



Choose Health

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Understanding and tracking your Body Mass Index, or BMI, maintaining healthy blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels are keys to healthy living. You and your doctor should talk regularly about your numbers.

The body mass index is a calculation that compares weight relative to height. It helps us see whether or not a child is proportional, his weight towards his height. It's one of the tools that we use.

If you have diabetes, it is important to take the appropriate medications to control your blood sugar and prevent complications. It is also important to test your blood sugar levels daily.

Blood sugar is a tool a physician uses to determine whether one is predisposed to diabetes or has diabetes.

Blood pressure's a real important measurement to see if you're predisposed to cardiac problems in the future.

The best blood pressure is when the top number is under 130, the bottom number is under 80.

Bravo!

Preventive health care for the entire family is crucial for healthy living regular check ups, screenings and tests can detect disease early.

KNOW YOUR HISTORY

The history is critical for every member of the family. We need to know exactly what the family history was.

It says here your mother had high blood pressure, and diabetes, is she alive?

Great grandparents, grandparents, mother, father, the brothers and sisters. We need to know if there were any conditions of diabetes, hypertension, cancer, heart disease, lung diseases. We need to know if there's any environmental factors, either work related or where one lives that could affect one's health. We need to know if there's any smoking history, alcohol history, drug history. We also need to know what kind of medicines people take.

Fifty five year old Rebecca Reyes is one of Dr. Meza's patients. She's a wife and the mother of five children. In 2002, she was diagnosed with diabetes.

I started feeling tired. I was thirsty. Um, I was sleeping all the time. I was losing weight. The doctor told me that, uh, because my mother had diabetes, probably the reason why I also had it.

Recently Rebecca's husband, Ruben, found out that he too has diabetes.

I do a lot of traveling in my job. It's a lot of fast food, a lot, you know, eating out, so that didn't help.

Since I've been diagnosed, I feel like I'm more aware of what's going on with me personally. That means eating three meals a day and not skipping, say, breakfast or lunch, which I did all the time before. Um, eating the right foods, which includes vegetables and fruits.

Forty five year old Jaime Ramirez, husband and father of three young boys, has been healthy and active for most of his life, but as he entered his forties, Jaime stopped exercising, and his wife Ana became increasingly concerned about his health.

I was worried for Jaime because I knew that his dad had had diabetes for about 40 years, and his mom was diagnosed with diabetes about a few years back. And I knew that--I know that diabetes is hereditary, so I was really concerned, so we talked about an exercise program, and tried to eat healthier as well.

Twenty eight year old Juan Coriano is a husband and father of two young girls. For most of his life, Juan has struggled with his weight.

My dad and my mom's overweight. My sister's overweight. You know, my grandparents are overweight. I mean, you name it; everyone's overweight,

And so, what's occurred now is we have obesity, diabetes, hypertension, all the complications of just eating too much and not exercising enough. What we need to do is make some healthy choices.

EAT FOR LIFE

One of the most important things is to eat healthy and make good choices. And that means probably eating less animal products, eating less carbohydrates and less fats, decreasing the amount of calories that we take every day, and clearly not eating as many fast foods.

Small changes over a long period of time can make dramatic results. For example, milk. Instead of whole milk, go to 2 percent. But from 2 percent, don't stop there. Go to 1 percent.

And let's not forget the importance of just good old water, water with lemon, water with ice. That's what we really need.

Nutritionists and physicians recommend we eat small portions of red meat, as well as pork and chicken, around three ounces per serving, which is the size of a deck of playing cards.

We're big meat eaters, or we were big meat eaters, and now we eat a lot of chicken. No more skin, no more, uh -- like Thanksgiving, the -- fighting over the skin off the turkey.

It is not necessary to eat meat at every meal, or even every day. There are other forms of protein, we can eat more fish, preferably baked or steamed. And more plant proteins such as beans and lentils.

Refried beans can be made without lard. You can substitute oil or water, and when possible, substitute healthier corn or wheat for the flour tortillas.

Now I find myself asking people, you know, do they use lard in the tamales or do they use vegetable oil?

I've lost maybe 12 pounds, and it wasn't quick. It was gradual, and that was eating habits or changing eating habits.

Fruit and vegetables should be served every day and for people with diabetes half of their plates should be vegetables. Use olive oil and canola oil in place of lard and corn oil, and limit deep fried foods to once a week. Eat three meals a day and in between have healthy snacks such as fruit, yogurt or whole grain crackers with 1 oz of low fat cheese.

After my husband's heart attack, we had to make some major changes in our diets, eating habits ...shopping. When I see people and their families and what they put in their baskets, that uh I wish I could say, look, there's so many healthy choices in the store, some alternate substitutes that are going to be just as delicious and satisfying, take care of your children, take care of yourself.

Don't focus on what we need to take away, instead focus on what we can add... more vegetables, fruit, whole grains and homemade soups.

Bueno, vamos a tomar sopa de pollo y verduras ahora.

We make chicken soup often, and you know, it's something as simple as taking the skin off a chicken, you know, takes a lot of the fat away from the soup, and the kids love them, they love to eat the chicken soup, they really love the food.

Try to re-awaken the memory of simple traditional, flavorful foods.

We still eat our traditional foods. I make pupusas at home, homemade. Instead of using the fatty cheeses, I try to use mozzarella with cheese, you know, still melts nicely in the pupusas, but it doesn't have as much fat, and it still tastes really great.

When it comes to the health of you and your loved ones it is important to make healthy food choices:

INCREASE:

- Baked, broiled or steamed foods
- Leafy greens, vegetables and fruit
- Whole grain foods and
- Water.

DECREASE:

- Pan or deep fried foods
- Red meat
- Starches and
- High fat dairy foods

BE ACTIVE

Improved nutrition is an important beginning, but it is also important to incorporate physical activity into your daily life. Good nutrition and regular exercise is good for health and energy and can also prevent and manage conditions such as diabetes.

I try to walk around more at work. Uh, instead of driving, say, three or four blocks, I walk it now. At lunch, say, go to the post office.

I try to walk around more at work. Uh, instead of driving, say, three or four blocks, I walk it now. At lunch, say, go to the post office.

Do something physical every day. Take walks, go to the park with your kids and dance

Doing the things you love, doing things as a family can make it easier.

We always together with the family. We went to the dances every week, go to the ah some picnics or swimming over there, and that's it. We never sit down, we never sleep late.

And also, limit computer games, limit television to one hour a day. If they have a TV in their room, take it out. Encourage the physical activities, not the passive ones.

We hardly watch TV, we go outside to play, to walk the dog, and my husband goes to the gym.”

I have three boys, and we play wrestling. They expect me to be daddy and be a horsy, and-and play rough with them. And I'm enjoying myself.

Being 4'11" and maintaining my weight, is not about looks, it's about my health, it's about my heart. And I become more aware of walking, jogging.

Not everyone was made to be a size two or a zero. We just have to accept the fact that real women do have curves!!

Running not only helped Jaime get in shape, it helped get rid of back pain that had bothered him for years. As Jaime's stamina increased, he and Ana became avid runners.

I have done two 10Ks, one 12K and then the half marathon after that, the half marathon was a wonderful experience, it was really great.

When I finish a half marathon running for two hours and 45 minutes, when the year before I was not able to even run a mile. I never never dreamed in my life that I could run for such a time.

It takes discipline. And that's something that now I enjoy. And I enjoy it also because I know that-that gets me healthy, uh I'm losing some weight, just not intention, really, it's just basically to be healthy and be there for my children.

Jaime also started doing something he loves, playing soccer with his kids. He's now a Youth Soccer Coach.

Soccer, it's, it's a passion for me. I couldn't wait until my children were in that age, that I can go with them and, and, and coach them. I'm, you know, motivating them to that, I'm teaching them to choose something so they're active.

TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR

I think it's important that we build a relationship full of trust. I'm a part of my patients' team. I'm a resource to help them be as healthy as they can be. If you have a question, let's talk about it. If you have a worry, let's discuss it.

When going to see your doctors prepare a list of questions and concerns. If English is a challenge, ask for an interpreter when you make your appointment or take an adult you trust to interpret for you.

It's also important that you know what questions to ask your physician. You should ask him, Is my weight appropriate for my height? Am I predisposed to diabetes, hypertension? Do I have a problem already with hypertension or diabetes? What would be the best medicines? Do you - could you tell me the side effects of some of these medicines?

When you see your doctor, take the opportunity to talk about any other concerns facing you or your family. For example:

- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Birth control
- Domestic Violence
- A desire to quit smoking and
- STD & HIV Prevention