



Ten Steps to Better Health

By Gerard L. Guillory, M.D.

Americans now spend more than \$2 trillion a year on healthcare—more than any other country in the world—and the cost increases keep coming. Meanwhile, we're all receiving conflicting and confusing reports about what we should or shouldn't do in order to take care of ourselves.

If you're struggling to stay well and manage healthcare costs, there are a few simple steps you can take to reach these goals.

In my 22 years in medical practice, I have identified 10 simple lifestyle/dietary changes that almost anyone can make in order to achieve better health, increased longevity and reduced medical expenditures.

For example, a 50-year-old journalist who was experiencing intense migraine headaches has put a stop to them, without medication. He simply eliminated monosodium glutamate from his diet. A middle-aged woman who had suffered for years from irritable bowel syndrome eliminated the problem by adding a probiotic supplement to her diet. And an elderly patient who was having difficulty walking is now moving around with impressive agility. She added vitamin D supplements to her diet.

1. Add probiotics to your diet. If you find your digestive tract grumbling more than you think it should, you might want to replenish your gut's probiotics.
2. Beware MSG and aspartame. If you regularly experience severe headaches, dizziness, muscle aches and digestive discomfort, the cause may lie in your diet.
3. Avoid trans fats. Trans fats may be the worst thing you can eat but, if you live in Colorado and other states that don't regulate these dangerous food additives, you probably aren't even aware that you're eating them.
4. Take appropriate supplements. Americans spend more than \$17 billion a year on nutritional supplements, but few of us know what we are getting for our money.
5. Take Omega-3 fatty acids. Some fats are essential to good health; for example, the Omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oil, cod-liver oil and flaxseed oil.
6. Take supplemental vitamin D. Another common deficiency involves vitamin D; in fact, some medical experts are referring to this as an epidemic. Recent studies have linked vitamin D deficiency to a range of medical problems such as diabetes, chronic fatigue, osteoporosis, hypertension, multiple sclerosis, at least 16 types of cancer, and other diseases, including influenza.
7. Get your blood tested. In addition to testing your vitamin D level, you also might want to undergo a blood test to determine whether your hormones are balanced, and a blood test to determine if you are gluten sensitive. These tests may uncover lurking problems, not discovered by the usual blood testing performed during a routine annual exam.
8. Reduce inflammation. Inflammation is a natural and vital part of the body's response to injury, helping fight infections and ward off cancer, but it can go awry. Poor diet, lack of exercise and ineffective responses to stress contribute to the problem. Many age-related illnesses and obesity arise as a result of excessive, chronic cellular inflammation.
9. Listen to your physician. Don't overlook the value of all the usual advice that physicians and other health-care professionals offer: stop smoking; work out regularly and appropriately; learn to manage stress more effectively; keep your weight within recommended limits; and get a good night's sleep.
10. Make the most of your office visit. One of the most important things you can do is to make the most of the time you spend with your doctor. A few suggestions: Before you call for the appointment, list and prioritize the issues you hope to address. When you make the call, mention all the reasons for the visit. Make a list of your medical conditions and medications (including doses). Also include a list of any vitamins and supplements that you take.

To learn more you may want to read the articles I have written on the *Ten Steps* and other health related topics by visiting our website www.thecaregrouppc.com. I frequently give the Ten Steps to Better Health seminar to employer groups in the area; to help their employees *feel better, live longer, and save money*.

Contact our office to set up a seminar at your work place or call to receive a copy of the Ten Steps to Better Health audio CD.

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