

The Ultimate Way to a



Healthier You

A Nutrition & Exercise Guide Benefitting

MEN | WOMEN | CHILDREN

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CHAPTER 2

Time to Change Your Diet?

How do you know when it's time to change your eating habits? For many people, their weight is a barometer for overall health. Gaining weight is a sign of poor nutrition. For most people, the only way to get off excess weight and keep it off is to change their diet.

This, however, is not an easy process. What follows are simple but important self-exams that'll help you get figure out if you need to make changes in your daily diet:

Examine Your Eyes for Signs of Poor Nutrition

If you can see a thin, white line around the edge of the iris of your eyes, you may have high cholesterol. Additional signs of high cholesterol may include flat, yellow spots on the eyelids or around the eye area. This is a particularly strong indicator for young people.

- ✦ **The Fix:** Cut down on the amount of saturated fat in your daily diet and eat more whole grains and beans.
- ✦ You should also get checked by your physician if you think your cholesterol may be out of control.

Check Your Fingernails

Interestingly, your fingernails are a good indicator of the state of your overall health. For example, if your nails have fine lines, this could be a clue that you've endured a recent illness. When you're sick, your nails grow slowly and produce ridges in the root. As your nails grow after the illness, the ridged areas will appear.

If your nails are flaky or splitting easily, you may not be getting enough calcium in your diet. But this could also be a sign that you are washing your hands excessively or using a harsh soap.

If you have spoon-shaped nails that bend easily or are extremely pale, you may have an iron deficiency.

If you have a swollen, throbbing area around the base of the nail, you may have a bacterial infection entering through a cut or break in the skin.

✍ **The Fix:** To begin, keep your nails clean and as dry as possible to keep bacteria from collecting under the tips.

✍ Wear gloves when you are getting your hands dirty and moisturize often. Pay attention to how they look and feel as an indicator of your overall health.

Pay Attention to Your Stress

A recent study at Ohio State University showed that long-term stress can put significant strain on your immune system as well as lead to higher blood pressure, infection, digestive issues, muscle strain, and frequent headaches. If you want to get an idea of how high your stress level is, assess your answers to the following questions:

- ▶ Are you having trouble sleeping or do you rise very early each morning?
- ▶ Are you more irritable than usual?
- ▶ Are you using drinking, smoking or overeating as a way to cope with emotional problems?
- ▶ Are you suffering from frequent headaches?
- ▶ Are you having heart palpitations or have you been feeling more anxious than usual?

✍ **The Fix:** If you answered “yes” to at least one of these questions, then you are probably overstressed and need to take a close look at your current lifestyle. Chances are you need to slow down and make some changes.

✍ Eating better and incorporating an exercise regimen into your daily routine is a great way to lower the amount of stress you are feeling. Start by

identifying the five biggest stressors in your life and work on eliminating at least two of them.

Pay Attention to Your Gums

If your gums are swollen and red and bleed easily, you may have gum disease. This can be dangerous to your overall health. Infected gums carry bacteria that can make its way into your blood stream and travel to other organs in your body. Researchers have found a link between gum disease and heart disease and stroke.

☞ **The Fix:** Start by seeing your dentist on a regular basis. Additionally, look for sores or ulcers that bleed or don't heal quickly. Also check for any white patches that won't rub off.

☞ If you notice any of these symptoms, take action quickly!

Take a Closer Look at Your Hands

Look at your fingerprints. Physicians at Southampton General Hospital found in their work that people who had a whorl pattern instead of an arch were more likely to suffer from high blood pressure. Additionally, take a look at your palm. Those who have longer versus wider palms were found to be more prone to suffer from hypertension.

☞ **The Fix:** Get a regular physical and be sure to get your blood pressure checked each time you visit your physician.

Do Your Fingers Turn Blue?

Make yourself a drink with some ice and hold the glass in your hands for at least 30 seconds. Then put it down and look at your hands. If your fingertips turned white or blue, you may have poor circulation. This is because the cold causes a spasm in the blood vessels leading to your fingertips, and sometimes to the nose, ears and toes. What happens to those with poor circulation is that those extremities turn white and then turn blue before finally turning red and becoming sore.

- ⚙️ **The Fix:** Don't subject yourself to extreme changes in temperature and make sure to keep as warm as possible in cold weather. Wear thermal gloves and socks and if you are a smoker, it makes circulation problems worse.
- ⚙️ There's also research that says that taking high strength ginkgo biloba with phytosome can improve circulation problems. Taking the two together allows your body to absorb the ginkgo biloba better.

Pay Attention to Your Skin

As you age, your skin tends to get drier. However, if you are pale and your skin is very flaky, you may have an undiagnosed thyroid condition. Other symptoms include unexplainable weight gain, sensitivity to cold and lethargy. If you have raised patches of skin that itch, or itching all over your body, you may have an overactive thyroid.

- ⚙️ **The Fix:** Take note of any changes to your skin and do regular checks for moles and freckles. This is particularly important if you have a lot of moles all over your body or have unusual ones that change in shape or color, or moles that develop an irregular border.
- ⚙️ Additionally, you want to see a doctor if you have moles that itch, crust over or bleed or become multicolored in appearance.

Check Your Pulse to Get Info About Your Health

Your pulse should be around 70 beats per minute, on average. If it's too fast, you may have an overactive thyroid. If it's too fast as well as irregular, you may have a condition called atrial fibrillation. This is a dangerous condition that can cause blood to pool in the upper chambers of the heart, which can cause a blood clot. If part of it breaks off and gets into your bloodstream, it can block an artery. If it's one that's supplying blood to the brain, you can suffer a stroke.

- ⚙️ **The Fix:** Check your pulse on a regular basis. You can easily do this by taking your middle and index finger of your right hand and placing them on your left wrist, just below the thumb. Count the number of pulses you have

over a period of 60 seconds, and pay attention to the regularity of the beats.

- ⚠️ Don't panic if you hear an extra beat, but you should definitely be concerned if it's too fast or irregular. If you suspect a problem, make arrangements to see your physician to get it checked into it.