



MOHAMMAD MASOOD ATHAR, MD, MD

LIFESTYLE AND LIFESTYLE MODIFICATION

Changing Your Habits for Better Health!

Lifestyle is the typical way of life an individual lives. Further to elaborate, the lifestyle is a composite of motivations, needs, and wants and is influenced by factors such as family, culture, race, faith, and social class. There are, especially the chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, stroke, heart diseases are related to certain lifestyle and personal behavior, often referred as 'Lifestyle Diseases'. These are commonly caused by smoking, alcohol, and drugs abuse as well as lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating habits and stress.

Lifestyle modification, making necessary positive changes in the lifestyle and the behavior which reduces the risk of many diseases and promote good health and wellbeing. Certainly, you can't change your genes or much of the environment around you but making wise, educated and intentional choices when it comes to diet, physical activity, sleep, alcohol use, and smoking, not only reduce your health risks, nevertheless potentially add years to your life.

When examining the development of the chronic diseases, the following personal behaviors are directly related to:

1. lack of physical activity,
2. poor nutrition,
3. tobacco use, and
4. alcohol consumption

There are several **positive lifestyle factors** that can promote good health if you want to live a long and healthy life.



Sleep: Get a regular and adequate sleep of 7-8 hours

Diet: Eat a healthy diet rich in whole grains, lean protein, vegetables, and fruits. Reduce or avoid unhealthy saturated fats and trans

fats. Instead, use healthier monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. A healthy, balanced diet can help provide energy and lower your risks for the leading chronic diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and cancer. It can also help you maintain a normal weight. Certain diseases or conditions have proven relationships with specific nutrition or dietary elements.





Physical Activity: Thirty minutes a day of regular physical activity contributes to health by reducing heart rate, decreasing the risk for cardiovascular disease, and reducing the amount of bone loss that is associated with age and osteoporosis. At the current time, lack of exercise is thought to contribute to 9 percent of breast cancers and 10 percent of colon cancers

Watch Body Weight.

Obesity is associated with a shorter lifespan and with an increased risk of many chronic diseases. The good news is that just being somewhat overweight does not reduce your longevity, and for those over the age of 65, it's better to be on the high side of normal than the low side.



Tobacco Products: Smoking accounts for over 400,000 deaths a year in the United States alone. Added to this are another 16 million people who are alive but coping

with a smoking-related illness. If you want to live an enjoyable life for however long you live, don't smoke or chew tobacco. The list of diseases and cancers attributed to smoking is long, but sometimes long-range concerns prompt less change than immediate concerns.



Alcohol: Despite the hype over red wine and longevity alcohol should not be consumed. Though red wine (in moderation) has been found to offer protection against diseases ranging from heart disease to Alzheimer's disease, but you don't need to drink red wine to get these benefits.

Screening for diseases: Health changes frequently sneak up on us. Sometimes the changes are so trivial, we don't even notice a change in our health at all. We barely even notice those small changes in our health until they start to affect our ability to do the things important to us. Being aware of your risks for health problems and acting to prevent health problems could keep you from having to face a life-changing disease. Discuss with your health care provider whether you need any screening, medicine to help you stay healthy. For example, these might include medicines to control high blood pressure, treat osteoporosis or lower cholesterol.



Lifestyle modification involves altering long-term habits, typically of eating or physical activity, and maintaining the new behavior for months or years. Lifestyle modification can be used to treat a range of diseases, including obesity. In other words, if you carry the risks for diseases got to stop somewhere and take a U-turn. The U-turn is towards good health by adopting healthy lifestyle. Further, lifestyle changes are a more "natural" way toward therapeutic goals and should be an integral component of halting or even reversing the disease in early stage. For example, in individuals with high blood pressure and diabetes, lifestyle modifications can serve as initial treatment before the start of drug therapy and as an adjunct to medication in persons already on drug therapy.

Let's examine the Islamic perspective of lifestyle and lifestyle modification. Allah Azza wa Jall, created us in the best shape and breathed into us His spirit to bring to life (*Who perfected everything which He created and began the creation of man from clay Quran 32:7, Then He proportioned him and breathed into him from His [created] soul... 32:9, We have certainly created man in the best of stature Quran 95:4, Who created you, proportioned you, and balanced you? Quran 82:7*). That means we as humans are the

custodian of His spirit, the honor of guest is reflected onto the house, and the guest's perfection has made it perfect as well. Our body is like a guesthouse where soul stays for an appointed period. Thus, our physical bodies are a trust from Allah Azza wa Jall, all praise to Him. On the day of Judgement, we will be called to account for all the bounties we enjoyed (*Then you will surely be asked that Day about pleasure. Quran 102:8*). In several Hadith it has been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that on the final day every individual will be accounted for the blessings bestowed by Allah Azza wa Jall. It has been mentioned that health, food, and drink are among the most imperative blessings out of countless bounties of Allah Azza wa Jall (*And He gave you from all you asked of Him. And if you should count the favor of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, mankind is [generally] most unjust and ungrateful. Quran 14:34*). Hence, we are accountable for how we look after our health and well-being. More so, we can always make changes in our lifestyle adopting good habits, never too late, we can achieve by the grace of Allah Azza wa Jall (*For each one are successive [angels] before and behind him who protect him by the decree of Allah . Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it. And there is not for them besides Him any patron. Quran 13:11*).

Hence, lifestyle modification involves altering long-term habits, typically of eating or physical activity, and maintaining the new healthy behavior. After a while, if you stick with these changes, they may become part of your daily routine for rest of the life. Further, the lifestyle modifications have the potential to prevent or arrest many diseases.

Therefore, healthy lifestyle is the cornerstone of prevention which is in your hand. This is your life, and you are fully in control of your lifestyle and responsible for adopting positive lifestyle behaviors. Remember, every individual is responsible for her/his own health and well-being!

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Mohammad Masood Athar, MD, MPH

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Indeed, Allah never changes the condition of the people unless they strive to change themselves -Quran 13:11

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Remember, this is your life, and you are fully in control of your lifestyle and responsible for adopting positive lifestyle behaviors.

PREVENTION OF MANY DISEASES IS IN YOUR HAND, AND YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING!