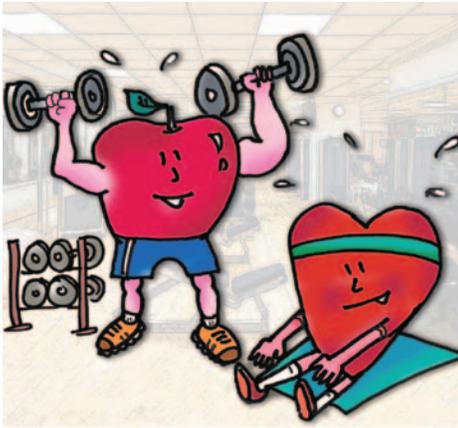


Ten tips to stay healthy

BY ASHLEY CISNEROS-MEJIA | JUNE 2013



Americans have good reason to be concerned about improving their health. Studies show that the higher a person's body mass, the higher the risk of serious health issues including high cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes and some cancers. And according to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), almost 33 percent of U.S. adults age 20 and over are overweight, 36 percent are obese, and almost 7 percent are extremely obese.¹

While good health and fitness is important for everyone, people of color *especially* have reason to be concerned. The Office of Minority Health found that minorities are especially at risk for these issues and have a higher number of health problems than the rest of the population.²

For example:

- The death rate for African Americans was higher than Whites for heart diseases, stroke, cancer, and diabetes.

- Asian Americans are most at risk for cancer, heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Asian Americans also have a high prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS, smoking, tuberculosis, and liver disease. Tuberculosis is 11 times more common among Asians compared to the White population.
- Other health conditions and risk factors that significantly affect Latinos are asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, HIV/AIDS, obesity, suicide, and liver disease.

Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has cited some of the leading causes of illness and death among Hispanics, which include heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes.

Too many Americans lack access to health information, resources and the money to pay for health care. In fact, nearly 49.9 million American lacked health insurance in 2010, according to the Census Bureau. Foreign-born residents who are not U.S. citizens, young adults and low-income families make up the bulk of this group.

The good news is that many chronic health conditions can be prevented with lifestyle choices. There are simple things you can do to improve your health. Here are 10 tips from the CDC and the National Institutes of Health:

1. Plan ahead and prepare meals consisting of a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

2. Limit foods and drinks high in calories, sugar, trans and saturated salt, fat, cholesterol, and alcohol.
3. Keep healthy snacks available and in view. Limit the amount of sweets and soda in your home or car.
4. Drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day. Try adding lemon or cucumber for taste.
5. Get 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Turn off your electronics and keep your room cool to help you fall asleep.
6. Wash your hands to stop the spread of germs.
7. Avoid smoking and breathing second hand smoke.
8. Aim to get 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity every day. Short on time? Break up the 30 minutes into three 10-minute sessions. Also consider stretching while watching TV and doing jumping jacks and sit-ups during commercial breaks.
9. Do activities with your kids like walking, playing tag, biking, gardening and dancing.
10. Leave your workout clothes by your bed as a reminder to work out in the morning, or pack your clothes with you and exercise after work before going home.

What other tips do you suggest to keep America healthy?

¹ Prevalence of Obesity in the United States, 2009-2010 (January 2012)

² National Center for Health Statistics. "Health, United States, 2011: With Special Feature on Socioeconomic Status and Health." (2012)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ashley Cisneros-Mejia is a co-founder of Chatter Buzz Media, an Orlando Internet marketing firm specializing in website design, search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing and content creation. A former newspaper reporter and magazine editor, Cisneros-Mejia's work has appeared in *New York Magazine*, the *Chicago Tribune* and *The Los Angeles Times*, and *LatinaStyle* among other publications