

# Healthy Lifestyle Habits and Goals

## Lifestyle Habits to Reduce Your Risk of Disease

**Adopt sun safe behaviors.** Sun safety is never out of season. The sun's harmful UV rays reflect off of water, snow, sand and even reach the earth's surface on cloudy days.

- Always apply sunscreen SPF 15 or above, 15 to 30 minutes **before** sun exposure. Use, at minimum, 1 ounce of sunscreen during every application.
  - Look for sunscreen that provides protection against both UVA and UVB rays.
  - Pay particular attention to lips, ears, back of neck and tops of feet.
- Reapply sunscreen at least every two hours.
- Wear a hat that protects your face, neck and ears.
- Wear a shirt with sleeves (at least short-sleeved) or other protective clothing.
- Wear sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays.
- Seek shade whenever possible or make your own with an umbrella.

**Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.** According to the 2006 Surgeon General's Report, secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard that can lead to disease and premature death in children and nonsmoking adults. There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke. Smoke-free environments are the only approach that effectively protects you.

**Be physically active on a regular basis.** Physical activity is anything that makes you move your body and burns calories, such as climbing stairs or playing sports. Without regular physical activity, the body slowly loses its strength and ability to function well. Aerobic exercises benefit your heart (examples are walking, jogging, swimming or biking). Muscle strengthening and stretching exercises are best for overall stamina and flexibility.

Recommended activity levels for adults age 18 to 64:

- 30-minutes of moderate activity most or all days of the week
- 75-minutes per week of aerobic exercise
- Muscle strengthening and stretching exercises on at least 2 days per week

**Don't smoke – if you do, stop.** Need help quitting? Call the North Dakota Tobacco Quitline at **1.800.QUIT.NOW** or 1.800.784.8669. Or go to **[www.nd.quitnet.com](http://www.nd.quitnet.com)** for a free web-based service to help quit tobacco.

**Eat a balanced diet** that emphasizes fruits and vegetables (five to nine servings daily), cereal and grain products (25 grams of fiber daily), fat-free and/or low-fat dairy products (3 servings daily), legumes, beans, nuts, fish, poultry and lean meats.

**Schedule regular visits with your doctor.** Regular physical exams and health screening tests are an important part of preventive health care and a critical method for detecting potential diseases before symptoms are noticed. Early detection is often the key to successful treatment.

# Healthy Lifestyle Habits and Goals

## Healthy Goals to Reduce Your Risk of Disease

**Aim for a healthy weight.** Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight is important for overall health and can help you prevent and control many diseases and conditions. If you are overweight or obese, you are at higher risk of developing serious health problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers. Indicators for healthy weight:

- **Body mass index (BMI)**    Less than 25
- **Waist circumference**    Less than 35 inches (women)  
Less than 40 inches (men)

The World Health Organization estimates that almost 20 percent of all strokes and over 50 percent of all heart attacks can be linked to high cholesterol. Cholesterol goals for most adults are listed below:

- **Total cholesterol**    Less than 200 mg/dL
- **HDL (good) cholesterol**    50 mg/dL or higher (women)  
40 mg/dL or higher (men)
- **LDL (bad) cholesterol**    LDL cholesterol goals vary depending upon risk.

For people with no heart disease and one or no risk factors, the goal is less than 160 mg/dL.

**For most people with two or more risk factors, the goal is less than 130 mg/dL.**

For people with heart disease or diabetes, the goal is less than 100 mg/dL.

- **Triglycerides**    Less than 150 mg/dL

**Risk factors are traits and lifestyle habits that increase your risk of disease.** The more risk factors you have, the higher your chances of having heart disease, cancer or stroke.

Uncontrolled high blood pressure increases your risk of serious health problems, including heart attack and stroke. Your blood pressure treatment goal depends on how healthy you are.

- **Blood pressure goal for most adults**    Less than 120/80 mmHg

Glucose is vital to your health because it's the main source of energy for the cells that make up your muscles and tissues. It's your body's main source of fuel. Too much glucose can lead to serious health problems.

- **Fasting glucose**    Less than 100 mg/dL

**For more information on healthy lifestyle habits and goals to prevent cancer and heart disease or stroke, contact:**

**Dubi Schwanz**

Community Outreach Coordinator  
Comprehensive Cancer Prevention & Control  
Phone: 701.328.3046  
Email: dschwanz@nd.gov

**Susan Mormann**

Program Director  
Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention  
Phone: 701.328.2367  
Email: smormann@nd.gov