

HEALING HABITS

1. Drink a minimum of 3 to 4 pints of water per day. It is important to stress that due to the variable water standards in tap water (which means pollutant levels maybe too high in your area) it is best to either filter or distil your tap water before drinking it as an extra precaution. That way you can be sure of the quality of what you drink. You can also boil your water but this does not provide the same safeguards. Good filtration and distillation will remove heavy metals, hydrocarbons, chlorine, pesticides and bacteria whilst retaining the essential minerals in the water.

2. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables every day to ensure a good source of nutrients which will boost your immunity. However, because of the food degradation and nutritional devaluation that is taking place as a result of the use of pesticides, insecticides and herbicides it is wise to wash all your fruits thoroughly in approx 2 or 3 pints of warm water with 2 tablespoons of vinegar and after drying them keep them in the fridge. This simple precaution will help neutralise the negative effects of these substances. Pesticides, insecticides and herbicides are powerful anti nutrients (substances that block and work against nutrients), and therefore we need to minimise their impact on our health. With vegetables always take off and throw away outer leaves as they carry the biggest deposit of these dangerous chemicals. Then wash well (which can also be done in a vinegar solution). Where you can, buy organic fruit and vegetables; this will help to diminish the toxic load on the body.

3. Every cell/muscle/organ and function in the body depends on oxygen for healthy performance and so developing the art of breathing fully and deeply is a vital therapeutic tool. Abdominal breathing (as opposed to shallow chest breathing) is the key to unlocking so many negative states such as stress, anxiety, phobias, paranoia and even some psychoses. Take your body's need for oxygen seriously and practice at least 5 minutes a day to breathe fully and deeply. Once you acquire the habit of breathing properly, your Medulla Oblongata (which is the part of the brain responsible for all involuntary and on-going essential activities in the body) will maintain your new pattern of breathing. This will promote better all round health.

4. Good mental health is multi factorial and depends on many things; it is a synergy of mind, body and spirit. However, if we are to provide the best possible platform for emotional and psychological growth then our nutritional status has a crucial part to play. A good place to start is with a quality all round multi-vitamin/mineral supplement. There are a number of nutrients needed for good mental health but the 3 that are probably most important are: vitamin C, vitamin B complex and the minerals. A good nutritional foundation would involve at least 1,000mg - 2,000mg vitamin C per day. And a B complex (which offers all the B family) at doses well in excess of the RDA's (recommended daily allowances) e.g., 50mg or more is a good benchmark (dependent on lifestyle/health and other needs). When purchasing minerals, look for a multi-mineral which includes at least the following nutrients: zinc (15mg), iron (10mg), calcium (400mg), magnesium (200mg), manganese (1.25mg), chromium (100mcg), selenium (100mcg) at around the dosages indicated in brackets.

5. Keep fit, exercise 2/3 times per week, but do not over exert yourself, this weakens your immunity. Do enough to challenge your body without exercising to excess. Twenty minutes of brisk walking is sufficient to stay healthy so exercise does not have to be elaborate or expensive. It is also good for joints, muscles and suppleness to regularly engage in stretching exercises; 5 minutes per day is plenty to stay in good shape and improve fitness, circulation and mobility.

6. Eat more whole foods (oats, rye, barley, millet, pulses, rice, corn) and where possible from organic sources. This is because they are packed with hundreds of health promoting substances. Eat wholewheat rather than white products. White rice, white flour, white pasta etc, are all stripped of essential nutrients in the refining and processing of these products. So eat more wholewheat pasta, natural brown rice and wholewheat bread for optimum health.

7. Cut down on, or better still remove sugar added and other stimulants from your diet as they have adverse effects on blood sugar levels, which in turn can be the cause of migraines, mood swings, lethargy, depression and other physical and mental conditions. Stimulants include tea, coffee, alcohol, chocolate and cigarettes. All of these products either destroy particular vitamins and minerals, block body functioning, or take the body through unhealthy patterns of excessive highs and sharp plummeting lows. The rapid rise and fall of blood sugar levels promotes ill health and speeds up the ageing process. The body needs a slow constant release of energy to function well, added sugars and stimulants prevent this from happening.

8. Although we really do have an external pollution battle on our hands and without doubt need to be concerned about its detrimental effects on us, a far greater pollution hazard to all of us is indoor pollution. There are far more pollutants in our homes and working environments which are having a toxic effect on both mind and body. Most of these toxic substances are part of the terpene family, which includes carpets and their backing, various glues, rubber, soft furnishings, paints and perfumes. All of these products exude their toxicity gradually into our indoor environments. There are also other hazardous pollutants like phenol which are found in many cleaning agents, disinfectants and other similar products. These various substances around the home are responsible for so many health problems, e.g. headaches, migraines, lethargy, asthma, other respiratory problems, eczema and a deterioration in general health. A practical and effective way of improving the indoor status of our homes is to open all the windows every day for at least 5 minutes this will ensure the removal of stale air, which will significantly reduce terpene levels. It is also good practice to have windows slightly open all the time (particularly when you have heating of any kind switched on).

9. Food allergies are the cause of so many health problems and like the toxic effects caused by terpenes, stimulants and poor diet they are equally responsible for skin disorders, respiratory problems, mood swings, digestive disorders, headaches, impaired mental functioning, etc. The main allergy provoking foods are wheat and dairy products. However, it should be noted that sugar, chocolate and oranges are also key allergy aggravators. One way of addressing allergy problems is a total elimination of one or more of these key allergens for about 4 weeks and then to slowly re-introduce the substance back into the diet whilst closely observing and monitoring the mental and physical reactions. Where adverse reactions are generated you might need to consider total abstinence of that food or significantly reducing its intake to prevent the detrimental consequence of allergic reactions.

10. Modern day diets have become laden with colourings, flavourings, preservatives and other additives which have diminished food quality. We may eat more but we are increasingly becoming malnourished because food farming and manufacturing processes do not respect the delicate balance of food. This is why we need to become more vigilant about what we eat. Good health requires a diet that is made up of complex carbohydrates which would be at least 60% of our food intake. Proteins and fats should ideally be no more than 20% each of food intake. This then helps make the body's conversion of food into glucose (which is the major fuel that drives all our functioning) easier. Anything that reduces the body's labour in the breakdown and conversion of food into glucose optimises health, and this ratio of 60:20:20: is the ideal balance.