

These Doctors Still Make House Calls

No matter how you write the prescription, healthcare is expensive. We talk a lot about health care benefits, but not nearly enough about *self-care* benefits! The following eight “doctors” are specialists in improving mental, physical, and spiritual health. You can use them every day, and they will reduce the risk for many diseases, drugs, and doctor’s fees—now that’s a powerful *self-care* benefit package!

1. Nutrition. Nourishing food strengthens both the body and the brain. Plant foods are rich in compounds and nutrients that lower stress and improve mental function and mood. Enjoy plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, and seeds. Avoid junk food, saturated animal fat and trans-fats, sugary drinks, caffeine, and large amounts of refined sugar. Almost half of our calories come in the form of sweetened beverages like soda pop and fruity drinks. When you ditch those high-calorie drinks you can watch unwanted pounds melt away and increase real energy. For a real energy boost, drink at least 8 glasses of water a day. When you eat better, and drink plenty of water, you will feel better and have the energy to make better choices.

2. Fresh Air and Exercise. Exercise, especially outdoor exercise in nature, improves head as well as heart health: it is critical to mental and physical health. It has been said that motion balances emotion. If you’ve got the blues, get out under the blue skies and go for a brisk stroll. Exercise lowers stress, depression, and anxiety. It improves mood, well-being, and mental processing. Exercise increases learning power. It helps you improve physical health, reduce disease risk, and achieve a healthful weight. Get into the mind-set of daily exercise and you will experience both head and heart benefits! Claim the promise: **“He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.” Isaiah 40:29**

3. Rest. Our bodies are designed for mental, physical, and spiritual rest as well as action. It is important to plan times of recreation, relaxation, and reflection to minimize the depression that is linked to constant mental and physical strain. Also, regular early-to-bed sleep patterns rejuvenate the brain and help control stress hormone and blood sugar levels. Rest reduces irritability, fatigue, and stress, and increases energy! New habits and routines are solidified during sleep, so help yourself to a happier, healthier brain by getting adequate, refreshing rest. Controlling stress, getting exercise out in the sun, and avoiding caffeine and late-night eating will promote sound, deep sleep. We are invited into God’s healing rest: **“Come to Me...and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28-30**

4. Attitude. Someone once said that a bad attitude is like a flat tire—unless you change it, you won't get very far. Studies show that a key factor in living a long, healthful life is a sense of meaning and purpose. Cultivate a thankful attitude, and check those negative thoughts! Make the choice to focus on solutions rather than problems, and look at difficulties and trials as opportunities for growth. God has promised to impart strength and wisdom for every difficulty. He will help you build the mental mettle to face life's problems in a positive way. **“Let the weak say, I am strong.” Joel 3:10**

5. Relationships. Cultivating healthy relationships is a lot like cultivating a garden: The more focused attention and care a garden gets, the more fruit it produces. In the same way, taking time to cultivate and maintain positive friendships and social relationships bears the fruit of joy, empathy, and unselfishness. Taking time for healthful relationships creates opportunities for giving as well as receiving. Other benefits include improved immune function, improved social skills, lower stress, improved mood, and longer life. Taking time for relationships is time well spent.

6. Mental Fitness. Physical fitness requires determination, perseverance, and practice. Mental fitness does too. You can give your brain a workout by engaging in challenging mental activities such as reading inspiring, challenging, and educational books, working puzzles, playing a musical instrument, or learning new skills. Such activities increase the brain's neuronal neighborhoods, creating new connections and increasing mental flexibility. Along with a healthful diet and exercise, this improves the speed and accuracy with which the brain can solve problems and meet challenges. Challenge your brain and change your world.

7. Positive Choices. Daily positive choices can overcome big, bad habits. Repetition and patience are the keys to crafting a healthy lifestyle. Successful people are not mistake free: they just refuse to give up! Remember: **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13**

8. Spiritual Health. Spiritual health is at the center of a healthy lifestyle. It is making peace with God and allowing His plan, purpose, and power to guide your life. Friends, circumstances, and life can be unpredictable and change over time. But God never changes. With God's help we may achieve steady growth and improvement in our lives, experience forgiveness when we fall short of our goals, and possess courage and cheerfulness to press forward in life's journey.

The Living Word

The Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ is the Great Physician who came to establish His kingdom of love, life, and freedom. He can bring renewal and restoration into your life. This eight-step plan—eight “doctors”—can help improve mental, physical, and spiritual health and reduce the risk for much needless suffering. His message of love may be

calling to your heart right now: **“My loved one, it is my prayer that you may do well in all things, and be healthy in body, even as your soul does well.” 3 John 2 (BBE)** He is waiting for you now as your Great Healer, Savior, and Restorer! Would you like to ask God to help you to make daily positive choices in your life? Now is your moment, your opportunity to move forward and enjoy the benefits of more optimal health!

Visit us at LifestyleMatters.com or call 1-866-624-5433 for your resources to build a better brain, body, and lifestyle.