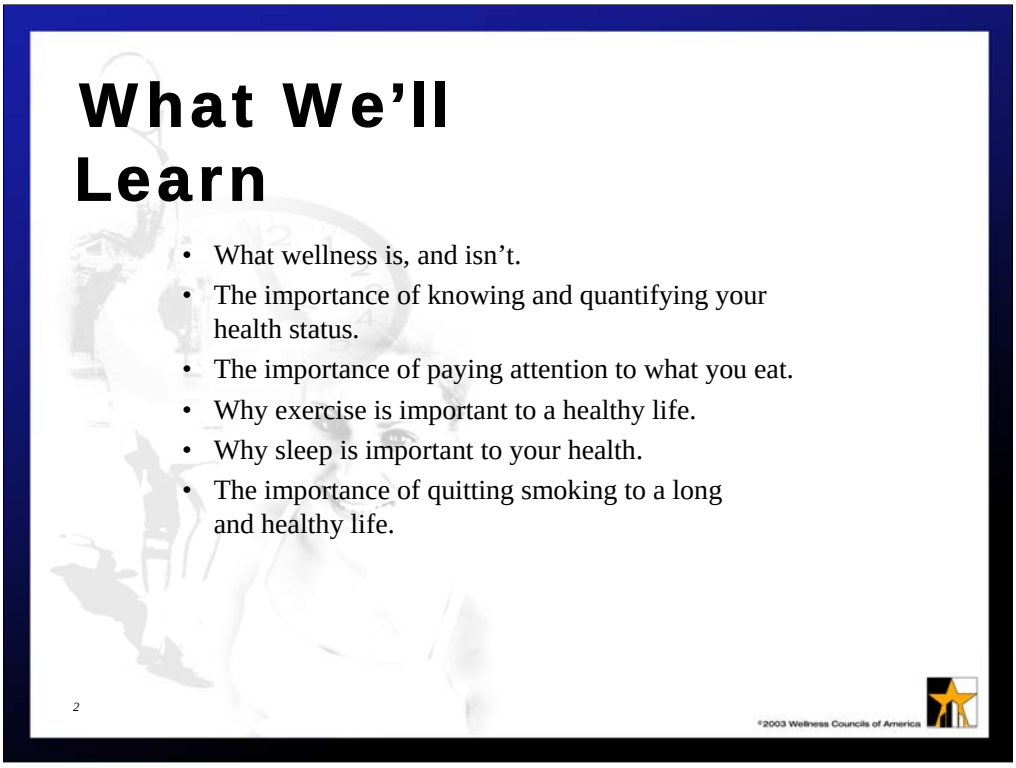
5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life

The 5 Smartest Things You Could Ever Do:

5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life

Welcome to *The 5 Smartest Things You Could Ever Do: Five Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life*. This presentation has been designed to teach you about five health behaviors that, when practiced, can improve your health and quality of life. Our health is a result of our behavior—how we treat ourselves throughout the course of our lives. The five rules presented here will help you live a longer and happier life.

5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life



What We'll Learn

In this presentation, you'll learn about five health behaviors and habits that play an integral role in the quality of your health and the length of your life. You'll learn the very real consequences of ignoring each of these rules, as well as the potential benefits associated with each of them. Lastly, we'll provide some tips and strategies to help you incorporate these rules into your daily life.

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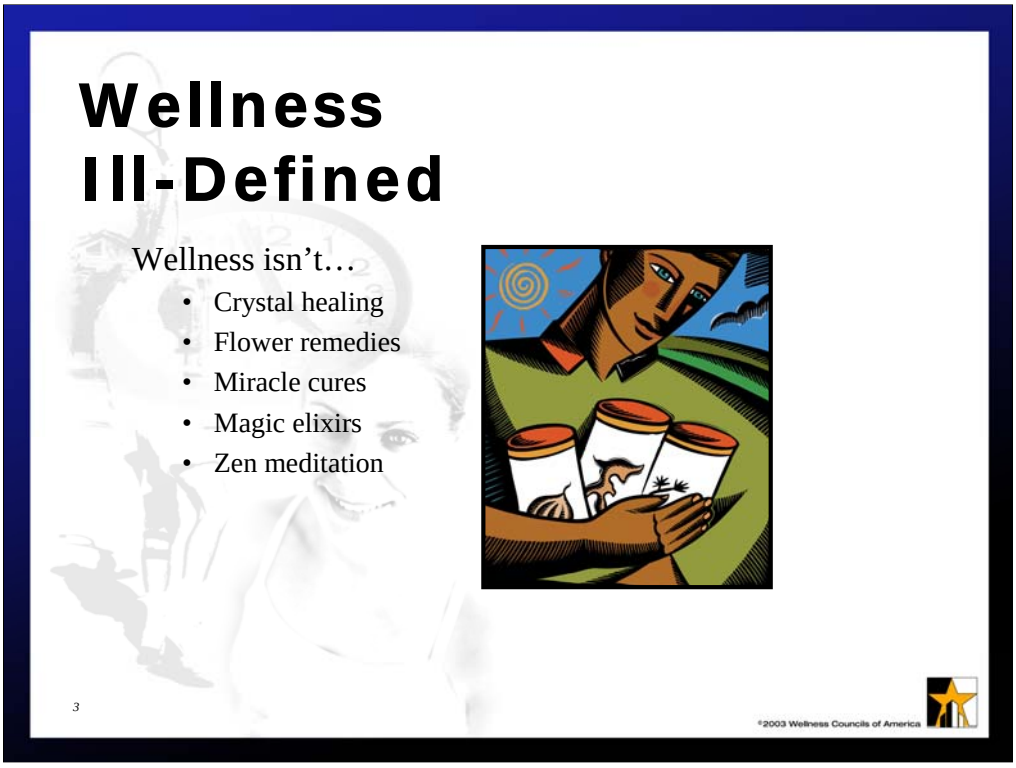

Wellness Ill-Defined

When people hear the term, "wellness," many things come to mind. Some people see images of secluded retreats where people practice crystal healing or undergo "flower remedies." Other people see the health nut that's always running around the office lecturing you about the importance of long-chain carbohydrates. Truth be told, wellness is a lot more concrete that most people think. In fact, it can be easily defined and incorporated into your life. Let's take a look at the next slide to better understand the definition of wellness.

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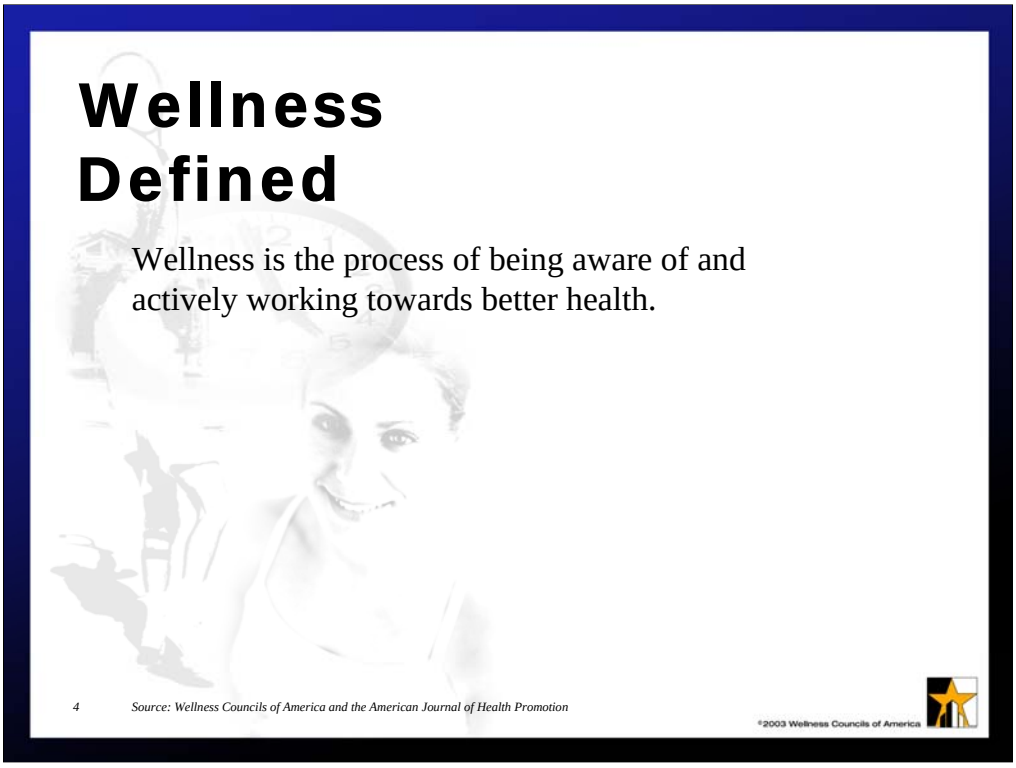

Wellness Defined

In reality, and put simply, wellness is the idea of being aware of and actively working towards better health. You'll notice that the first part of this definition deals with awareness. That's because before you can work on improving your own personal wellness, you need to understand where you're starting from. That's why personal wellness starts with health screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, and other risk factors.

The second part of the definition is all about working to improve and protect your health. When you think about wellness, think of the phrase, "Make the rest of your life the best of your life." No matter where you're starting from, or what you've done in the past, don't worry about it. Rather, assess where you are in terms of your health status, and then take the necessary steps to "Make the rest of your life the best of your life."

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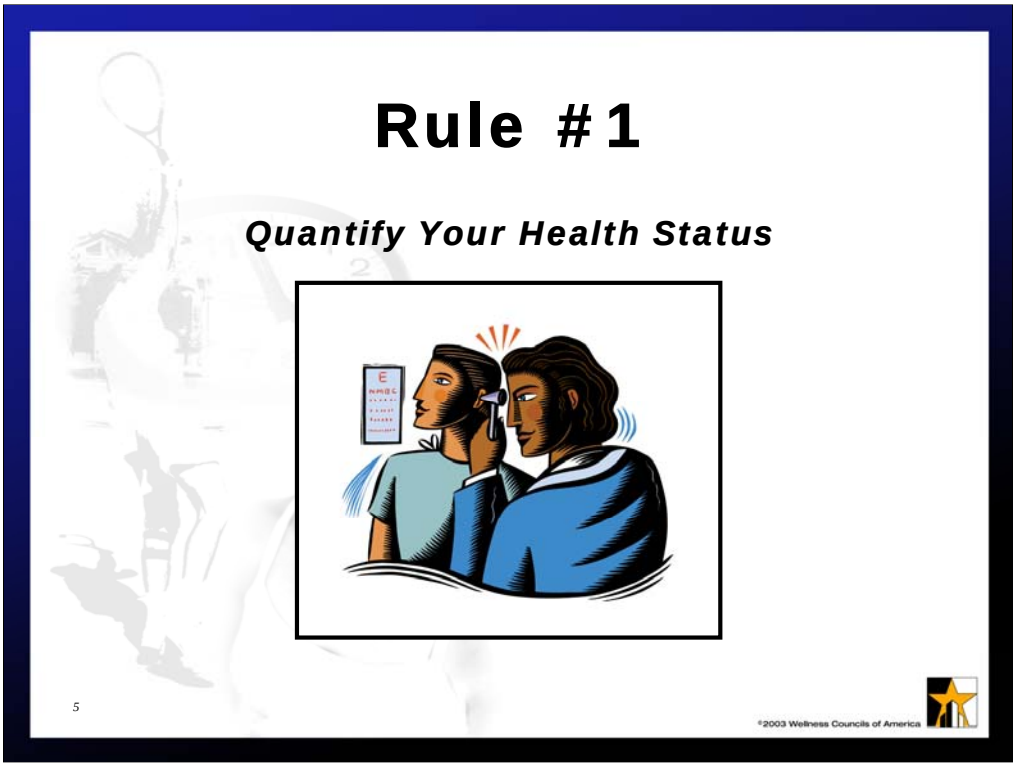

Rule #1: Quantify Your Health Status

Now that we better understand the definition of wellness, let's take a look at the first essential rule for living a healthy life. This rule is quantifying your health status.

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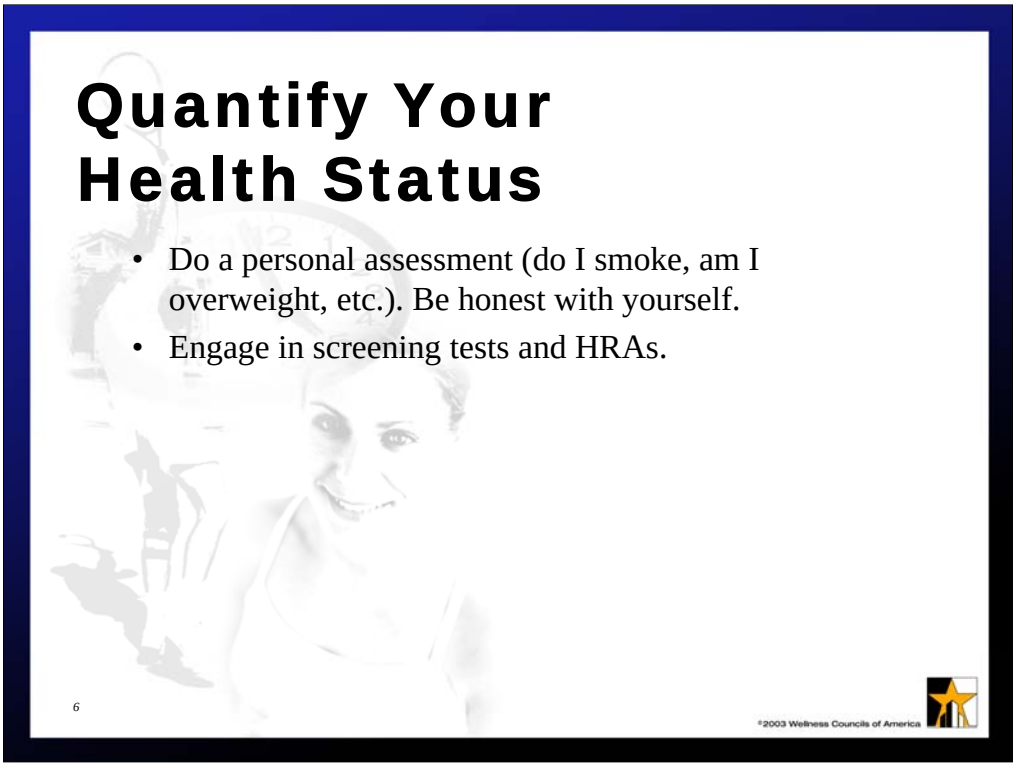

Quantify Your Health Status

As we've just talked about, Rule #1: *Quantify Your Health Status,* addresses the first part of our definition of wellness—being aware of your health. And while it's easy to believe you're healthy as a horse, you never know until you get an unbiased assessment. It isn't until we actually quantify our health status and health risks that we get a realistic picture of just how healthy we are—or aren't. Many people are often surprised by their actual health status.

Whether your health status is top-notch, or leaves much to be desired, the thing to remember is that it's never too late to begin a healthy lifestyle. Quantifying your health status means doing an honest, personal assessment, and engaging in preventive screenings and HRAs (health risk assessments).

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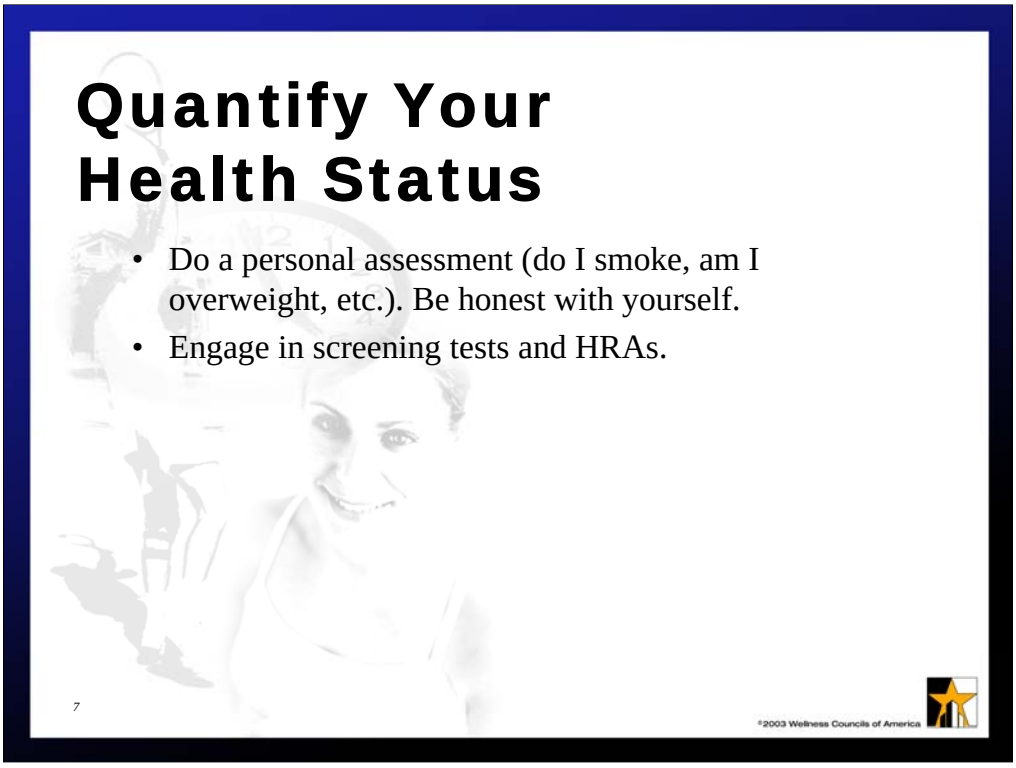

Quantify Your Health Status *(Continued)*

Quantifying your health status is a matter of addressing your current health behaviors (do I smoke, am I overweight, etc.) and other health risk factors (family history, etc.). Asking yourself questions about these topics is a key first step in honestly assessing your personal health condition. But the process doesn't end there. It's extremely important to engage in regular health screenings and to use an unbiased tool like an HRA to get a better handle on your health risks. Both the health screenings and the HRA are completely confidential and provide a great baseline for, "Making the rest of your life the best of your life."

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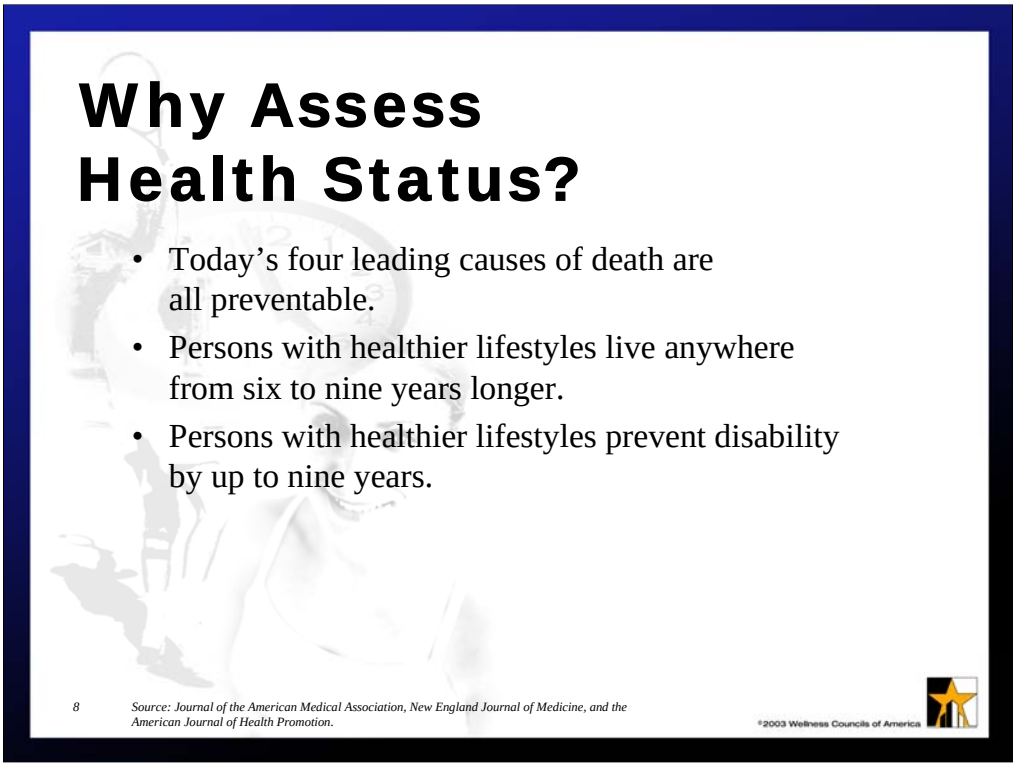


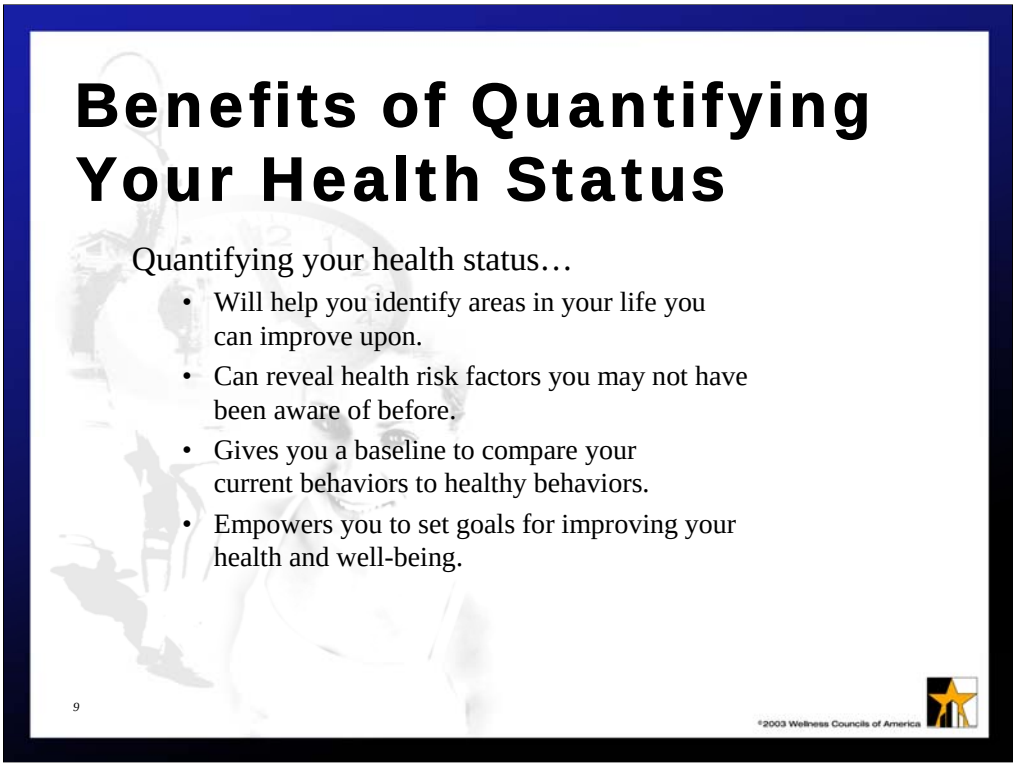
Why Assess Health Status?

By in large, the way we live is the most important determinant of our health. Relying on our genes and family history—or luck alone—as a guarantee for good health and a long life is a risk that very seldom pays off.

The fact of the matter is, the poor choices we make (i.e., bad nutrition, not exercising, smoking, etc.), account for more than half of the reasons we get sick. These choices also play a big role in the nation's leading causes of death.

Believe it or not…

- Today's four leading causes of death are all preventable—smoking, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and high-risk alcohol use.
- Persons with healthier lifestyles live anywhere from six to nine years longer.
- Persons with healthier lifestyles not only live longer, but also prevent disability by up to nine years.



Benefits of Quantifying Your Health Status

The most important part of being able to quantify your health is the feeling of empowerment is provides. Quantifying your health status gives you command over your health and means you can take steps in preventing illness and living a healthier life.

Quantifying your health status…

- Will help you identify areas in your life you can improve upon.
- Can reveal health risk factors you may not have been aware of before.
- Gives you a baseline to compare your current behaviors to healthy behaviors.
- Empowers you to set goals for improving your health and well-being.

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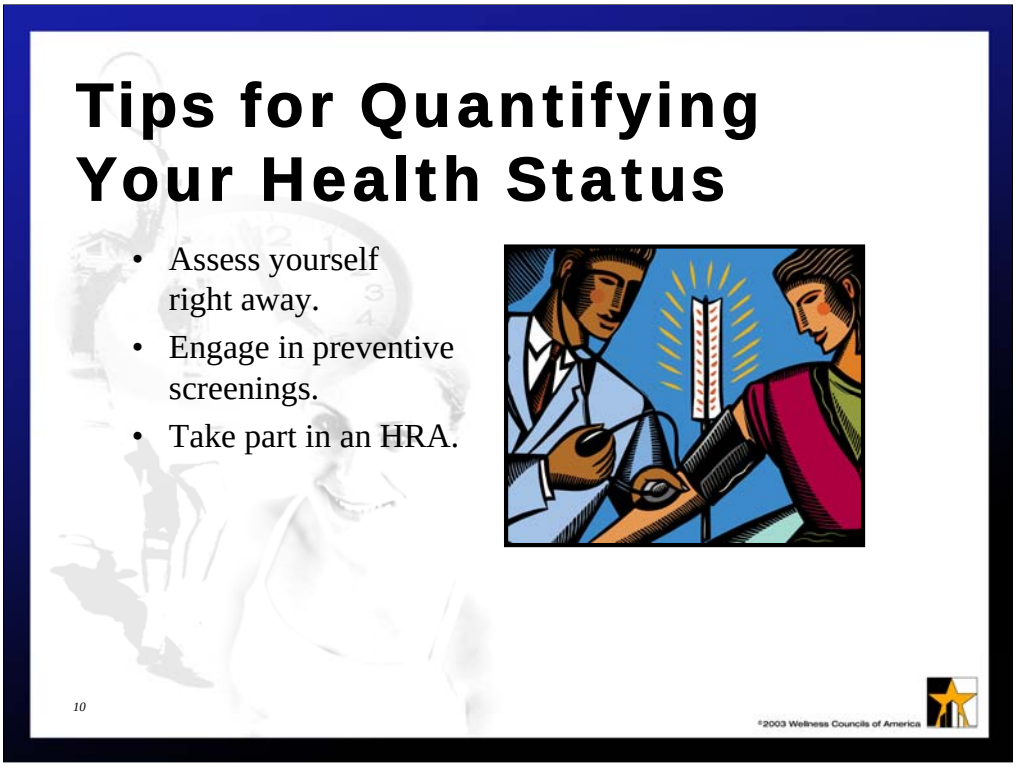

Tips for Quantifying Your Health Status

One of the most important things you can do for your health is to start learning about and quantifying your health status *right away*. Remember, your past doesn't matter; it's all about moving forward. The sooner you understand your current status, the sooner you can begin making improvements in your life. Remember, when assessing your personal health status, be honest, you're only hurting yourself if you do anything otherwise.

The next thing you'll want to do is get regular health screenings. Regular screenings are an important part of getting and staying healthy. Regular screenings can help you detect possible life-threatening illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, or high blood pressure—all of which can be hard to detect without some sort of screening.

Regular screenings should include…

- Cancer
- Glucose—for diabetes
- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol
- Osteoporosis
- Vision

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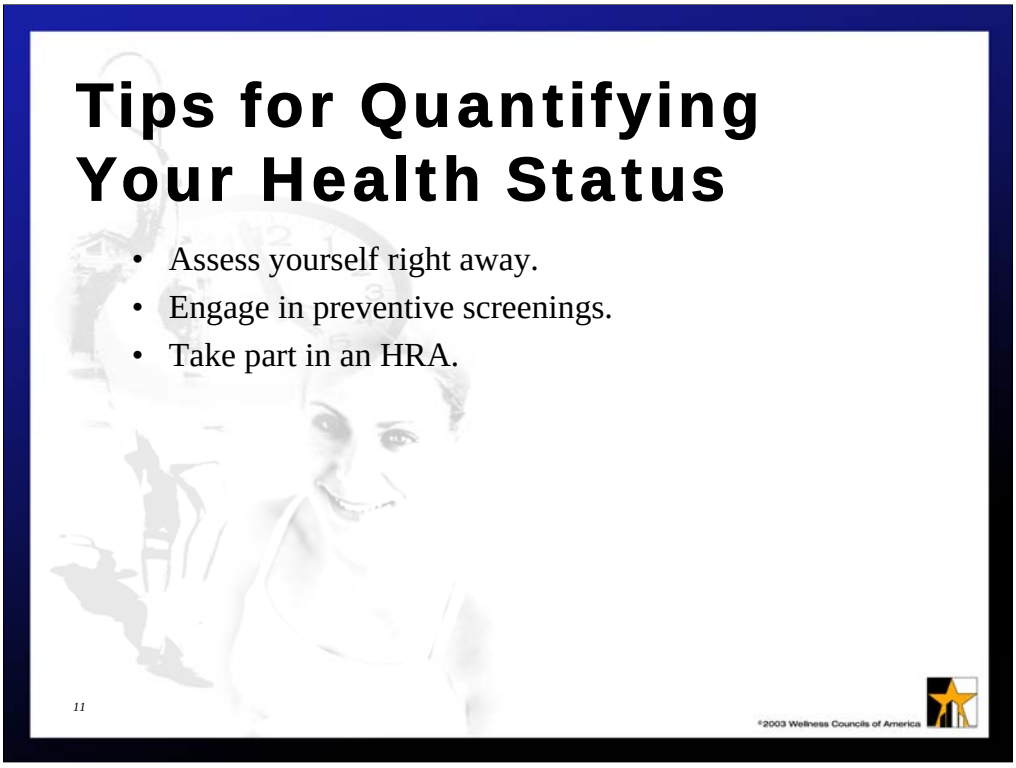

Tips for Quantifying Your Health Status *(Continued)*

As we mentioned before, how we live is the major determinant of the quality of our health. It's fairly common knowledge that some risk factors such as smoking or problem drinking affect our health in negative ways. Others such as poor nutrition, being overweight, or sun tanning aren't as clear-cut for many of people. That's why taking part in a health risk appraisal is important in helping you determine your health status.

A health risk appraisal is a questionnaire that assesses your lifestyle habits as determinants of the health risks you may be facing. HRAs basically measure your health habits, using them to determine your level of health risk, and provide crucial information you can use to begin changing your health behaviors for the better.

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Rule #2: Pay Attention to What You Eat

The foods we eat affect our health in a number of ways. Nutrition—good or bad—plays a major role in our overall health. Poor nutrition increases our chances for a number of diseases and serious medical conditions. Good nutrition can keep us strong and healthy, provide energy for life, and protect our health well into our golden years.

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Food in America Today

Americans are fighting the battle of their lives—the battle against obesity. For the most part, it's been a losing battle. Americans, over the past century, have become larger and larger—so much so that overweight and obesity are of epidemic proportions. One of the contributing factors to America's rapid weight gain is the food we eat.

The following statistics shed light on how we approach food in America today.

- The typical American now consumes three hamburgers and four orders of French fries every week.
- Americans now spend more money on fast food than on higher education, personal computers, computer software, or new cars.
- In 1999, of the 30 fastest growing US franchises, 12 were fast food—only three were nutrition and fitness.

Source: Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser.

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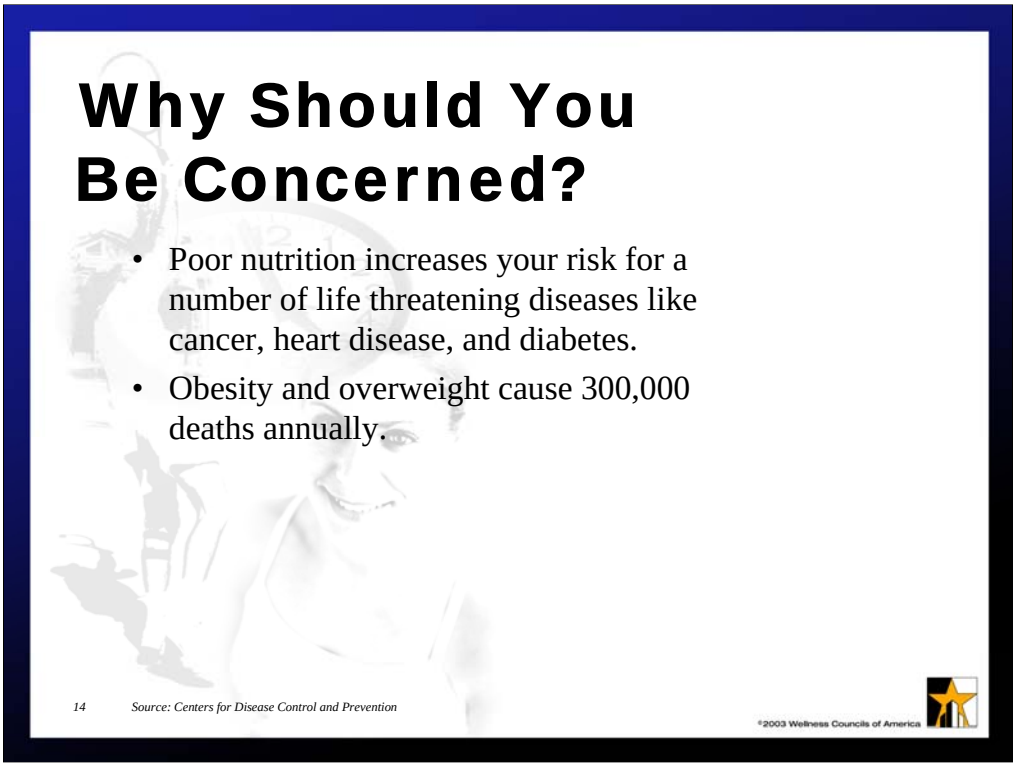

Why Should You Be Concerned?

While most of us probably give little thought to the food we eat on a daily basis, it's an important factor we need to be concerned about. Our nutrition plays an important role in our overall health and quality of life.

As a determinant of our health and quality of life, our nutrition either protects us from, or increases our chances for, a number of life threatening diseases.
Consider this…

- At least 1/3 of all cancers are attributable to poor diet, physical inactivity, and overweight.
- Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating also contribute to obesity, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes.
- Overweight and obesity are responsible for at least 300,000 deaths annually.

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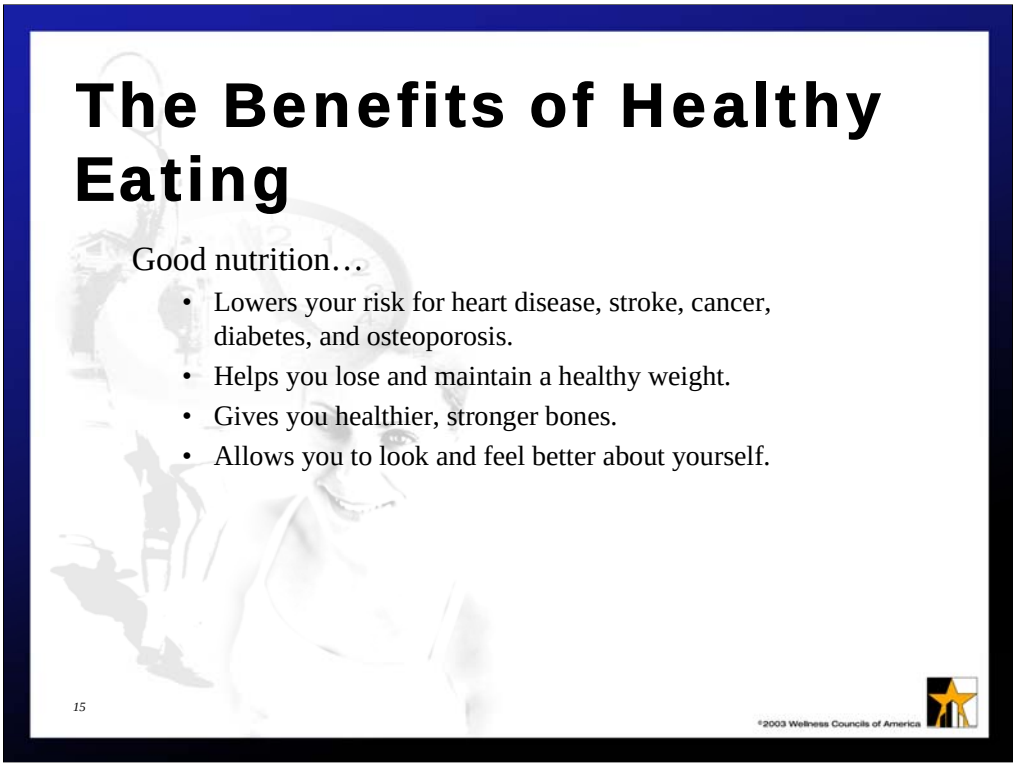

The Benefits of Healthy Eating

While poor nutrition leads to a variety of negative health consequences, proper nutrition maximizes the quality of your life. Good nutrition lowers your risk for many chronic diseases including heart disease, stroke, some types of cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis. In addition, eating right can help you maintain a healthy weight, gives you healthier and stronger bones—an important factor as you age—and also helps you look and feel better about yourself. When you get right down to it, eating right is one of the most essential things you can do to lead a healthy life. Let's take a look at some tips for eating better.

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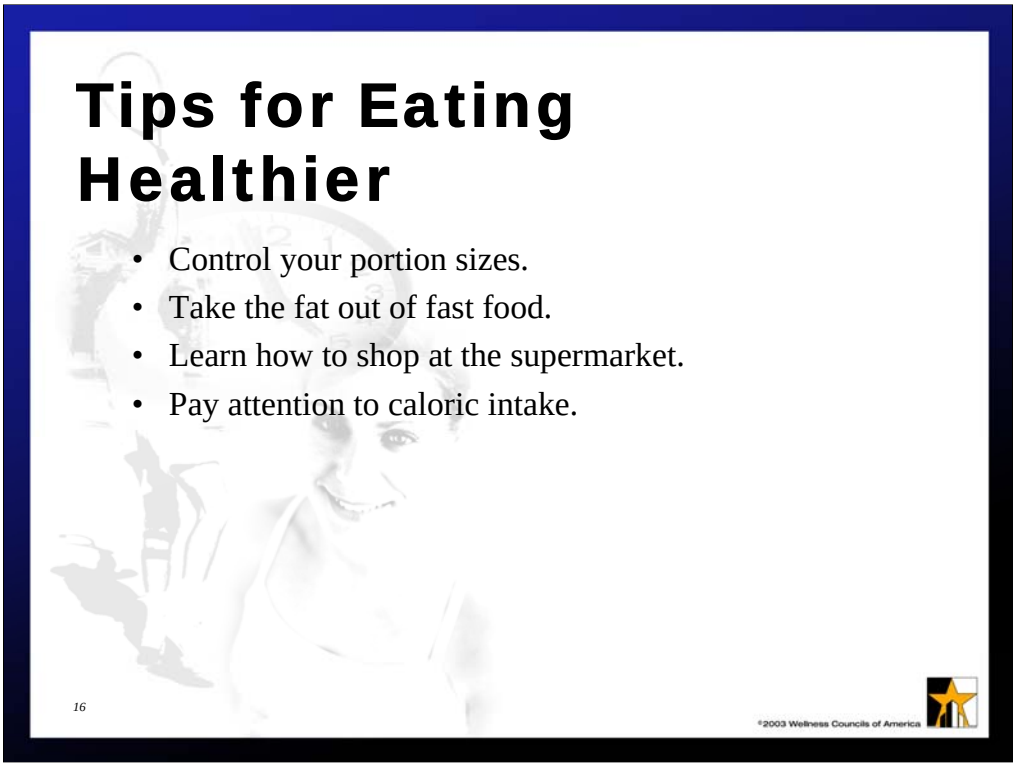

Tips for Eating Healthier

Eating healthier doesn't mean we have to give up all of our favorite foods and resign ourselves to eating beans, rice, and water for the rest of our days. Even small changes in our nutritional habits can go a long way towards improving our health. The following tips are designed to help you eat healthier and live longer.

Control your portion sizes.

In today's "bigger is better" society, portion sizes are out of control. Part of healthier eating is learning not only what to eat, but also how much to eat.
Check out some of these examples of proper portion sizes.

- Three ounces of cheese is about the size of a single deck of cards.
- One serving of meat, fish, or poultry is about the size of a computer mouse.
- One-half cup of cut fruit or vegetables, pasta, or rice is about the size of a small fist.

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Tips for Eating Healthier

Take the fat out of fast food.

Fast foods are notorious for being high in fat and loaded with empty calories. The ability to take the fat out of fast food is key to staying healthy. Here are some tips to help you take the fat out of fast food.

- **Request a nutritional analysis brochure**. Avoid the highest fat items.
- **Don't super size your meals**. Super sizing can nearly triple the calorie content of your meal.
- **Watch the extras**. Excess cheese and sauces can be packed with fat and calories.

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Tips for Eating Healthier

Learn how to shop at the supermarket.

Nutrition should be your guiding force as you navigate the grocery aisles. But shopping at the grocery store can be a difficult task if you're searching for nutritious food items. The following tips will help you shop healthier the next time you go to the supermarket.

- **Don't browse the aisles**. Browsing the aisles can lead to impulse buys. Usually these purchases are high-fat, "taste good" foods.
- **Make a list**. Thinking about what you need to purchase will not only lead to more informed purchases, but may also save you some money.
- **Don't go shopping hungry**. Just like going to a restaurant when you're hungry, going to the supermarket on an empty stomach can cause you to buy too much food, or worse yet, graze while you shop.

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Tips for Eating Healthier *(Continued)*

- **Go shopping alone**. If you shop alone, you'll be better able to maintain your commitment to buying healthy food. Sometimes, children can influence you to buy things you wouldn't otherwise purchase.
- **Don't be fooled by marketing claims—read food labels carefully**. Sometimes "low-fat" or "no-fat" foods aren't all they're cracked up to be. There's no substitute for reading food labels. Pay particular attention to the number of servings in each package.
- **Be careful in check out lines**. Unhealthy, impulse food items are notoriously placed at the checkout. Don't get duped.

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Tips for Eating Healthier

Pay attention to caloric intake.

USDA statistics show that American caloric intake has risen from 1,854 calories daily to 2,002 calories daily over the last 20 years. That's approximately 148 more calories per day—or theoretically—an extra 15 pounds per year. Take a look at these quick guidelines on caloric intake. They'll help make sure you stay within your recommended range.

- 1,500-2000 calories for women.
- 2,000-2,500 calories for men.
- Anything under 1,000 calories is considered a starvation diet.

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Rule #3: Exercise Every Day

People tend to think of an "elixir of life" as medicine in a bottle, a "magic bullet" as some kind of pill, and the "fountain of youth" as mystical waters. But exercise may come closer than anything else we know of as the best way to become and stay beautiful, strong, healthy, energetic, and happy. It may be the single best route to a long and active life.

5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life

Exercise in America Today

America has become a nation of sitters. We sit when we work, we sit when we drive, and we sit when we watch TV. In a cruel twist of irony, America's motto has become, "Don't just do something, sit there."

When we look at the numbers, about 170 million Americans aren't getting enough healthy physical activity in their daily lives. One hundred seventy million people is a lot—in fact, if all these people joined hands, they'd circle the earth almost eight times.

What's more, another quarter of our population—or 42 million Americans—don't get **ANY** healthy physical activity at all on a daily basis. That's enough people to fill Pasadena's Rose Bowl more than 400 times.

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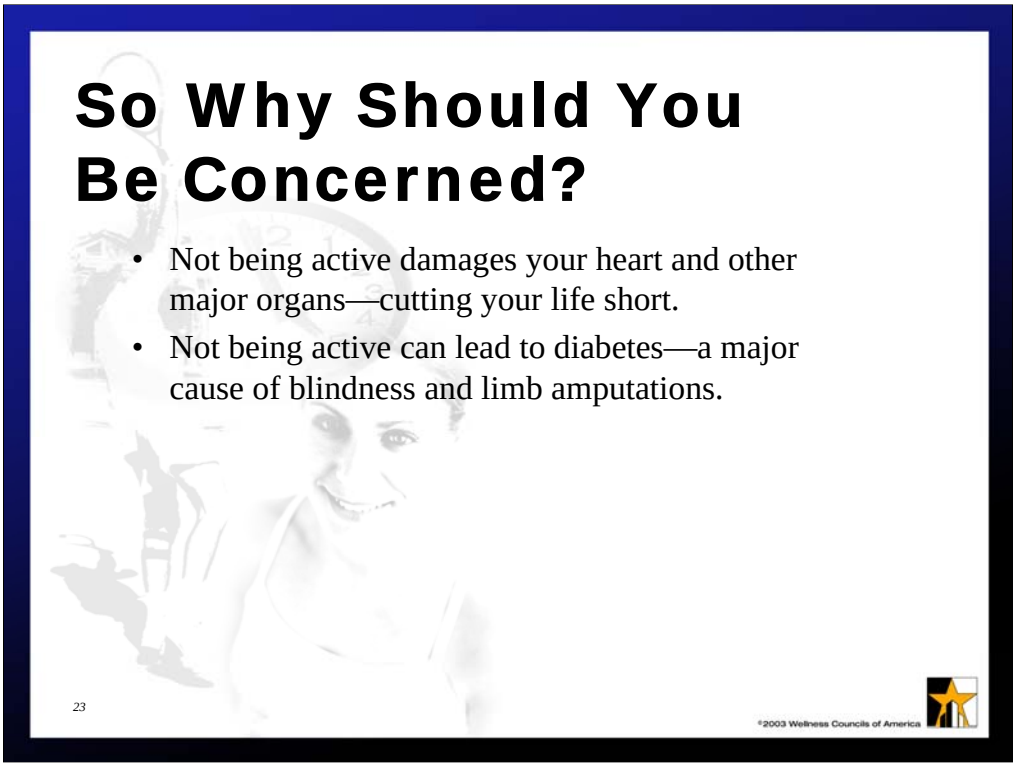

So Why Should You Be Concerned?

Not exercising damages your heart. Exercise helps keep blood pressure low, and cholesterol at healthy levels—two important factors in heart disease. Don't think that's a big deal? More than 2,600 Americans die each day because of heart disease—that's one death every 33 seconds.

Our lack of physical activity also increases our chances of developing diabetes. If not diagnosed and treated early, diabetes can have dire consequences including blindness, heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, birth defects, and amputations. Don't think it's a problem? Consider the fact that approximately 800,000 new cases of diabetes are diagnosed each year. What's more, about half of the people who have diabetes don't even know it.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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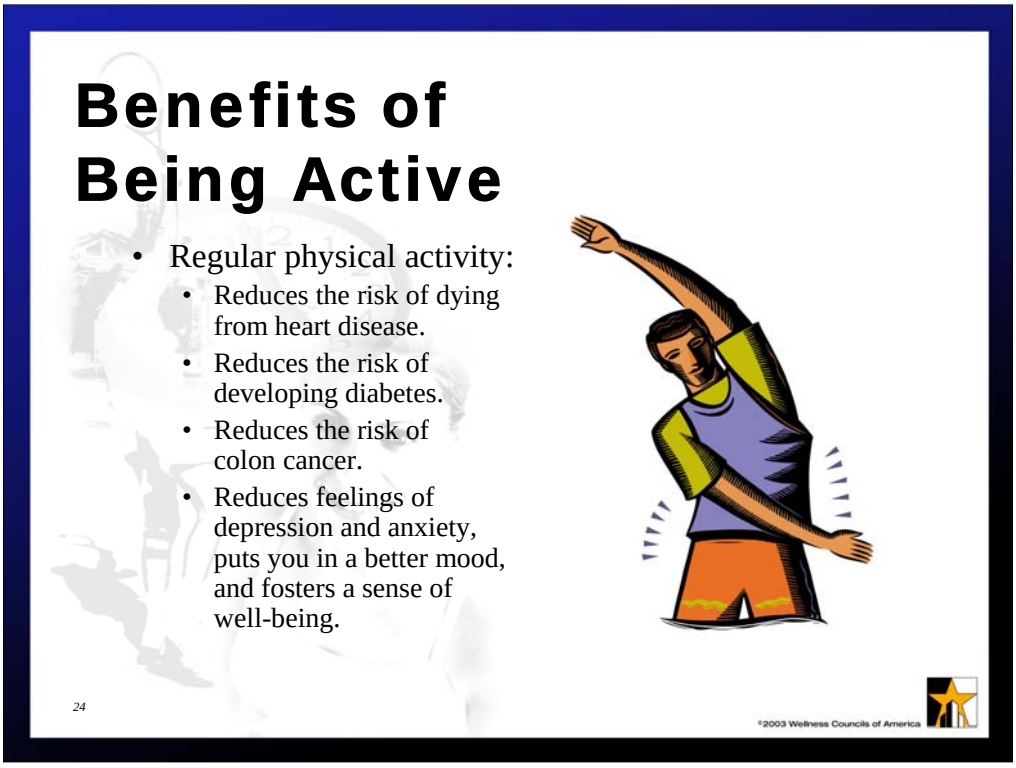

Benefits of Being Active

Regular physical activity is important for disease treatment and prevention. It can help prevent or treat many diseases such as stroke, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, arthritis, and osteoporosis. In fact, studies indicate that physical activity can reduce your risk of these diseases by as much as 30 to 50%.

Being physically active can have a dramatic impact on a person's mental health and overall quality of life. Regular physical activity reduces feelings of depression and anxiety, puts you in a better mood, and fosters a sense of well-being. The feeling of being fit that comes from regular exercise goes a long way toward imparting a strong sense of well-being, a positive outlook, and a feeling of "can-do" confidence.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life

Tips for Getting Active

Getting physically active doesn't mean that you need to spend hours and hours at a gym. In fact, getting physically active may be easier than you think. The following tips are designed to help you find ways to incorporate more physical activity into your daily life.

- **Commit yourself.** Make a commitment to yourself that you will start exercising regularly. Sometimes, actually signing your name to a "contract" you make with yourself can be helpful.
- **Set goals.** Setting goals gives you something to work for. And, as with anything in life, if you don't set a goal, you'll rarely reach your destination.
- **Schedule exercise during your day.** Just like you make time to meet with clients, eat lunch, or pay bills, you need to schedule exercise into your day if you expect to do it regularly.
- **Exercise with a friend.** Plain and simple, an exercise buddy keeps you accountable, plus, by exercising with a friend, you'll be able to share in your successes.

5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life

Rule #4: Protect Your Sleep At All Costs

Sleep is an important part of our overall health, however, most Americans aren't getting nearly enough of it. In fact, it's been estimated that millions of Americans are suffering from a variety of sleep disorders, which are likely affecting their health and well-being.

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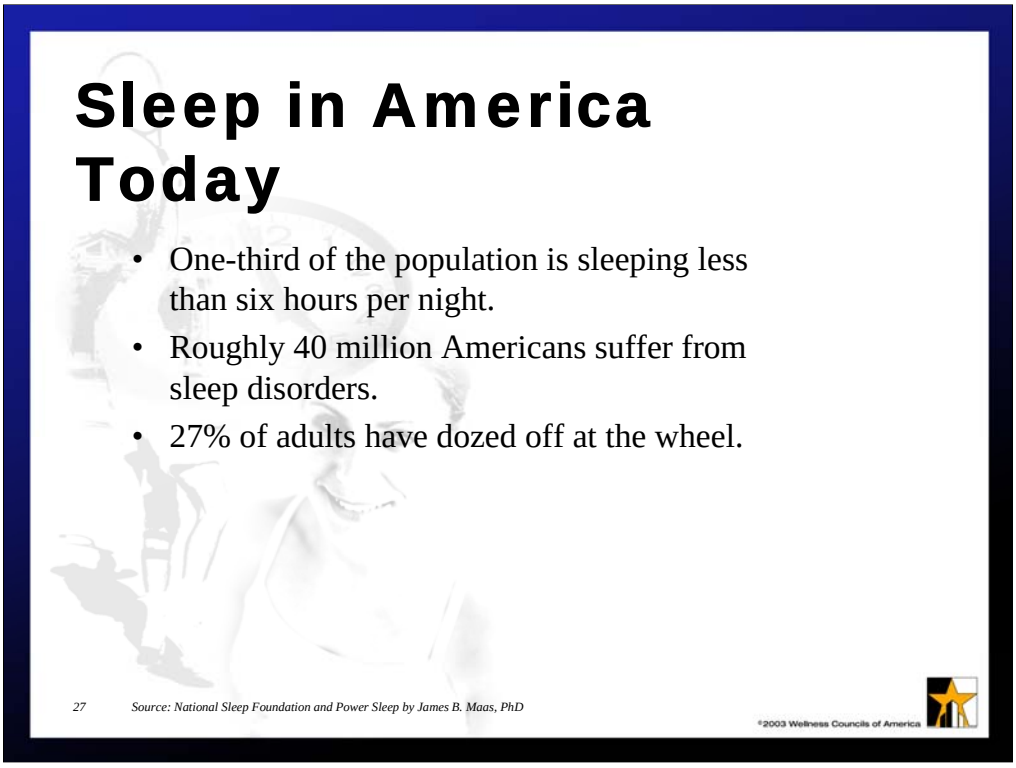

Sleeping in America Today

The following eye opening statistics reveal Americans' sleep habits and just how dangerous our lack of sleep can be.

One-third of the population is sleeping less than six hours per night. This is significantly less than the recommended eight hours and contributes to what many experts call a sleep deficit, which can be both dangerous and unhealthy. Additionally, those Americans who *are* sleeping are doing so with some significant challenges. Roughly 40 million Americans suffer from sleep disorders like insomnia, sleep apnea, and restless leg syndrome.

Americans' lack of sleep contributes to many dangerous situations like job injuries and traffic accidents. In fact, 27% of adults have dozed off at the wheel and the National Sleep Foundation reports that 37% of Americans report being so sleepy during the day that it interferes with daily activities like work.

Source: National Sleep Foundation and Power Sleep by James B. Maas, PhD.

5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life

How a Lack of Sleep Affects Us

Although it may seem more like an annoyance when you don't get enough sleep at night, lack of sleep has a negative effect on your overall health and well-being. Sleep is an important physiological need that, if absent, can be very dangerous. It has been estimated that up to 50% of sleep apnea patients have high blood pressure. It has also recently been shown that sleep apnea contributes to high blood pressure. Risk for heart attack and stroke may also increase in those with sleep apnea.

Consider also that a lack of sleep can be dangerous and deadly. Millions of individuals struggle to stay alert at home, in school, on the job, and on the road. Tragically, fatigue contributes to more than 100,000 police-reported highway crashes, causing 71,000 injuries and 1,500 deaths each year in the United States alone.

Source: National Sleep Foundation.

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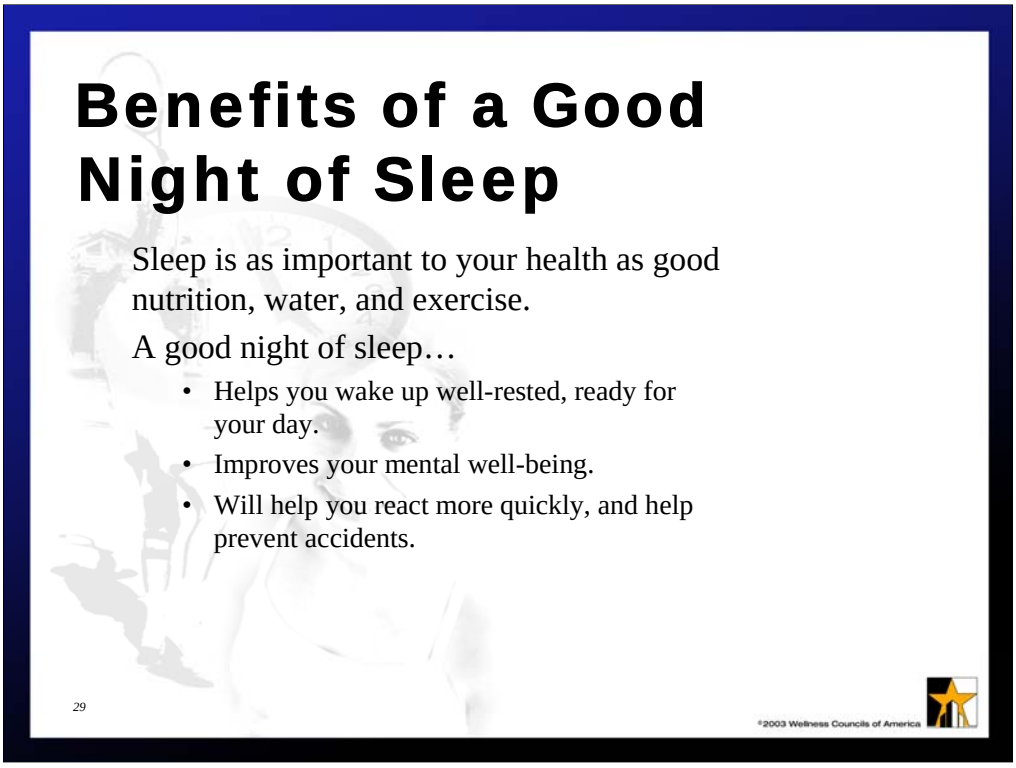

Benefits of a Good Night of Sleep

Sleep is an important physiological need. Our bodies need sleep; it's not just something to do at night. In fact, sleep is as important to your health as good nutrition, water, and exercise.

A good night of sleep…

- **Helps you wake up well-rested, ready for your day.** It may sound obvious, but proper sleep simply helps you wake up well-rested and more ready for your day. Feeling more alert will help you achieve more and develop stronger relationships with those closest to you.
- **Improves your mental well-being.** Getting enough sleep can be a key factor in having a positive outlook on life.
- **Will help you react more quickly, and help prevent accidents.** There's no doubt about it, getting enough sleep means we'll be better prepared to quickly react in dangerous or even life-threatening situations.

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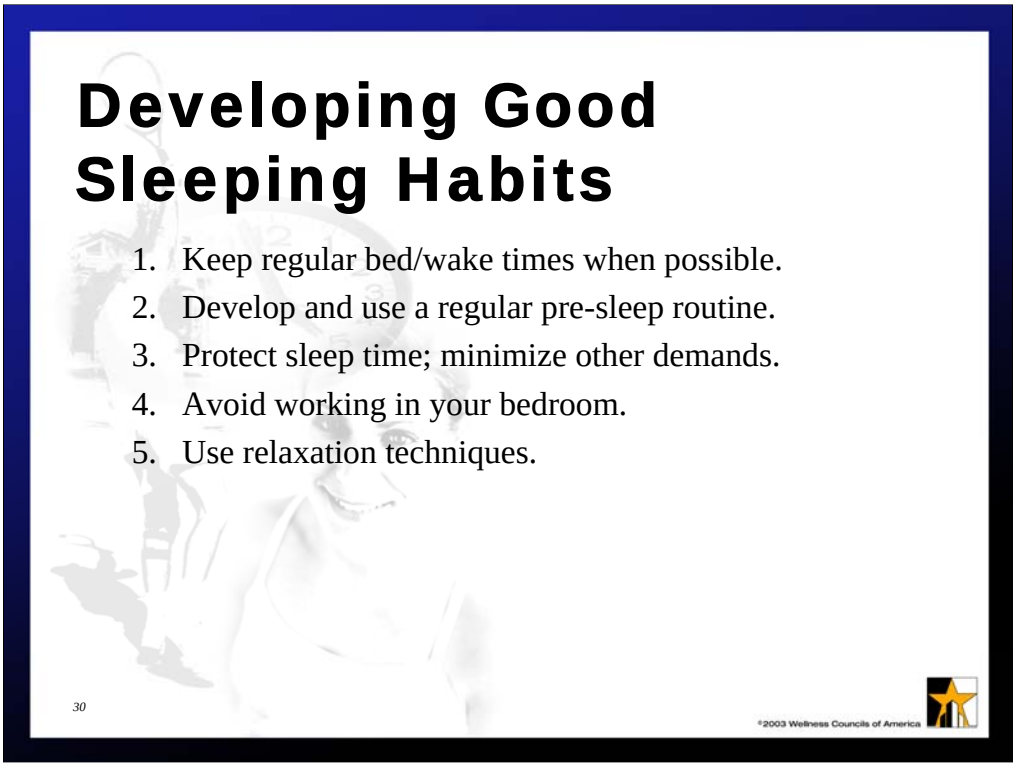

Developing Good Sleeping Habits

For some of us, it may be hard to remember the last really good night of sleep we had. If that's the case, the following tips might help you catch a few more Zs at night—helping you to wake up well rested, ready for your day.

1. **Keep regular bed/wake times when possible.** Having regular bed/wake times allows your body to develop a sleep schedule.
2. **Develop and use a regular pre-sleep routine.** A pre-sleep routine can improve sleep because you condition your body to know that sleep is on its way.
3. **Protect sleep time; minimize other demands.** If you're going to get the right amount of sleep you simply have to make sleep a priority.
4. **Avoid working in your bedroom.** By keeping your bedroom for sleep only, you naturally relax when you enter this space.
5. **Use relaxation techniques.** Whether it's progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation, relaxation techniques can help you fall asleep fast.

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Rule #5: Quit Smoking

Smoking will likely be the worst plague the world has ever known. And while quitting smoking may be one of the most difficult things you'll ever do, the health benefits you'll derive from kicking the habit are significant. Let's take a look a smoking in America today and examine some tips for quitting successfully.

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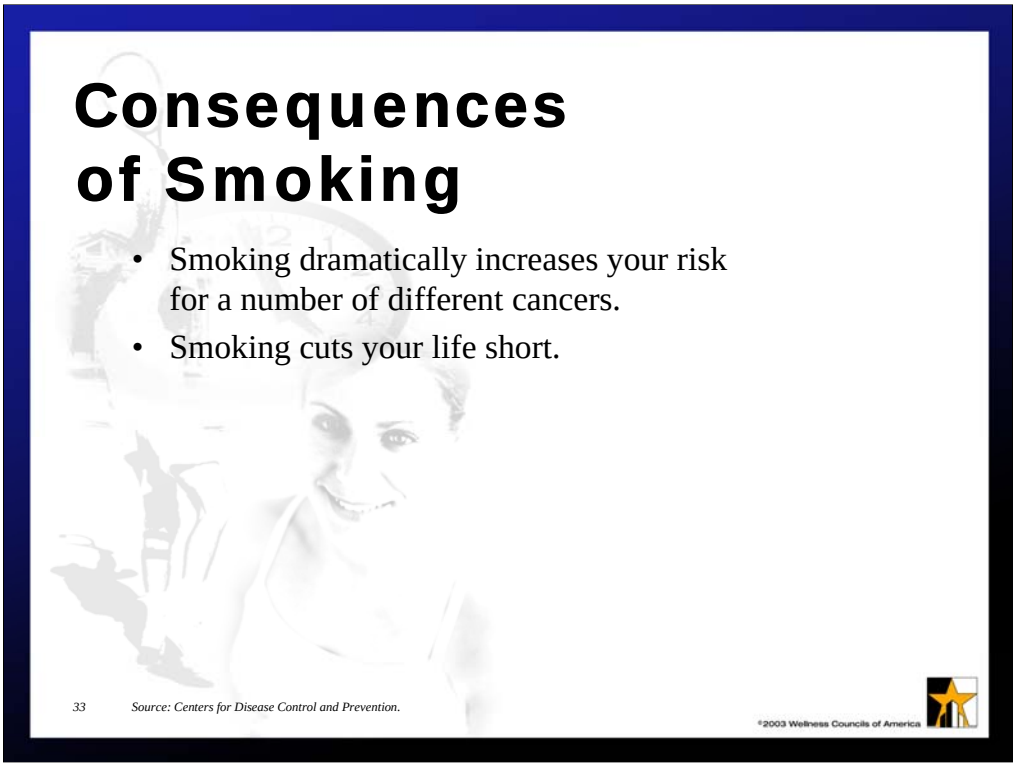
Smoking in America Today

Although smoking rates have been declining dramatically over the past 40 years, smoking is still a very serious health concern in the United States today. Not only do 46 million Americans currently smoke, but they smoke a lot. In fact, Americans have consumed 17 trillion cigarettes since the first Surgeon General's Report on Smoking in 1964. To put into perspective just how many cigarettes that is, if laid end-to-end, that many cigarettes would measure 900 million miles—or approximately 1,800 trips to the moon and back.



Consequences of Smoking

In 1982, the Surgeon General released a report titled, *The Health Consequences of Smoking*. The report stated that, "Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of cancer mortality in the United States." Very little has changed in the past 20 years.

Smoking dramatically increases your risk for a number of cancers including cancers of the lung, stomach, cervix, mouth, and kidney—to name just a few.

Consider also that, according to the CDC, tobacco use contributes to more than 440,000 deaths annually. In addition, smoking results in more than 5.6 million years of potential life lost each year.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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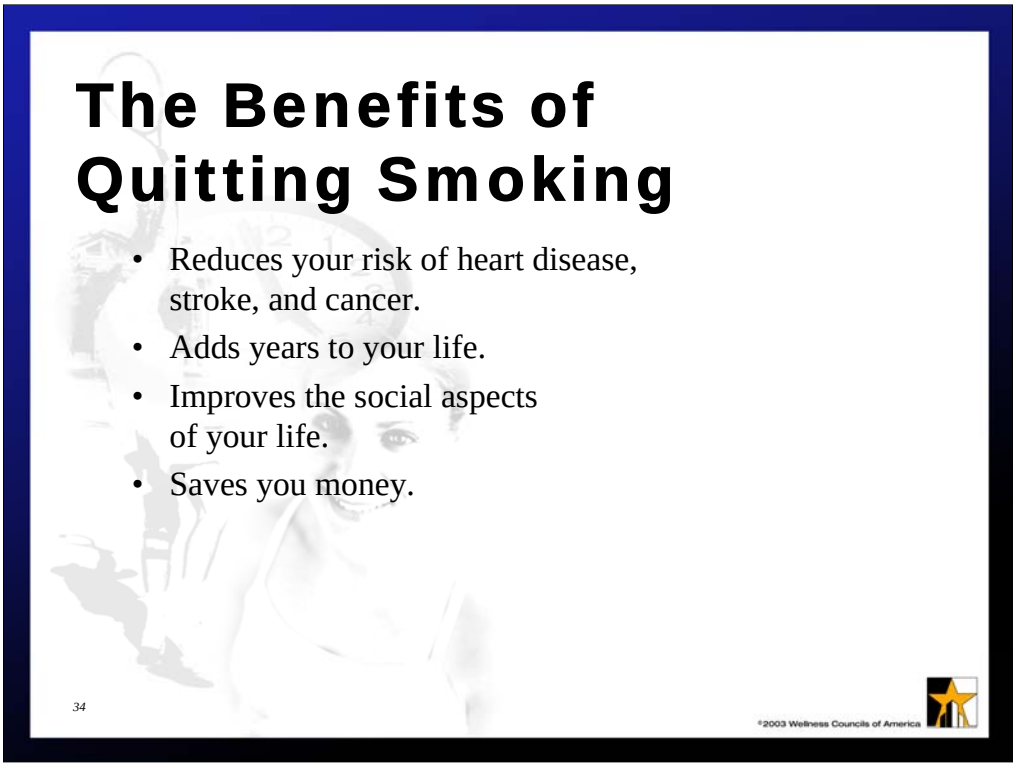


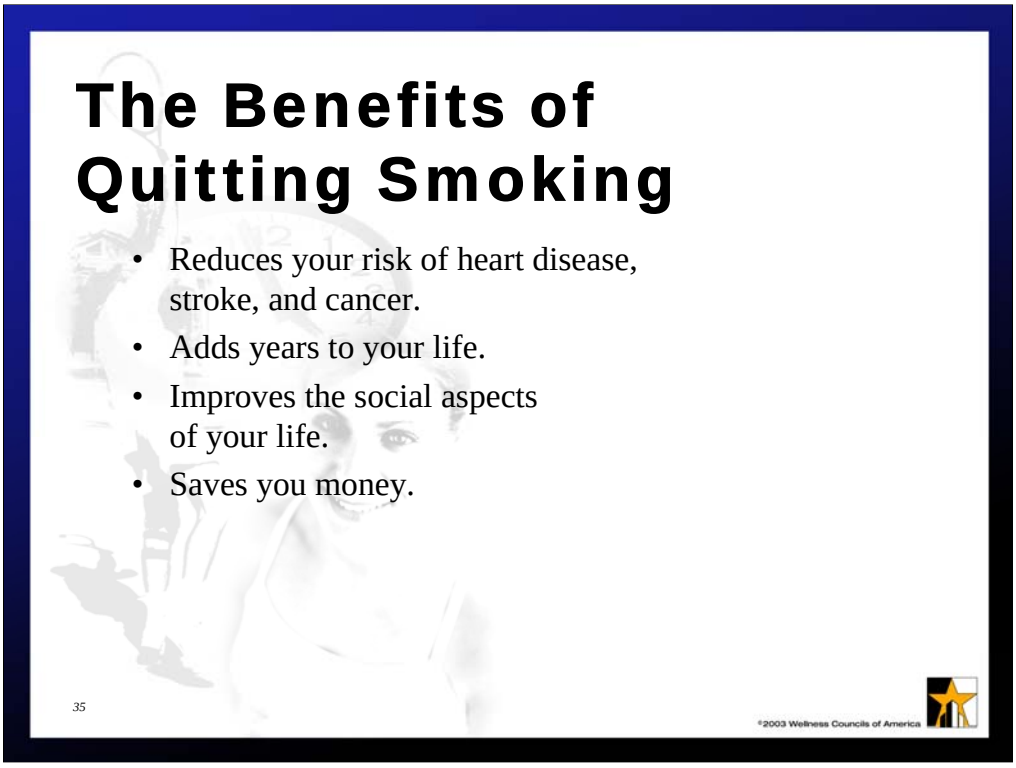
The Benefits of Quitting Smoking

Cigarette smoking is the most important preventable cause of premature death in the United States. Evidence indicates that chronic exposure to smoke, direct or environmental (second-hand smoke), increases your risk for heart disease and stroke.

In fact, other studies demonstrate that smokers' risk of heart attack and stroke is more than twice that of non-smokers.

Source: American Heart Association

5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life



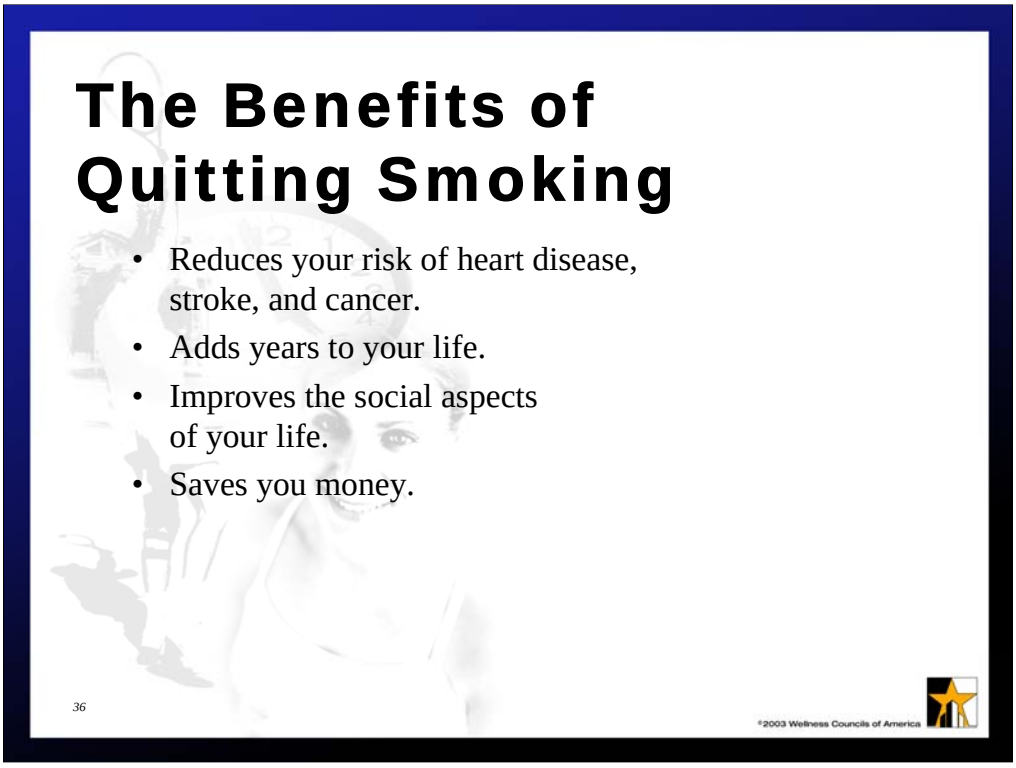
The Benefits of Quitting Smoking *(Continued)*

Quitting smoking is possibly one of the most important steps you can take to a longer, healthier life. Consider the following benefits of quitting smoking.

- **Reduces your risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer.** Study after study shows that quitting smoking greatly reduces your risk of dying from heart disease, stroke, and cancer.
- **Adds years to your life.** It's been estimated that non-smokers live an average of 13 years longer than smokers. But if you quit smoking, after 15 years, your chances of dying prematurely return to about that of a non-smoker.

Source: American Heart Association

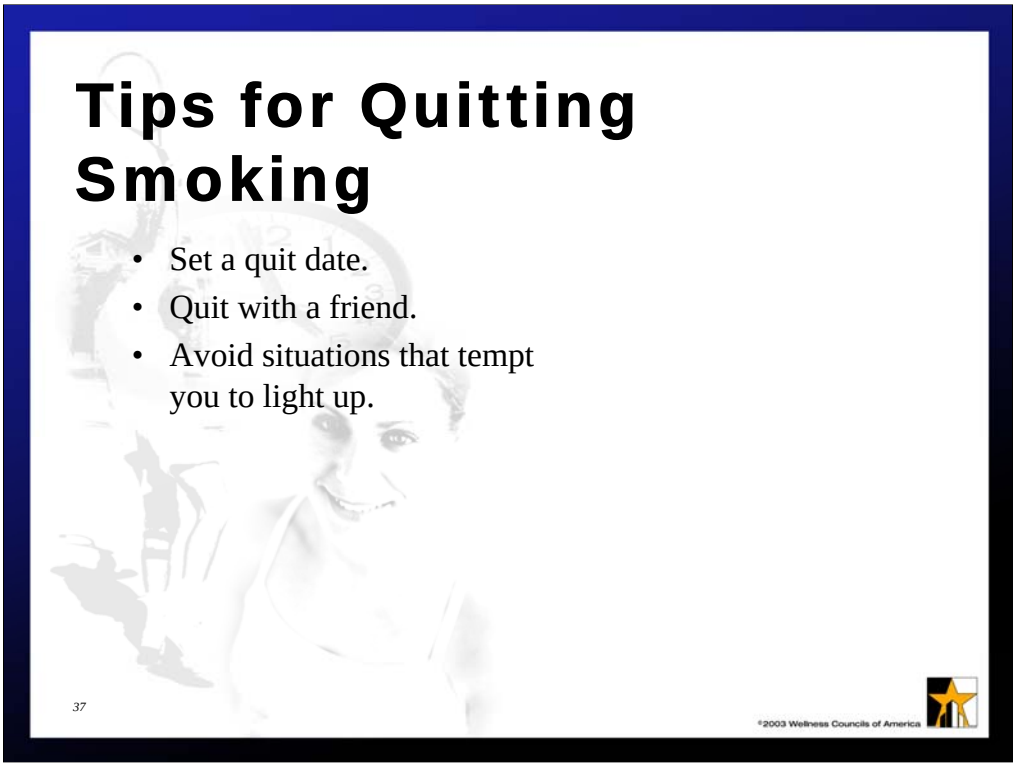
5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life



The Benefits of Quitting Smoking *(Continued)*

- **Improves the social aspects of your life.** Imagine your clothes not smelling like cigarette smoke, not having to sit in the smoking section at your favorite restaurant, or not having to leave the party to smoke outside all by yourself. The fact is, most of world doesn't smoke. Join them.
- **Saves you money.** It's been estimated that a pack-a-day smoker spends nearly $11,000 on cigarettes over the course of a decade. That means after 30 years of smoking, you'll spend nearly $35,000 on cigarettes—enough money to purchase a brand new BMW.

5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life

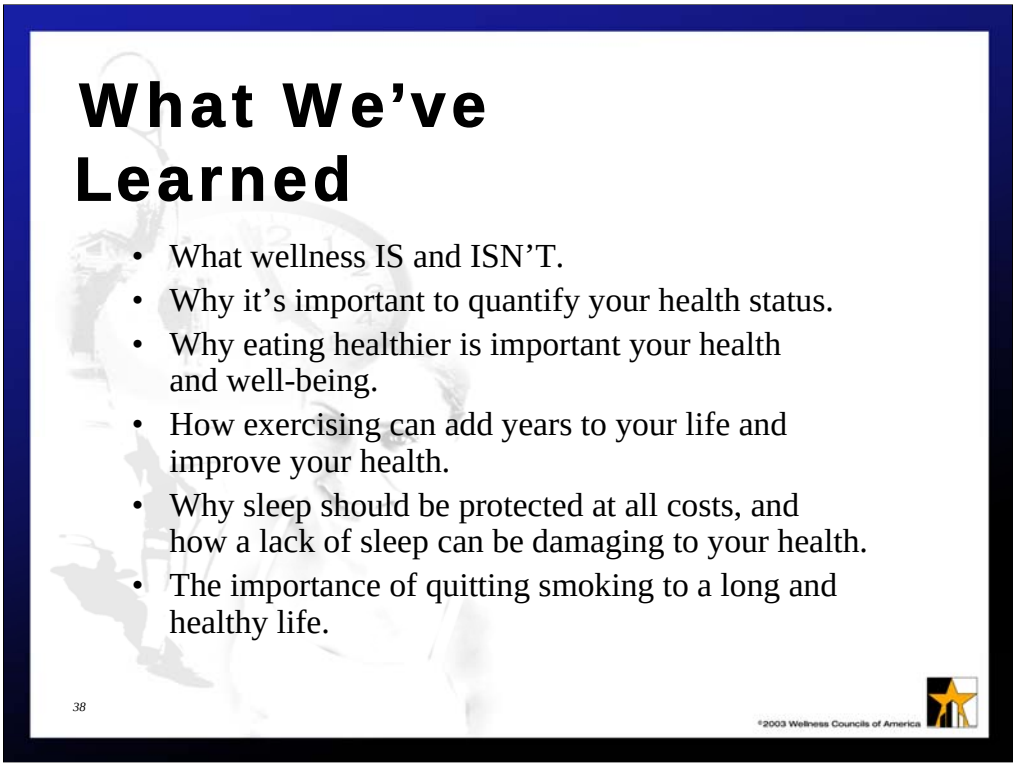


Tips for Quitting Smoking

As mentioned before, quitting smoking is one of the most difficult things a person could choose to do. With that in mind, here are three key strategies to implement if you are planning on quitting smoking.

- **Set a quit date.** Setting a quit date will allow you to better prepare yourself for the challenge of quitting smoking. You'll be able to tell your friends and family, throw out your ashtrays, and prepare yourself mentally the night before.
- **Quit with a friend.** There's nothing like the element of accountability when you're quitting smoking. Quitting smoking with a friend will not only be encouraging, but you'll also be able to lean on each other during the tough times.
- **Avoid situations that tempt you to light up.** Avoiding situations that tempt you to smoke will be a key factor in quitting smoking successfully. This may include avoiding friends who smoke, avoiding places like bars or restaurants where smoking is prevalent, or finding different ways of dealing with stress. If you can minimize the outside factors that tempt you to light up, you'll be on your way to a smoke-free life.

5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life



What We've Learned

In this presentation, we've talked about the *5 Essential Rules for Living a Healthy Life*. We've talked about the very real health consequences of ignoring these rules, as well as the benefits of following them. Lastly, we've examined ways you can go about implementing these five rules into your daily life.

The 5 Essential Rules of Living a Healthy life are…

1.Quantify your health status.

2.Pay attention to what you eat.

3.Exercise everyday.

4.Protect your sleep at all costs.

5.Quit smoking.