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- *Healthy Living Is the Best Answer*

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As always, we hope you enjoy this edition and would like to hear from you with any questions, concerns, or suggestions for future articles. Send us an email at info@alliantservices.com.

Healthy Living Is the Best Answer

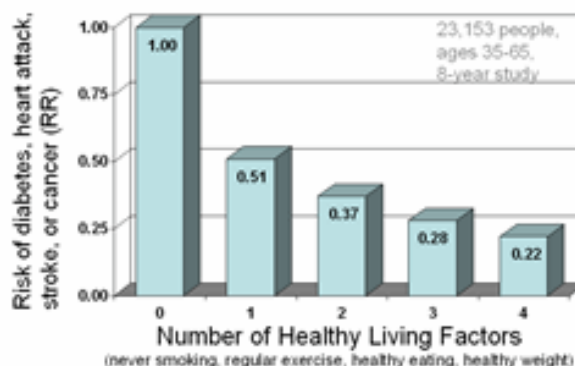
With lots of debate on how to reduce the high cost of healthcare in the United States, a new study dramatically reveals that the best answer is healthy living.

Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention along with other health institutions studied key healthy behaviors in a large population of 23,153 people aged 45-65. All people were free of chronic disease and in good health at the start of the study. After 8 years of follow-up, researchers looked for new cases of serious disease that developed, such as diabetes, heart attack, cancer, or stroke. They found four life-style factors that were strong predictors for developing chronic disease. They are:

- Never smoking
- Avoiding excess body weight (BMI less than 30)
- Getting regular physical activity – at least 3.5 hours per week (30 min/day)

Eating healthier meals – a high intake of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, and low consumption of red meat.

Healthy Living Factors and Risk of Serious Disease





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After adjusting for age, educational level, occupation, etc., participants who had all four of the healthy living factors, compared to those with none, decreased their risk of developing any of the serious chronic diseases by 78%. In other words, those living healthfully were only one-fifth as likely to develop diabetes or cancer or experience a heart attack or stroke compared to those with the unhealthy lifestyle.

Looking at specific diseases, the four healthy lifestyle factors (compared to those not following them) reduced the risk of getting diabetes by 93% and heart attacks by 81%. Strokes were cut in half and the risk of getting cancer was cut by 36%. Think what impact this would have on the healthcare expenses in the United States if everyone chose the healthy living option.

Even if following only two of the healthy factors (compared to those who followed none), study participants still had remarkable reductions in the likelihood of developing a serious disease. For example, if participants who exercised regularly and ate healthy meals cut the risk of a serious illness by two-thirds (66%). Those who avoided excess body weight and exercised regularly reduced their risk of serious disease by 64%.

Clearly a healthy lifestyle has a major impact on whether you will experience a serious and expensive illness in your life or not. One major part of the "healthcare debate" should be focusing on a healthcare system that helps people live more healthfully, and that promotes prevention. The economic impact could be phenomenal.

The bottom line. For yourself, you can choose to live healthfully each day. If you want to significantly reduce your risk of cancer, a heart attack or stroke, and diabetes, this study showed that you should:

- Avoid smoking
- Keep your weight in a healthy range, at least avoiding obesity.
- Get regular physical activity such as brisk walking, at least 30 minutes daily.

Choose healthier meals by eating primarily whole-grain breads and cereals, eating more fruits and vegetables (aim for 4-5 cups daily), and eating less red meat and other foods high in saturated fats.

Reference: Ford ES, et al. Healthy Living Is the Best Revenge. Archives of Internal Medicine. 2009;169(15):1355-1362

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