

HEALTHIER PEOPLE



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THE
CARTER
CENTER

Dear Friend:

Medical scientists have discovered numerous ways to improve health and extend life. The purpose of this booklet is to help you apply their knowledge to your own life and the lives of your friends and family.

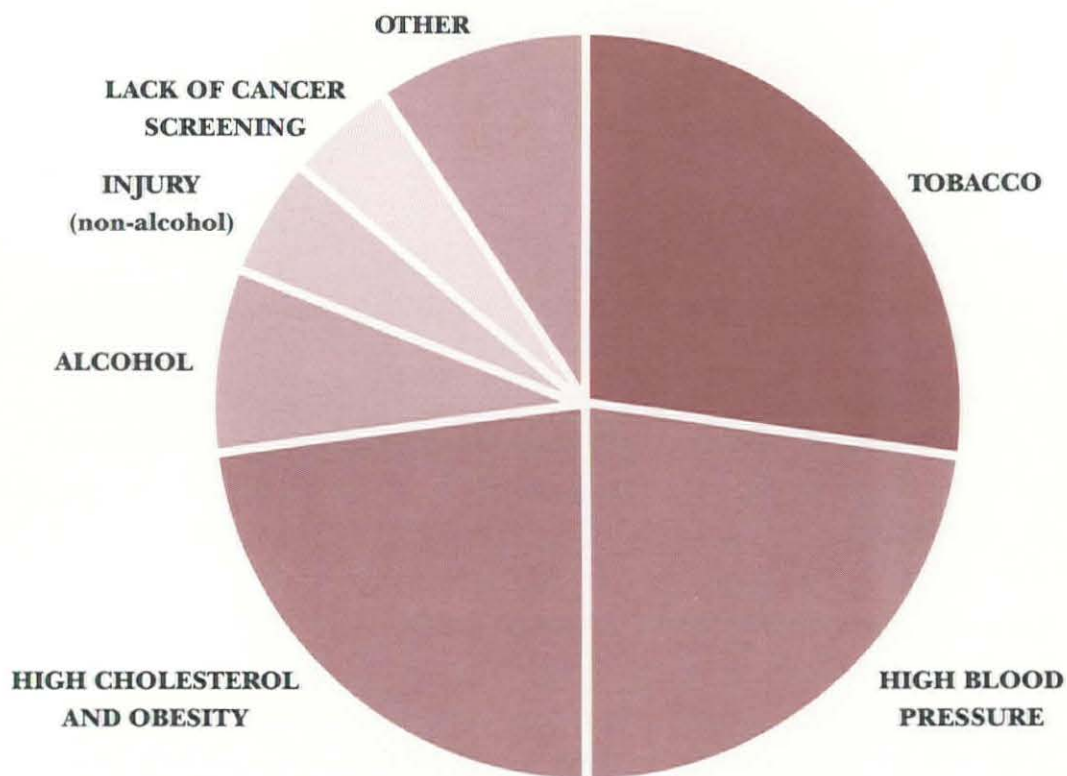
We are proud that this publication is sponsored by the Carter Center of Emory University. The Center was founded in 1982, a result of our decision, after leaving the White House, to work actively on issues that significantly affect our nation and the world. One of our major interests is the health of Americans.

The Carter Center seeks to help "close the gap" between the level of health in America today, and the level that is possible if we use our current knowledge to prevent disease and early death. The majority of today's health problems, such as heart disease, cancer, stroke and injuries, can potentially be prevented or delayed. Healthy lifestyles account for much of this potential, according to recent research sponsored by the Carter Center and published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine and the Journal of the American Medical Association.

We hope this booklet encourages you to become one of the "Healthier People."


Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter

Causes of Early Death



Every year in the United States, 1.3 million people die from conditions which could be prevented or delayed. This graph compares the dangers from each major risk factor.

Why be one of the “Healthier People?”

You feel okay — why should you change anything?

A healthier lifestyle enhances the quality as well as the quantity of life. Like millions of others, you are probably concerned with the quality of your life—how you look and how you feel. As you get older, living longer becomes important, too. Healthier habits—reducing dependence on nicotine and other addictive drugs, eating healthier foods, getting exercise, dealing with stress — will improve your appearance and will also improve how you feel about yourself. And when you feel good, you will want to do more and will be able to do more ... for a longer time.

WELLNESS includes a personal commitment to improve your lifestyle. It goes

beyond the traditional definition of health as “absence of illness.” True, a person who is not feeling sick can feel “well,” but wellness is much more. It means continually making choices, regardless of current health status, which will keep all the pieces of your life in harmony — in a natural balance unique to you. As you learn healthy alternatives, you can see yourself as a growing, changing person who is capable of enriching your life. Thus, as many experts point out, wellness not only adds years to your life but life to your years. Wellness is the way to enjoy a healthy life to the fullest at every age—from 1 to 100 plus!

What can you do to be one of the “Healthier People?”

Of course, deciding to live a healthier lifestyle and actually doing it are two separate things. Where do you begin? Here are three steps toward improving your lifestyle.



(1) Get the **FACTS**

(2) Get **SERIOUS**

(3) Get **GOING**

STEP 1. Get the FACTS.

You can only choose healthy habits if you have appropriate information. But many times it is hard to know whom to trust. What famous people say, what advertisements claim — and even what authors of best-selling books write — may not always be sound advice for you. Ask a respected doctor, nurse, or health promotion professional for reading material. Fads will come and go, but healthy habits will endure.

A health risk appraisal can help by giving you the facts on healthy habits. Certain unhealthy habits can lead to early death or disability. These habits may be risk factors themselves, like smoking, or may lead to other risk factors; for example, the risk of having high blood cholesterol may result from a high fatty diet. Risk factors were studied in depth by Carter Center consultants for a conference called "Closing the Gap." Out of this conference arose the opinion that a health risk appraisal is a useful tool and provides accurate facts about risk factors — the habits which actually affect how long you can avoid unnecessary illness and, ultimately, how long you may live.

Everyone is unique; risk factors differ from person to person. For this reason, every individual can benefit from a personal lifestyle evaluation. Just as a doctor's diagnosis can help treat an illness, a health risk appraisal can help

you "treat" your lifestyle by scoring your risk factors. Your overall risk greatly increases with each additional risk factor; therefore, the health risk appraisal ranks your risk factors in order of importance. For example, quitting smoking will usually be a higher priority than losing weight. This fact does not mean that being overweight is not risky, but that smoking is more risky. Some risk factors, such as heredity, cannot be changed, but they increase the importance of those factors you can change.

The facts provided in your health risk appraisal report can be impressive. For example:

- You can greatly reduce your chances of heart attacks and cancer by avoiding tobacco of any kind.
- You can nearly double your chances of surviving on the highway just by buckling up every time you get into a car or truck.
- You can vastly improve your chances, again, by simply not riding in a car driven by someone (including yourself) who has been drinking alcohol or using mood-altering drugs.

Considering the significance of facts such as these, a health risk appraisal is a worthwhile activity.

How does the Health Risk Appraisal work?

The health risk appraisal is a personalized estimation, usually calculated by a computer, of your risks of death and major illness in the next ten years. First, the computer program uses your age and health-related personal habits, as well as national statistics on risk factors and diseases, to calculate your current risks.

Your risk may be expressed in terms of a RISK AGE or a HEALTH SCORE. Ideally, you want a risk age lower than your real age or a health score of 100 points.

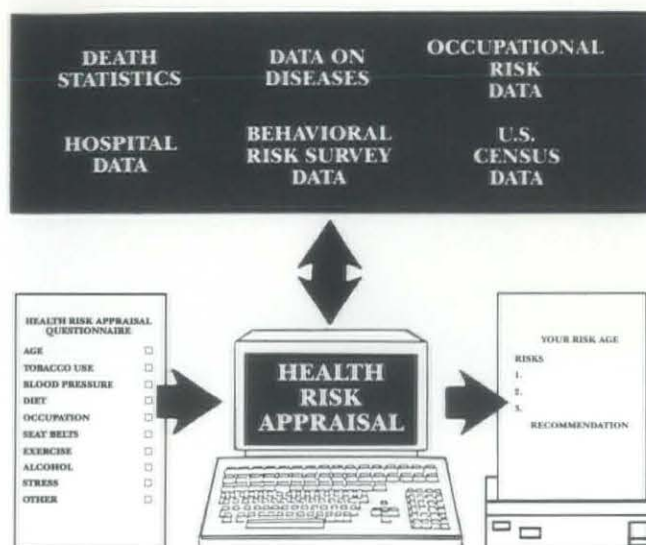
The second part of your health risk appraisal calculates your risks again, as if your

risk factors were reduced as much as possible. The result is your "target" risk age or health score. It shows your potential benefit, in health terms, of improving your lifestyle — if you quit smoking, wear safety belts, take moderate exercise, etc.

Therefore, your health risk appraisal report includes your real age, your current risk age and your target risk age. Your current risk age tells you how healthy your lifestyle is right now, and your target risk age lets you know how much longer and healthier you can live with a few positive changes in your lifestyle.

IMPORTANT NOTE! The health risk appraisal is no substitute for a physical examination or check-up. It will not give you a diagnosis nor will it tell you how long you will actually live. However, the health risk appraisal will help you understand and recognize your risk factors.

How can you use a health risk appraisal?



Currently, health risk appraisals are used in health promotion programs for hospitals, communities, churches, worksites, and increasingly by doctors in private practice. Your worksite, church, or community may have a health promotion program which offers health risk appraisals.

Here is an example of how two individuals improved their lifestyle by completing a health risk appraisal at their worksite. Mrs. Andrews and Mr. Baker both work for Corporation, Inc., which has recently started a health promotion program for its employees. The program is offering free health risk appraisals to all employees. Out of curiosity, Mrs. Andrews and Mr. Baker both completed health risk appraisals.

Meet Mrs. Andrews, a manager of Corporation, Inc. She is 52 years of age. At 5'7", she weighs 175 pounds. She rarely has time to exercise. At a health center, she discovered her blood pressure was 160/95, and her cholesterol was 250. Mrs. Andrews does not drink, but she smokes two packs of cigarettes a day. She seldom drives a car and rarely wears her safety belt. Even though breast cancer runs in her family, Mrs. Andrews has never had a mammogram.

Meet Mr. Baker. As a salesman for Corporation, Inc., he drives over 20,000 miles each year, but he never wears a safety belt. At 45 years of age, he is 5'11" and weighs 160 pounds. He smokes a pack and a half of cigarettes a day, consumes 24 alcoholic drinks per week (mostly beer), and usually eats on the run. His doctor recently told him that his blood pressure was 150/100, and his total cholesterol was 280. Mr. Baker's father died of a heart attack at the age of 50.

Two years later, Corporation, Inc., offers free health risk appraisals again to see if the health promotion program is helping its employees. Mrs. Andrews and Mr. Baker complete new health risk appraisals. Both have better scores!

By scheduling time to walk four days a week and reducing fat in her diet, Mrs. Andrews has lost 20 pounds and kept it off. Her exercise and healthier diet also reduced her blood pressure (140/88) and cholesterol (195), both of which are recommended levels. She now wears her safety belt 100% of the time and has regular check-ups, including a Pap smear, mammogram and rectal exam.

Mr. Baker was especially motivated to improve any risk factors for an early heart attack because of his father's early death. Therefore, he successfully quit smoking by attending a smoking cessation class. Through dietary changes and exercise, Mr. Baker reduced his cholesterol to a healthier level of 200 and his blood pressure to 138/90. Mr. Baker still drinks socially (7 drinks per week) but carefully avoids any drinking and driving situations. He now remembers to buckle his safety belt all the time.

Below is the report from Mrs. Andrews' first health risk appraisal. Her ACTUAL AGE is 52, her RISK AGE is 56.3, and her TARGET AGE is 47.4.

Healthier People
The Carter Center of Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia

Woman, Age 52

YOUR RISK AGE:	NOW	TARGET
	56.3 YEARS	47.4 YEARS

Many serious injuries and health problems can be prevented. Your Health Risk Appraisal lists factors you can change to lower your risk. For causes of death where not enough data are available, the computer uses the average risk for persons of your age and sex.

MOST COMMON CAUSES OF DEATH	NUMBER OF DEATHS IN NEXT 10 YEARS FOR 1000 WOMEN, AGE 52			RISK FACTORS YOU CAN CHANGE
	YOUR RISK	RISK TARGET	AVERAGE RISK	
Breast cancer	54	27	7	Get regular exams
Heart attack	45	10	12	Smoking, Hypertension, Cholesterol, Overweight
Lung cancer	16	9	6	Smoking
Stroke	10	3	4	Smoking, Hypertension
Emphysema/Bronchitis	3	1	2	Smoking
Colon cancer	2*	2*	1	A high-fat and low-fat diet might reduce risk
Ovary cancer	2*	2*	2	Get regular exams
Esophagus cancer	2	1	1	Smoking
Pancreas cancer	2	1	1	Smoking
Diabetes	2*	2*	2	Control your weight and follow your doctor's advice
Cirrhosis	2*	2*	2	Continue to avoid heavy drinking
Cervix cancer	1	1	1	Smoking, pelvic exam
All other	28	24	29	
				* = Average Value Used
TOTAL:	169	85	70	Deaths in Next 10 Years, Per 1,000 Women, Age 52

For Height 5'7" and Medium Frame 175 lbs. is About 29% Overweight ... Desirable Weight Range is 129-143

GOOD HABITS	HABITS YOU COULD CHANGE	RISK YEARS GAINED
+ Travels close to the speed limit	- Quit smoking — get help if needed	3.6
+ Low violence risk	- Get a regular breast exam	2.9
	- Lower your blood pressure to 140/88 or less (Get your blood pressure checked regularly)	1.1
	- Lower your cholesterol with help (Weight loss and exercise could help)	1.0
	- Reduce weight to desirable range (An exercise program could help)	.1
	- Get a regular pap test	.1
	- Buckle your safety belts all of the time	.1

Total Risk Years you could gain = 8.9

Two years later, Mrs. Andrews receives her second health risk appraisal report. Notice that through healthier habits her RISK AGE is now lower (48.9) than her ACTUAL AGE of 54.

Healthier People
The Carter Center of Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia

Woman, Age 54

YOUR RISK AGE:	NOW	TARGET
	48.9 YEARS	48.9 YEARS

Many serious injuries and health problems can be prevented. Your Health Risk Appraisal lists factors you can change to lower your risk. For causes of death where not enough data are available, the computer uses the average risk for persons of your age and sex.

MOST COMMON CAUSES OF DEATH	NUMBER OF DEATHS IN NEXT 10 YEARS FOR 1000 WOMEN, AGE 54			RISK FACTORS YOU CAN CHANGE
	YOUR RISK	RISK TARGET	AVERAGE RISK	
Breast cancer	29	29	8	A low-fat diet and regular exams might reduce risk
Lung cancer	10	10	7	Avoid smoking
Heart attack	7	7	16	Overweight
Stroke	4	4	5	Keep your blood pressure low and don't smoke
Colon cancer	3*	3*	3	A high-fiber and low-fat diet might reduce risk
Ovary cancer	2*	2*	2	Get regular exams
Diabetes	2*	2*	2	Control your weight and follow your doctor's advice
Cirrhosis	2	2	2	Continue to avoid heavy drinking
Lymphoma	1*	1*	1	
Hypertensive	1*	1*	1	
Uterine cancer	1	1	1	Get regular exams
Pancreas cancer	1	1	1	Continue to avoid smoking
All other	30	30	34	
				* = Average Value Used
TOTAL:	93	93	83	Deaths in Next 10 Years, Per 1,000 Women, Age 54

For Height 5'7" and Medium Frame 155 lbs. is About 14% Overweight ... Desirable Weight Range is 129-143

GOOD HABITS

- + Non-smoker
- + Regular breast check-up
- + Regular pap test
- + Blood pressure 140/88 or less
- + Cholesterol 200 or less
- + HDL of 60 or more
- + Safety belts used all of the time
- + Travels close to the speed limit
- + Good physical activity
- + High-fiber diet
- + Low-fat and low-cholesterol diet

HABITS YOU COULD CHANGE

RISK YEARS GAINED

- Reduce Weight to desirable range .1

Total Risk Years you could gain = .1

Below is the report from Mr. Baker's first health risk appraisal. His ACTUAL AGE is 45, his RISK AGE is 51.9, and his TARGET AGE is 41.4.

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The Carter Center of Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia

Man, Age 45

YOUR RISK AGE:	NOW 51.9 YEARS	TARGET 41.4 YEARS
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Many serious injuries and health problems can be prevented. Your Health Risk Appraisal lists factors you can change to lower your risk. For causes of death where not enough data are available, the computer uses the average risk for persons of your age and sex.

MOST COMMON CAUSES OF DEATH	NUMBER OF DEATHS IN NEXT 10 YEARS FOR 1000 MEN, AGE 45			RISK FACTORS YOU CAN CHANGE
	YOUR RISK	RISK TARGET	AVERAGE RISK	
Heart attack	65	15	19	Smoking, Hypertension, Cholesterol, Overweight
Lung cancer	13	7	7	Smoking
Cirrhosis	6	2	4	Alcohol
Motor vehicle crash	5	1	2	Alcohol, Safety belts unbuckled, Speeding
Stroke	4	2	2	Smoking, Hypertension, Cholesterol, Overweight
Esophagus cancer	3	1	1	Smoking
Suicide	2*	2*	2	Get help from a health person if needed
Other injuries	2*	2*	2	Avoid heavy alcohol use and observe safety rules
Homicide	2*	2*	2	Avoid heavy drug/alcohol use and handguns
Emphysema/Bronchitis	1	1	1	Smoking
Colon cancer	1*	1*	1	A high-fiber and low-fat diet might reduce risk
Pancreas cancer	1	1	1	Smoking
All other	27	22	25	
* = Average Value Used				
TOTAL:	132	59	69	Deaths in Next 10 Years, Per 1,000 Men, Age 45

For Height 5'11" and Medium Frame 160 lbs. is About Right . . . Desirable Weight Range is 147-163

GOOD HABITS

- + Weight is near desirable range
- + Regular rectal and prostate exam

HABITS YOU COULD CHANGE

RISK YEARS GAINED

- Quit smoking — get help if needed 4.8
- Lower your cholesterol with help 3.1
(An exercise program could help)
- Lower your blood pressure to 140/88 or less 1.2
(An exercise program could help)
- Reduce alcohol use to 1 drink a day or less .8
(Quit drinking if alcoholic)
- Buckle your safety belts all of the time .3
- Reduce speed to the speed limit .3

Total Risk Years you could gain = 10.5

Mr. Baker's second health risk appraisal report (two years later) is below. He, too, lives a healthier lifestyle and now has a RISK AGE of 41.9 which is lower than his ACTUAL AGE of 47.

Healthier People
The Carter Center of Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia

Man, Age 47

YOUR RISK AGE:	NOW	TARGET
	41.9 YEARS	41.8 YEARS

Many serious injuries and health problems can be prevented. Your Health Risk Appraisal lists factors you can change to lower your risk. For causes of death where not enough data are available, the computer uses the average risk for persons of your age and sex.

MOST COMMON CAUSES OF DEATH	NUMBER OF DEATHS IN NEXT 10 YEARS FOR 1000 MEN, AGE 47			RISK FACTORS YOU CAN CHANGE
	YOUR RISK	RISK TARGET	AVERAGE RISK	
Heart attack	10	10	24	Hypertension
Lung cancer	10	10	9	Avoid smoking
Suicide	2*	2*	2	Get help from a health person if needed
Stroke	2	2	3	Hypertension
Other injuries	2*	2*	2	Avoid heavy alcohol use and observe safety rules
Cirrhosis	2	2	4	Continue to avoid heavy drinking
Homicide	2*	2*	2	Avoid heavy drug/alcohol use and hand guns
Colon cancer	2*	2*	2	A high-fiber and low-fat diet might reduce risk
Hypertension disease	1*	1*	1	
Diabetes	1*	1*	1	Control your weight and follow your doctor's advice
Lymphoma	1*	1*	1	
Alcohol poisoning	1*	1*	1	Avoid heavy drinking (don't drink if alcoholic)
All other	26	25	31	
* = Average Value Used				
TOTAL:	62	61	83	Deaths in Next 10 Years, Per 1,000 Men, Age 47

For Height 5'11" and Medium Frame 160 lbs. is About Right . . . Desirable Weight Range is 147-163

GOOD HABITS

- + Non-smoker
- + Cholesterol 200 or less
- + HDL of 55 or more
- + Weight is near desirable range
- + Safety belts used all of the time
- + Travels close to the speed limit
- + Good physical activity level
- + High-fiber diet
- + Low-fat and low-cholesterol diet
- + Regular rectal and prostate exam

HABITS YOU COULD CHANGE

RISK YEARS GAINED

- Lower your blood pressure to 140/88 .1

Total Risk Years you could gain = .1

What major risk factors should you know more about?

Experts are constantly announcing new findings on risk factors. However, according to the Closing the Gap conference, you can add the most years to your life by concentrating on only a few risk factors. Pay special attention to the following.

TOBACCO

If you smoke and you are deciding which risk factor to tackle first, stop searching. **QUIT SMOKING!** Avoiding tobacco use of any kind deserves top priority.



Why quit? Most people know tobacco is the leading cause of cancer in both males and females, but it is also the leading cause of heart attacks before age 50. In addition, tobacco causes about 90% of emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

Is there a safe form of tobacco? The answer is no! The ad writers and the sports heroes they hire would have you believe that smokeless tobacco is a safe alternative to smoking. Nothing could be further from the truth. Smokeless tobacco contains many well-known cancer causing agents including some of the same chemicals found in bacon which caused a controversy a few years ago. These chemicals are 80,000 times more concentrated in smokeless tobacco than in bacon. If it were food, smokeless tobacco could not legally be sold in the USA.

So, join the millions of Americans who have stopped using tobacco. You will feel better, breathe better, live longer and provide cleaner air for those around you.

CHOLESTEROL

Your body produces cholesterol because you need this substance to be healthy. But, an excess of cholesterol can be harmful. High levels of cholesterol in the blood may cause damage to your blood vessels, and increase your risk of heart disease. In general, total cholesterol levels of 200 or lower are safe, and levels above 200 indicate an increased risk (see Chart 1).

Your body carries cholesterol through the bloodstream in several fat-protein substances, called lipoproteins. A "bad," or low-density lipoprotein (LDL), contributes to heart disease. A "good," or high-density lipoprotein (HDL), protects against heart disease. Therefore, the more HDL cholesterol you have, the less your risk is for heart disease.

So, what can you do about cholesterol? First, know your own cholesterol level. If you are at risk, you can then take steps to reduce your cholesterol. Fortunately, many people can reduce their blood cholesterol with a few dietary changes. In addition, it helps to exercise

regularly, maintain ideal body weight, and quit smoking.

To follow a low cholesterol diet, what should you eat? In general, cholesterol is found in animal products. Foods of plant origin usually contain no cholesterol — fresh fruits and vegetables, grains, and beans.

Your cholesterol level may also be affected by the type of fats you eat. SATURATED FATS (those that are usually solid at room temperature) increase blood cholesterol.

UNSATURATED FATS help to lower cholesterol levels and can be substituted for SATURATED FATS. Using polyunsaturated fats is an excellent way to lower blood cholesterol levels.

Monounsaturated fats may have a slight effect on lowering cholesterol levels.

Since saturated fats are often an ingredient in processed foods, read labels of the foods you buy and try to avoid products with animal fat, lard, coconut oil, palm oil or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.

FOODS TO AVOID

- Beef, pork
- Egg yolks
- Coconut and palm oil, lard, meat fat, meat drippings
- Butter, cheese, whole milk, cream

FOODS TO SUBSTITUTE

- Chicken (skinless), fish, egg whites
- Oils from corn, soybean, safflower, sesame seed, sunflower, wheat germ, olive or peanut
- Low-fat or non-fat dairy products

CHART 1.

Ranges of Risk for Total Blood Cholesterol Level

Age	Goal	Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk
20-29	under 180*	180-200	200-220	over 220
30-39	under 200*	200-220	220-240	over 240
40 & up	under 200*	200-240	240-260	over 260

* Less than 90 is considered unhealthy.

Source: National Institutes of Health. Consensus Conference Statement. Lowering Blood Cholesterol to Prevent Heart Disease. Vol 5, Number 7, December 1984.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

In order to supply blood to all parts of your body, your heart contracts and relaxes in a pumping motion. When it contracts, blood pressure is higher; when it relaxes, blood pressure is lower. For example, "120 over 80" means that your blood pressure is 120 (systolic) when your heart contracts and is 80 (diastolic) when your heart relaxes. A diagnosis of high blood pressure, or hypertension, is made when your blood pressure is consistently higher than "140 over 90" (see Chart 2).

Why check your blood pressure? High blood pressure increases the work your heart must do, and adds to the wear and tear on your blood vessels. If left untreated, it may lead to a heart attack or stroke. Your most important step is simply to know your own blood pressure and make sure it is normal or under control. In addition, maintaining an appropriate body weight, exercising regularly, and minimizing stress can all help to prevent high blood pressure.



CHART 2.

Ranges of Risk for Blood Pressure

Blood Pressure	NORMAL	HIGH	
		Mild to Moderate	Severe
Systolic	under 140	140-159	over 159
Diastolic	under 90*	90-114	over 114

* 85 - 90 is "high normal."

Source: Joint National Committee on Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure. Arch Intern Med — Vol. 144, May 1984.

STRESS

Most experts agree that not all stress is bad. You need some stress to be active, to be creative, to be challenged and to change. On the other hand, too much stress can be harmful. Symptoms of too much stress include frequent anger, anxiety, sleep disorders, impatience, tension headaches, backaches, cramps, diarrhea, or ulcers.

Your body reacts to stress in a "fight or flight" response. Since prehistoric time, human beings have had an internal alarm system to react quickly in a stressful situation, such as being face to face with a wild animal. When you get uptight, your body responds by releasing

hormones into your blood which affect your heart — your blood pressure rises and your heart rate increases — allowing you to respond physically to the situation. In today's society, however, you usually cannot react physically. If your heart rate and blood pressure stay up, your health may be in danger.

How can you control stress? Some people try to "escape" by taking drugs, smoking, drinking, or overeating, but there are healthier ways to relax. The way you relax is up to you. For example, here are some suggestions from the Carter Center staff:

- Call a friend
- Stretch your muscles
- Take a bubble bath
- Work in garden or yard
- Take a 3 day weekend
- Read a book
- Play with your pet
- Spend time with family or friends
- Swim
- Take a walk
- Listen to (or play) music
- Go on vacation
- Try relaxation techniques
- Go shopping
- Ride a bike
- Take short breaks at work
- Jog



When pressure seems to be overwhelming, it sometimes helps just to stop, take a deep breath, and exhale slowly. Parents, especially, find they can cope better with a difficult child or teenager by "counting to ten" first.

LACK OF EXERCISE



Exercise is an essential step to improving many of your major risk factors. A regular exercise program can improve your cholesterol profile, blood pressure, weight, diabetic symptoms, and even mental attitude. Also, being fit helps many people eliminate other risk factors, such as smoking.

Many people begin to exercise and then quit. How can you stay motivated? Choose an activity you enjoy! In addition, some find it easier to stay fit if they join an exercise group. Experts do not all agree on which exercises are best, but they do agree that getting some vigorous exercise on a regular basis is the most important factor. And, for the most benefit, whatever kind of exercise you choose should FIT into these general guidelines:

Frequency:

Try to exercise 3 to 5 times per week.

Intensity:

Try to exercise hard enough to make your heart beat faster, ideally, at least 60 percent of your maximum heart rate. You can estimate your maximum heart rate by subtracting your age from 220.

Time:

Try to exercise 15 to 60 minutes each session. Longer sessions are probably better, even if the intensity is only moderate.

When beginning your exercise plan, be careful not to overdo it. Most exercise specialists recommend exercise every other day as you gradually increase the intensity and time of your exercise. It is easy to estimate intensity. You are on the right track if you breathe deeper and faster but can still carry on a conversation. SLOW DOWN if you can't speak with comfort.

Warm-up. Begin the exercise you choose at a slow pace for a few minutes to allow your breathing and heart rate to gradually increase. Cool-down. When you are ready to finish, slow down for a few minutes to allow your breathing and heart rate to gradually return to normal.

Caution:

Intense exercise without supervision can be harmful to some people. If you are over 40 and have been inactive, are diabetic, are overweight, or a smoker, consult your physician before starting an exercise program. In addition, persons with chest pains, irregular heart beat, heart disease, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, lung disease or other medical condition should consult a physician before exercising.



INJURY

Let's face it — a lot of injuries could be avoided by common sense. Take safety belts for example. Even professional drivers sometimes crash; that's why they wear safety belts. No one can foresee every road hazard, brake or steering failure, or occasional distraction. Even if you could, the other drivers might not, and may hurt or kill you as a result. Until cars are built better and equipped with passive restraints (such as air bags), safety belts are your best assurance of staying alive on the road. They cut your risk of dying in half! The benefits for buckling up begin immediately.

Drinking alcohol of any kind increases your risk of injury and other health problems, including liver disease and certain cancers. Drinking too much dulls your senses and results in a lack of awareness and coordination. If you do drink alcohol, ask yourself the question, "Am I in control of alcohol or is alcohol in control of

me?" Help is available if you are not in control.

As for drinking and driving, your risk of crashing increases immediately after your first drink of beer, wine, or liquor, and keeps increasing with each successive drink. Your risk is increased further by fatigue, bad weather, road hazards, mistakes by other drivers, and preoccupation with other problems. Be defensive! Remember, drunk drivers are usually on the road late at night or on the weekends.

Most hand guns are purchased for personal protection, yet most homicides are committed with hand guns, and most victims are family members, loved ones, or friends. If you own a hand gun, you invite more than the risk of an accidental shooting in your house. Police also point out that your own weapon could easily be used against you by a criminal who is expertly trained or has been surprised.

NEED FOR SCREENING

You may actually save your life by keeping yourself up-to-date with certain screening procedures and preventive measures. Chart 3 (on facing page) summarizes routine services for men and women in different age groups which are listed on health risk appraisal reports. Your doctor or health center can tell you how often these services are recommended. Some tests help identify cancer at an early stage to prevent

death. For example, a mammogram (breast X-ray) is recommended every year for women over 50 (some authorities say beginning at age 40). According to the National Cancer Institute, mammograms can reduce breast cancer deaths by 30%. Also, examining your own breasts is important. Be aware of growths or other changes in your own body and report them to a doctor or nurse.

CHART 3.

Routine Preventive Services

AGE

	19-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75+
<i>Blood Pressure test</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Cholesterol test</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
<i>Pap Smear</i> <i>(women only)</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		
<i>Mammogram</i> <i>(women only)</i>				0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Breast Exam</i> <i>(women only)</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Prostate Exam</i> <i>(men only)</i>					+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Rectal Exam</i>					+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Tetanus-Diphtheria Booster</i> <i>(every ten years)</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Measles-Rubella Vaccine</i> <i>(if not immune)</i>	+	+										
<i>Rubella Vaccine</i> <i>(if not immune)</i>			+	+								
<i>Influenza Vaccine</i> <i>(every year)</i>										+	+	+
<i>Pneumococcal Vaccine</i> <i>(once)</i>										+	+	+
<i>Dental Exam</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Eye Exam For Glaucoma</i>					+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

+ = Recommended 0 = Optional

STEP 2. Get SERIOUS

Once you realize that you can control many of the factors that determine your life span, it's time to get SERIOUS about improving your health. Fortunately, you do not have to face this task alone. Millions of Americans have succeeded — quit smoking, lost excess weight, reduced alcohol intake, or changed another habit — either by themselves or with professional help. You can too!

When you get serious about changing, don't forget "practice makes perfect." Experts claim it

takes at least three weeks of practice to start a new habit. For example, more and more Americans have adopted the habit of wearing safety belts. And, most will admit that, at first, remembering to buckle up took some concentration but soon became second nature.

You may find it difficult to keep some commitments. To get you on the right track, here are some general tips on adopting a healthier habit. Some of these ideas may help you change the desire into the reality of a healthier you.

Tips on Adopting a Healthier Habit

PRIORITY

You don't have to change your entire lifestyle overnight. Your health risk appraisal sets the priorities. Pick your greatest risk and set a realistic goal that you can accomplish in a reasonable length of time. If necessary, divide your major goal into smaller steps. Successes accomplished in one to two weeks keep you motivated.

PLAN OF ACTION

Write a plan. Actually write down what you plan to do and place it in sight to help you keep your commitment.

PREPARATION

Prepare for temptation! Head temptation off at the pass. Observe the time, situation, or

place that triggers your unhealthy habit and be ready. Visible reminders, such as "No munching while on!" taped on the TV, will keep you on track.

PEOPLE

Support from the people around you really helps. Tell your family and friends that praise and encouragement will keep you going. You can even sign a written contract with someone to let them know how serious you are about making a change. Who knows? Maybe your healthier attitude will rub off.

PRIZES

Reward yourself when you accomplish a goal. Your prize doesn't necessarily have to cost anything; choose something healthy and enjoyable. Don't eat half of a pie after losing 10 pounds!

STEP 3. Get GOING!



What's next? You have the FACTS on your personal health, and you are SERIOUS about making changes. Now, GET GOING!

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