FOR YOUTH

Checklist for a Healthier Lifestyle

This is a list of suggestions you can use to try to improve your health habits.

Try the following: Choose two or three steps to focus on. Once those steps have become part of your daily life, add another new step.

- **Drink lots (8 glasses a day) of water!** Water is the fuel your body needs. Keeping bottles of water around the house and in your backpack makes this easier.
- **Cut back on TV/video game/computer time.** Try to watch or play less than 1-2 hours of TV/computer/video games a day—even during holidays, weekends, and summer vacations. Get rid of your remote controls. Every little bit helps!
- **Do fun things with your friends other than eating.** Eating is a fun social activity but do other activities with your friends besides eating. Try walking to and from places together.
- **Go food shopping.** Once you learn how to make healthy food choices, go to the store and pick out nutritious foods. But remember: It is a bad idea to go food shopping when you are hungry. You’ll be tempted to buy junk food.
- **Notice what causes you to over or under eat or eat a lot of junk food.** Try different ways of dealing with those situations such as calling a friend, talking to a trusted adult, exercising, listening to music, slow deep breathing, and taking a walk or running in place.
- **Brush and floss your teeth.** It’s important to take good care of your teeth and gums. Try to brush at least two times a day and floss at least once a day.
- **Make a list** of 3-4 important food or activity reminders and put them up where you’re most likely to see them, like the refrigerator, bathroom, or near your bed.

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**

- The goal is to be more active, have fun, feel good about yourself, and to eat well.
- Get friends and family to help. It definitely works better when you partner with someone else to make changes in the way you eat or exercise.
- **You are NOT on a diet!** A “diet” usually means only a short-term change and generally isn’t something that is healthy.
- Limiting foods just doesn’t work and causes you to crave “forbidden” food more often. The goal is to maintain healthy eating and exercise habits as a regular part of life. Avoid over and under eating and find a place somewhere in between.
- **Last BUT NOT least:** Avoid short-term goals because nothing changes overnight. There will be times when it will be rough to stick to the changes you’ve decided to make. This is okay. Lifestyle change is very difficult for everyone, so try to remain positive and congratulate yourself for the changes you make. Hang in there and take one day at a time!13

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13 Adapted from Daniel Delgado, County of Santa Clara