**HEALTHY LIFESTYLE FOR HEALTH PROMOTION**

Lifestyle is a way of living. There are certain ways of living that are detrimental to health and other ways that promote good health in an individual. These has short and mostly long term effects. A healthy lifestyle is advised by all irrespective of individual health status. Some of the benefits of living healthily are listed below:

1. It helps prevent, and or reduce the chances of having diabetes, control the blood sugar level, control the blood pressure, helps reduce bad cholesterol in the body by converting them to good lipids. These help reduce the chances of having some heart and blood vessel diseases.
2. To those either having high blood pressure, raised cholesterol and or diabetes it helps reduce the rate of progression of these conditions, and to some extent it can even revert these conditions over time.
3. Healthy lifestyle helps your mental health, helps channels the mind into more positive changes continuous for a lifetime. Exercise helps to improve mood in general
4. Helps the immune system. Overtime the body builds stronger immunity

You can modify your Lifestyle. It entails the following:

**EXERCISE**

As adults we should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate intense aerobic activity each week or 75 minutes of intense aerobic activity weekly. We can have a mix of both level of activities. Moderate intensity activity means you get your heart rate up and you are breathing harder, but you shouldn’t be out of breath. Examples include walking, jogging, swimming, cycling , dancing etc Remember to start slowly and build up. Do muscle strengthening activities on two or more days a week that work on all major muscle groups, legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest shoulder and arms.

Some people already have physically demanding jobs that make them active for a large part of daily working times. They still need to exercise. As exercise raises their heart beat above their normal baseline at work.

**DIET**

The general advice is for all to eat healthily. Eat a mix of different healthy foods in the right proportions. Daily consumption of fruits including lots of highly coloured apples and green leafy vegetables. Drink lots of water average 2-3L per day. Water intake can be increased gradually overtime to reach daily target.

WHO recommended daily sodium consumption of not more than 2g, and salt intake of less than 5g per day. This is a summation of the all salt intake from different sources of food and drink in a day. Cut down on salt intake, avoid adding table salt to already prepared meal if possible. When you cut down on salt intake over time your taste buds re-adjusts to the low salt level.

The is a slight modification in people at risk of heart and blood vessel disease, raised cholesterol, diabetic and pre-diabetic. Though there could be specific dietary requirement, in general especially for people at risk of cardiovascular disease the advice is as below:

1. Total fat intake should be 30% or less of total energy intake and saturated fat 7% or less. Where possible saturated fats should be replaced by mono-unsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Saturated and monounsaturated fats intake can be replaced with olive oil, rapeseed oil etc
2. Intake of dietary cholesterol of less than 3000mg per day
3. Choose whole grain variety of starchy food
4. Reduce sugar and food products containing refined sugars including fructose.
5. Eat at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables per day
6. Eat at least 2 portions of fish per week including a portion of oily fish
7. Eat at least 4 to 5 portions of unsalted nuts, seeds and legumes( beans, peas etc) per week

Avoid eating late at night. Target 6:45 pm not later than 7pm, and at least 3 hours before bedtime

**ALCOHOL**

It is advised not to drink beyond 14 units of alcohol per week, spread over at least three days. The Word Health Organisation, WHO recently further stressed that no level of alcohol consumption is safe for health.

**SMOKING**

If you smoke. it is best to quit smoking. There are smoking cessation programmes that can help you through the process. Passive smoke has almost the same detrimental effect as mainstream smoke. Avoiding sidestream smoke exposure is very helpful.

**REST/SLEEP**

A good sleep rejuvenates the body. Helps cut down stressors and aid the repair process of the body. If not getting the required amount and quality of sleep try to find out the likely cause(s) and deal with it/them. Some little tips that can help enhance sleep quality includes:

1. Maintaining a good sleep hygiene and have particular time you go to bed
2. Avoiding phones, TV , laptops and gadgets one hour prior to sleep
3. Write down your worrying thoughts, unfinished task, problems before bed to release them from your mind prior to sleeping.
4. Learn to relax and relinquish your defence prior to sleep.

These little pits will help you sleep better.

There are situations whereby you might need to see the doctor to rule out any underlying health cause that might be affecting your sleep quality.

**WEIGHT/BMI**

The ideal weight is a healthy weight. To maintain this your BMI , body weight in relation to your height should be 18.5 to 25kg/m/m. For older adults it is okay to be maintained at 25-27kg/m/m. It is better to loss weight gradually. You are more likely to gain the weight back if you lose it rapidly than over time. Things that help loss weight include:

1. Lower calory intake than the body needs on daily basis
2. Avoiding sedentary lifestyle. Sitting for long and eating too late at night contributes to increase belly fat
3. Exercise regularly

If these healthy lifestyle tips are followed as outlined you will notice significant changes in your general health over time.