

Common Sense Prevention

- Stay up-to-date with preventive medical screenings.
- Wear appropriate footwear at all times.
- Pay attention to scatter rugs and uneven surfaces that you could trip on.
- Use a night light to prevent falls.
- Avoid sun between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.; wear a hat and loose clothing with long sleeves; use sunblock routinely (minimum SPF 15) and reapply often.
- Remember to wear your helmet when bicycling.
- Always wear your seat belt! No trip is too short, even around the corner.
- Be sure to carry identification with you at all times.



Simple Measures for Successful Aging

Brought to you by

The Committee on Geriatric Medicine
of the Massachusetts Medical Society

© 2001
Massachusetts Medical Society
Department of Public Health and Education
860 Winter Street
Waltham, MA 02451-1411
www.massmed.org

For additional copies, call (800) 843-6356



■ Sleep

Sleep needs change as you age. The key is quality sleep.

- Get enough — 7 to 9 hours per night.
- Establish a regular sleeping pattern.
 - Start a relaxing bedtime routine.
 - Get up and go to bed at about the same time — even on weekends!
 - For nappers: take early, short naps before 2:00 p.m. and for no longer than one (1) hour.
- Don't use alcohol as a sleep aid. It may initially help you fall asleep, but risks interrupting your sleep later in the night.
- Sleeping pills — over the counter or prescription — should not be used on a regular basis. Generally, unless advised by your physician, sleeping pills should not be used for more than a two (2) week period due to dependence.



■ Exercise

Regular exercise lowers blood pressure, improves cardiovascular function, strengthens bones and makes you feel good. It doesn't have to be strenuous or exhausting to be effective.

- Regularity is the key: don't be a weekend warrior or a couch potato.
- Gentle, slow stretching feels good and keeps you flexible.
- Walking is simple, inexpensive and very good for you.
- Climbing stairs gives you an extra workout, but always hold a handrail to avoid falling.

- Make it fun!
Try different types of exercise with friends.
- Start slowly and build up to 20-30 minutes at least 3-4 times a week.

If you don't feel well when exercising, stop. If symptoms persist, call your physician.



■ Eating Right

Food that is good for you can also taste great!

- Diversify your diet: eat lots of different foods from each food category; avoid excesses of any one type of food.
- Love those fruits and veggies: eat at least 5-8 servings per day.
- Drink lots of water: 6-8 glasses (8 oz each) per day.
- Dietary supplements are a good idea but should not be overused. Just because one is good does not mean five are better.
- Talk with your physician before taking herbal remedies. Your physician needs to be sure herbals and prescription drugs are not interacting.

With all these areas (sleep, exercise and nutrition), practice MODERATION. Because something is good does not mean that more of it is better!

These are general guidelines and not a substitute for the advice of your physician. Be sure to consult with your physician before changing your diet or exercise or if you have any specific concerns.