

## Recommended Behaviors to Improve Health in the US

Improving health in the United States requires addressing several key behaviors that are strongly linked to chronic disease prevention and overall well-being. The following behaviors are consistently recommended by leading health organizations and supported by research:

### 1. Avoid Tobacco Use

- Never smoking or quitting smoking significantly lowers the risk of heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, lung disease, and premature death<sup>[1] [2] [3]</sup>.

### 2. Engage in Regular Physical Activity

- Adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week, such as brisk walking or gardening, along with muscle-strengthening activities on two days per week<sup>[1] [4] [3]</sup>.

### 3. Eat a Healthy Diet

- A balanced diet should include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy, while limiting added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium<sup>[5] [6] [1]</sup>.
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans emphasize healthy dietary patterns to prevent diet-related chronic diseases<sup>[6]</sup>.

### 4. Maintain a Healthy Body Weight

- Achieving and maintaining a normal body mass index (BMI) is associated with reduced risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and some cancers<sup>[1] [3]</sup>.

### 5. Limit Alcohol Consumption

- If alcohol is consumed, it should be in moderation-no more than one drink per day for women and two for men. Excessive drinking increases the risk of high blood pressure, cancers, liver disease, and other health problems<sup>[1] [3]</sup>.

### 6. Get Sufficient Sleep

- Adults should regularly get at least 7 hours of sleep per night. Insufficient sleep is linked to obesity, diabetes, heart disease, depression, and poor management of chronic conditions<sup>[1] [3]</sup>.

### 7. Get Preventive Health Screenings

- Regular visits to healthcare providers for preventive screenings can help catch chronic diseases early or prevent them altogether. This includes screenings for diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and dental checkups<sup>[1]</sup>.

### 8. Take Care of Oral Health

- Brushing and flossing daily, drinking fluoridated water, and regular dental visits help prevent oral diseases that can impact overall health<sup>[1]</sup>.

## 9. Know Your Family Health History

- Sharing your family health history with your healthcare provider can help identify risks and guide preventive actions<sup>[1]</sup>.

## Summary Table of Key Behaviors

| Behavior              | Recommendation                                                                |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tobacco Use           | Never smoke or quit smoking                                                   |
| Physical Activity     | ≥150 minutes/week moderate activity + muscle strengthening 2x/week            |
| Healthy Diet          | Eat fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins; limit sugar, fat, sodium |
| Healthy Weight        | Maintain normal BMI (18.5–25)                                                 |
| Alcohol Consumption   | No alcohol or moderate intake                                                 |
| Sleep                 | ≥7 hours/night for adults                                                     |
| Preventive Screenings | Regular health and dental checkups                                            |
| Oral Health           | Brush, floss, and visit dentist regularly                                     |
| Family Health History | Know and share with your healthcare provider                                  |

## Supporting Evidence

- The CDC and American Public Health Association identify tobacco use, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and excessive alcohol use as the main behavioral risk factors for chronic diseases in the US<sup>[1] [2]</sup>.
- Research shows that clustering of five key behaviors-never smoking, regular physical activity, moderate/no alcohol use, normal BMI, and sufficient sleep-significantly reduces chronic disease risk, yet only a small percentage of US adults meet all five<sup>[3]</sup>.
- The WHO and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide specific dietary and lifestyle recommendations to support these behaviors and improve public health outcomes<sup>[5] [6]</sup>.

Addressing these behaviors through individual choices, community programs, and policy initiatives can lead to substantial improvements in health and reductions in chronic disease rates across the US.



1. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronic-disease/prevention/index.html>
2. <https://www.apha.org/what-is-public-health/generation-public-health/our-work/healthy-choices>
3. [https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2016/16\\_0054.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2016/16_0054.htm)
4. <https://www.aafp.org/pubs/fpm/issues/2018/0300/p31.html>
5. <https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/fact-sheets/item/a-healthy-lifestyle---who-recommendations>

6. [http://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Americans\\_2020-2025.pdf](http://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans_2020-2025.pdf)