals do you eat per day? What is the size of those meals?
- Do you snack regularly throughout the day or evening? During the night?
- How many snacks do you have per day? Of what do they consist?
- What is your energy pattern? Do you have any slumps during the day?
- How much caffeine through coffee, tea, and carbonated drinks do you drink per day?
- What is your alcohol intake?
- What is your coping style when under stress? Do you consume unhealthy foods or large quantities of food when you are feeling stressed, depressed, anxious, or unhappy?
- Do you tend to make healthy food choices?

**KEY POINT**

Some people think organic and natural foods are similar but there are differences. There are criteria that must be met by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in order for them to certify a food as organic and allow it to be labeled as such. For example, for meats to be certified as organic animals must be fed 100% organic feed, not be administered any growth hormones or antibiotics, and be raised in conditions that support their natural behavior. Produce must be grown in soil that has been substance free for at least three years to be considered organic.

Many foods labeled “natural” boast that they have been made without the use of pesticides, GMOs, irradiation, or hormones; however, neither the U.S. Department of Agriculture nor the Food and Drug Administration have any criteria or regulations governing what can be labeled “natural.”

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## Identifying Patterns

Daily food journals that record food consumed, when it is consumed, and how one feels during food consumption can be beneficial in identifying patterns. Everything that enters the mouth—whether it is a piece of candy or a few sips of juice—should be recorded. Keeping this type of food diary increases self-awareness, which in turn can become the catalyst for positive changes in nutritional habits. After keeping a food journal for a couple of weeks, sufficient data will be available to determine the pattern and content of nutritional habits. Are meals being eaten on a regular basis? How much snacking is taking place? Are the foods chosen basically nutritious? Is one kind of food eaten in excess? Are some nutrients missing from the diet?

A review of beverage consumption is useful. What kinds of beverages are consumed? Is caffeine consumed from coffee and carbonated beverages, and if so, how much? Carbonated beverages are high in sugar or artificial sweetener, neither of which has any nutritional value. While recent research has shown caffeine to contain protective compounds that can enhance memory and concentration and lower the risks of Parkinson’s disease, dementia, stroke, and certain cancers, it is addictive, acts as a mild stimulant to the central nervous system, and is a diuretic (causes fluid loss through urine). In addition, it can be a problem for people with high blood pressure, worsen insomnia and gastric upset, and interact with medications; consuming in moderation is wise.

Alcoholic beverage intake needs to be captured as well. What is the alcohol intake on an average day? Alcohol supplies no nutrients, but it does supply calories. High levels of alcohol intake increase the risk of stroke, heart disease,

breast cancer, high blood pressure, birth defects, violent acts, and accidents. Women should drink no more than one alcoholic beverage per day, and men should drink no more than two alcoholic beverages per day.

An evaluation of body weight is important, with attention to possible gradual increases in weights that may have been experienced with age. Maintaining weight within an ideal range is important to general health. Obesity has been on the rise for the last two decades, with approximately 30% of the adult population being obese (having excess body weight and fat) and an equal number being overweight (having excess body weight). Obesity increases the risk of hypertension; heart disease; diabetes; arthritis; and uterine, breast, colon, and gallbladder cancers. People should be taught to use a weight chart to learn where their weight is in respect to their height. The Body Mass Index (BMI) is a useful means to determine if one's weight is of concern (Figure 2-1).

In addition to using the chart, you can calculate your BMI by:

multiplying your weight in pounds by 703,  
dividing that number by your height in inches, and  
dividing that number by your height in inches again.

There also are several sites online that can calculate your BMI for you. A healthy BMI is in the range of 18.5 to 24.9. BMIs higher than 30 increase the risk of heart disease and diabetes.

BMI	CATEGORY
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5–24.9	Healthy
25.0–29.9	Overweight
30.0–39.9	Obese
Over 40	Extreme or high risk obesity

Obese individuals need to be encouraged and assisted in implementing a reduction program; at minimum, they should commit to not gain any additional weight. On the other hand, being underweight for height or having a recent unexplained weight loss may be a sign of other health problems and warrants further diagnostic evaluation.



BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
Height (inches)	Body Weight (pounds)																
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287

  

BMI	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
Height (inches)	Body Weight (pounds)																		
58	172	177	181	186	191	196	201	205	210	215	220	224	229	234	239	244	248	253	258
59	178	183	188	193	198	203	208	212	217	222	227	232	237	242	247	252	257	262	267
60	184	189	194	199	204	209	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	255	261	266	271	276
61	190	195	201	206	211	217	222	227	232	238	243	248	254	259	264	269	275	280	285
62	196	202	207	213	218	224	229	235	240	246	251	256	262	267	273	278	284	289	295
63	203	208	214	220	225	231	237	242	248	254	259	265	270	278	282	287	293	299	304
64	209	215	221	227	232	238	244	250	256	262	267	273	279	285	291	296	302	308	314
65	216	222	228	234	240	246	252	258	264	270	276	282	288	294	300	306	312	318	324
66	223	229	235	241	247	253	260	266	272	278	284	291	297	303	309	315	322	328	334
67	230	236	242	249	255	261	268	274	280	287	293	299	306	312	319	325	331	338	344
68	236	243	249	256	262	269	276	282	289	295	302	308	315	322	328	335	341	348	354
69	243	250	257	263	270	277	284	291	297	304	311	318	324	331	338	345	351	358	365
70	250	257	264	271	278	285	292	299	306	313	320	327	334	341	348	355	362	369	376
71	257	265	272	279	286	293	301	308	315	322	329	338	343	351	358	365	372	379	386
72	265	272	279	287	294	302	309	316	324	331	338	346	353	361	368	375	383	390	397
73	272	280	288	295	302	310	318	325	333	340	348	355	363	371	378	386	393	401	408
74	280	287	295	303	311	319	326	334	342	350	358	365	373	381	389	396	404	412	420
75	287	295	303	311	319	327	335	343	351	359	367	375	383	391	399	407	415	423	431
76	295	304	312	320	328	336	344	353	361	369	377	385	394	402	410	418	426	435	443

**Figure 2-1 Body Mass Index (BMI) Table**

Reproduced from National Heart, Blood, and Lung Institute. (n.d.). Calculate your body mass index. Retrieved from [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose\\_wt/BMI/bmi\\_tbl.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmi_tbl.htm). Accessed July 25, 2016.

A deeper understanding of nutritional patterns and habits can be done by examining a person's childhood relationship with food. What were his or her habits and patterns of nutrition and diet during childhood? Does the individual continue to carry these patterns and habits? How does the childhood experience with food and eating affect current nutritional choices and lifestyle?

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## REFLECTION

**Do you believe that if you make sensible nutrition choices you will live a healthier, more energetic life and reduce your risk of disease? Do you think that you can deviate from sound nutritional habits without consequences? What has influenced your beliefs? If your beliefs do not support good nutritional habits, what can you do to change them?**

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Often, small actions are all that are needed to realize significant change. This can be explored by evaluating the way lifestyle impacts eating habits, food preferences, and food choices, similar to the nutritional self-assessment (Table 2-2) mentioned earlier. Writing the answers is important so that there will be a baseline to use for comparison after changes have been made. The answers will help in determining whether there are nutritional imbalances (excesses or deficiencies). Decisions can then be made as to which foods need to be added to and/or removed from the daily diet to improve nutrition.

The next step is to begin the process of eliminating or replacing foods that contribute to poor health. The intake of foods that are laden with artificial colorings, sweeteners, and preservatives should be reduced by half for the first few weeks and eventually eliminated altogether. Other foods that lead to ill health when consumed in excess are foods high in fat, refined sugar, salt, and dairy products.

### KEY POINT

Paying attention to diet and nutritional habits does not mean that people need to become obsessed with eating to the point that they become stressed when they have an occasional slip from healthy eating. This stress could create an emotional imbalance, which has a negative effect on general health.

## Fat

Eating high-fat foods such as ice cream, sour cream, cream cheese, hard cheese, heavy-butter sauces, red meat, pork, duck, oil, and whole milk is a contributing

factor in conditions such as atherosclerosis, heart disease, and cancer. In addition to the studies that have been done from within a reductionist framework (ones in which answers are sought by breaking substances down into their smallest particles), there also is an understanding in TCM that fatty foods create heat in the system, which exceeds humans' needs given their ecological situation. Eskimos eat large amounts of fat because their bodies need to produce high amounts of heat. When average Americans eat the same amount of fat as Eskimos, they most likely will develop severe cholesterol problems. Furthermore, too much heat in the system creates an imbalance between hot and cold, or yin and yang, according to TCM. When this balance is disrupted, problems in the bioenergy system begin to manifest.

## Sugars

Like saturated fats, refined sugars cause imbalances in the body when eaten in excess. Refined sugars are the simple sugars such as white, raw, brown, or turbinado sugar, as well as honey, corn syrup, corn sweeteners, dextrose, and fructose. Although a sweet flavor has a strengthening effect on the digestive system, according to TCM, it must come from complex carbohydrates, such as grains, fruits, and beans. Unlike the refined carbohydrates, these foods provide a more lasting energy, facilitating a more balanced physical, emotional, and intellectual experience every day. Foods filled with refined sugars create an excess in the system, as they overstimulate the endocrine system in the production of enzymes and hormones to deal with the sudden onslaught of glucose into the cells. When cookies, cakes, candies, ice cream, and other foods laden with refined sugars are consumed, an initial burst of energy occurs, and shortly thereafter a feeling of fatigue and lethargy occurs. This kind of eating pattern, when continued for a period of time, can negatively affect health because it stresses the endocrine system unnecessarily. High sugar intake also can contribute to inflammation.

### KEY POINT

Fresh fruit and malt barley, rice syrup, or blackstrap molasses are good to use as sweeteners because as complex sugars they stress the body less.

## Dairy

Dairy is another important group to consider. Although milk is touted as the complete food by the dairy industry, it is not without its problems. Dairy products can negatively affect the mucous membranes and contribute to digestive difficulties. Humans are the only species that drinks milk as adults, and it is

milk of a different species. According to TCM, excess consumption of dairy products produces a condition called dampness, displayed as abdominal distention, edema, cysts, and allergies.

### The Tune-Up

Good general health requires that there be balance in all areas of life—mind, body, spirit, family, and community. Physically it means that people eat healthful foods that provide energy and balance, without the problems of overeating, indigestion, or food intolerances. Psychologically and spiritually it means that people enjoy meals in peace, appreciate and respect their food and those they share it with, and practice intention (belief and faith that all is right and as it should be) to a higher power. Family and community events usually involve food and eating. Family get-togethers and social events are ways for us to feel connected to others; however, if those events involve patterns of eating that are not beneficial to general health, some changes may be necessary (Exhibit 2-1).

## A Nutritional Lifestyle for the Ages

The holistic approach to nutrition and diet considers self-care, healthful food selection, moderate intake, and balance. It suggests listening to one's own inner wisdom, being present (paying attention to what is happening at the present), and following a healthful lifestyle and a diet that includes foods that work in synergy (together) with other aspects of life.

### EXHIBIT 2-1 SMART SNACKING

#### INSTEAD OF

Potato chips or pretzels  
A candy bar  
Cookies  
Fried meats  
Whole milk  
Butter or syrup on pancakes  
Ice cream  
French fries or home fries  
Sour cream on baked potato  
Butter or cheese on vegetables

#### TRY

Mini bagels or breadsticks  
A piece of fruit or a glass of juice  
Graham crackers or raisins  
Baked or grilled meats  
Skim or 1% or 2% milk  
Fresh fruit  
Frozen low-fat or light yogurt  
Baked potato with herbs  
Nonfat yogurt and chives  
Lemon juice or herbs

## Nutritional Intake

A varied, balanced diet from wholesome, high-quality foods will provide much of what is needed to live a healthy, productive, long life. Varying colors, tastes, textures, and temperatures from good quality, organic food will yield the best results.

Time should be taken at meals to enjoy food, masticate (chew) it, and allow the action of the digestive powers to be fully utilized. Relaxation, enjoyable company, tranquility of mind, and pleasant conversation while eating help to fulfill the psychological, social, and cultural needs associated with food intake. The spiritual aspects of eating can be addressed through rituals and family traditions that are incorporated into each day's meals.

## Regular Meals

Consistency of food intake is important. The body must have intervals of rest from eating or its energies are soon exhausted, resulting in impaired function, dyspepsia (stomach upset), and other problems. Constant munching, whether on pastries and candy or apples and carrots, will lead to a digestive tract that is almost constantly at work; poor and weak digestion will follow, causing nutritional imbalances. Eating six small daily meals, beginning with a good breakfast, is best. Meals should be approached with an attitude of self-caring that will allow the mind, body, and spirit a much needed respite from the regular schedule.

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## REFLECTION

**Do you have rituals—such as prayer, candle lighting, or sharing time—that you incorporate into your main meals with significant others in your life? If not, how could you incorporate at least one?**

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## Amount and Timing

People generally eat too much rather than too little. It is an excellent plan to rise from the table before the desire for food is quite satisfied. The body's nutrition does not depend on the amount eaten but on the quality of food consumed. Eating too much is nearly as bad as swallowing food before it is properly chewed.

More than half of the U.S. population is overweight or obese, reinforcing the importance of controlling caloric intake. However, research now shows that caloric reduction can benefit persons who have normal weights as well (Martin et al., 2016). Researchers at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center and Duke, Tufts, and Washington universities have explored the effects of

calorie reduction on adults of normal weight. They had the group reduce their caloric intake by 25% (about 500 calories a day) and followed them for one year. At the end of the year, the group averaged a 15% reduction in weight, but that wasn't the only positive outcome. They also showed improvements in their moods, sleep quality, sexual drive, and relationships as compared to the group who did not reduce their calories. There are benefits to restricting calories beyond the preventing of obesity!

Those who dine late should wait 2 or 3 hours before retiring. Late-evening meals usually lead to a poor night's rest, with organs such as the liver being unable to detoxify properly.

## Fasting

A reduction or abstinence of food intake for a period of time, known as fasting, has been promoted as a healthy practice, and recent research has offered evidence of its benefits. Intermittent fasting in which caloric intake is limited for at least two days a week has been shown to not only aid in weight control, but also improve brain function (Mattson, 2015; Sugarman, 2016). The fasting improves neural connections in the brain's hippocampus and protects neurons from accumulating amyloid plaques (which is the protein found in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease). Fasting is viewed as offering benefits that surpass just reducing calorie intake as it offers a change for glycogen levels in the liver to be reduced.

Mark Mattson (2015), who serves as chief of the Laboratory of Neurosciences at the National Institute on Aging recommends two strategies for fasting:

- Time-restricted diet: all meals are consumed within an eight-hour period
- The 5:2 diet: caloric intake is restricted to 500 calories on two non-consecutive days per week with a healthy diet of normal caloric intake consumed the rest of the week.

Both of these approaches afford sufficient time for the body to reduce its supply of glycogen and begin burning fat. Intermittent fasting may be less difficult for people to practice than a more restrictive approach.

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## MyPlate

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have developed recommendations and tools to help consumers understand and apply sound nutritional principles (Table 2-3). One such tool that illustrated recommended dietary intake is MyPlate (Figure 2-2), which replaced

**TABLE 2-3    DIETARY GUIDELINES: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS****BALANCING CALORIES TO MANAGE WEIGHT**

- Prevent and/or reduce overweight and obesity through improved eating and physical activity behaviors.
- Control total calorie intake to manage body weight. For people who are overweight or obese, this will mean consuming fewer calories from foods and beverages.
- Increase physical activity and reduce time spent in sedentary activities.
- Maintain appropriate calorie balance during each stage of life—childhood, adolescence, adulthood, pregnancy and breastfeeding, and older age.

**FOODS AND FOOD COMPONENTS TO REDUCE**

- Reduce daily sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) and further reduce intake to 1,500 mg for persons who are 51 and older and those of any age who are African American or have hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease. The 1,500-mg recommendation applies to about half of the U.S. population, including children and the majority of adults.
- Consume fewer than 10% of calories from saturated fatty acids by replacing them with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids.
- Consume fewer than 300 mg per day of dietary cholesterol.
- Keep trans fatty acid consumption as low as possible by limiting foods that contain synthetic sources of trans fats, such as partially hydrogenated oils, and by limiting other solid fats.
- Reduce the intake of calories from solid fats and added sugars.
- Limit the consumption of foods that contain refined grains, especially refined-grain foods that contain solid fats, added sugars, and sodium.
- If alcohol is consumed, it should be consumed in moderation—up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men—and only by adults of legal drinking age.

**FOODS AND NUTRIENTS TO INCREASE**

Individuals should meet the following recommendations as part of a healthy eating pattern while staying within their calorie needs.

- Increase vegetable and fruit intake.

*(continues)*