



## LIFESTYLE MEDICINE FOCUSES ON 6 AREAS TO IMPROVE HEALTH



# LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

Lifestyle medicine is an evidence-based approach to preventing, treating and even reversing diseases by replacing unhealthy behaviors with positive ones — such as eating healthfully, being physically active, managing stress, avoiding risky substance abuse, adequate sleep and having a strong support system.



**NUTRITION** Food trumps all. Choose whole, plant-based foods that are fiber-filled, nutrient dense, health-promoting and disease-fighting! Consider veggies, fruits, beans, lentils, whole grains, nuts and seeds as your dietary “North Star.”



**EXERCISE** Regular and consistent physical activity that can be maintained on a daily basis throughout life—walking, gardening, push ups and lunges—is an essential piece of the optimal health equation.



**SLEEP** Lack of, or poor quality, sleep can lead to decreased ability to recover from illness, a strained immune system and chronic disease. Lifestyle medicine identifies dietary, environmental and coping behaviors to improve sleep health.



**TOBACCO** The well-documented dangers of tobacco use include an increased risk of many cancers, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Cessation counseling combined, when necessary, with medications, helps patients successfully quit the habit.

# 6 WAYS TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

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Being mindful of your food choices, managing your stress, being physically active, avoiding risky substance use, getting plenty of sleep and having a strong emotional support system in your life—are “just what the doctor ordered” to powerfully prevent, treat, and, often, even reverse chronic disease and select autoimmune conditions.

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**RELATIONSHIPS** Social connectedness is essential to our emotional resiliency and overall health. Studies show that isolation and loneliness are associated with increased mortality and morbidity, especially among individuals already diagnosed with lifestyle-related conditions.



**STRESS MANAGEMENT** Stress can either lead to improved health and productivity — or to anxiety, depression, obesity, immune dysfunction and poor health outcomes. Helping patients recognize negative stress responses, leading to coping mechanisms and stress reduction techniques leads to improved health and wellbeing.

## LIFESTYLE MEDICINE’S UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

- Allows the body to protect and heal itself by promoting healthful lifestyle choices
- Educates, guides and supports positive behavior changes
- Places a focus on evidence-based optimal nutrition, stress management, sleep and physical activity
- Encourages active patient participation
- Treats the underlying, lifestyle-related causes of disease
- Uses medications as a supplement to therapeutic lifestyle changes
- Considers the patient’s home and community environment

The American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM) is the nation’s medical professional association for physicians, allied health professionals, healthcare executives, and those in professions devoted to transforming health and redefining healthcare through lifestyle medicine.

[lifestylemedicine.org](http://lifestylemedicine.org)