

### **Volume 09, Issue 38: A Proactive Approach to Health (Part I)**

Have you ever noticed how a majority of people don't start taking care of their health until they get sick, until they have a disease or an ailment or some sort of issue that warrants taking care of their health?

What if we decided to take care of ourselves proactively, rather than waiting for illness to strike? We are not talking about things that are out of our control. There are many diseases that we can't control at all. We are talking about things that relate to lifestyle. Things that are related to stress levels or poor nutrition or lack of exercise. If we can take care of those things proactively, we can reduce our risk of a lot of health issues down the line. This is a much better approach than waiting for ourselves to get sick and then starting to take care of ourselves. Let's consider some of the things we can do to take care of our health proactively rather than reactively.

#### ***1. Practice safe sun exposure***

Sun damage is real. Accumulative damage starts showing in later years. If you are in your twenties, you may think you are immune to sun damage. But the damage is happening, you just don't see it. The sun can also cause pre-mature aging and skin cancer. You don't have to be scared of the sun but avoid and limit sun exposure when the sun is at its strongest. Wear sunscreen, practice safe sun exposure so you are not damaging your skin.

When I was younger I would come back from vacation with my face and other exposed areas of my skin a mess from unsafe sun exposure. Now that I know better, you wouldn't find me basking by the pool or walking on the beach in the hot sun. I either swim in the morning before the sun gets hot or in the evening after the sun has set. I also enjoy my walks on the beach early in the morning before the sun comes out.

#### ***2. Eat a healthy diet***

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Written by Lillian Chebosi

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Meal planning is one of the keys to consistent healthy eating. When I plan my meals in advance and do grocery shopping accordingly, I am able to stick to a healthy diet consistently. And when I don't plan my meals, things go a little haywire. So if you are struggling with staying consistent with eating well, try meal planning. Just remember that there's no one fits all approach when it comes to healthy eating. Embrace an approach that works for you and do it consistently.

Eating a healthy diet consistently may be hard in the beginning but it grows on you with time. It eventually becomes your lifestyle and unhealthy food options will no longer draw your attention. Just be sure to make it interesting and experiment with different whole food recipes that you enjoy. That way you won't be eyeing your neighbors' food or feel you are missing out. When you start seeing changes in your body and how you feel, and more importantly understand the investment you are making to your future health, you will wish your neighbor knew what you know. Let's stop here so this read isn't too long. Look out for the continuation in Part II of the series.

For His Glory,

Lillian Chebosi