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Skip to main content A healthy diet helps to protect against malnutrition in all its forms, as well as noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer. Unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity are leading global risks to health. Healthy dietary practices start early in life breastfeeding fosters healthy growth and improves cognitive development, and may have longer term health benefits such as reducing the risk of becoming overweight or obese and developing NCDs later in life. Energy intake (calories) should be in balance with energy expenditure. To avoid unhealthy weight gain, total fat should not exceed 30% of total energy intake (1, 2, 3). Intake of saturated fats should be less than 10% of total energy intake, and intake of trans-fats less than 1% of total energy intake, with a shift in fat consumption away from saturated fats and trans-fats to unsaturated fats (3), and towards the goal of eliminating industrially-produced trans-fats (4, 5, 6). Limiting intake of free sugars to less than 10% of total energy intake (2, 7) is part of a healthy diet. A further reduction to less than 5% of total energy intake is suggested for additional health benefits (7). Keeping salt intake to less than 5 g per day (equivalent to sodium intake of less than 2 g per day) helps to prevent hypertension, and reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke in the adult population (8). WHO Member States have agreed to reduce the global populations intake of salt by 30% by 2025; they have also agreed to halt the rise in diabetes and obesity in adults and adolescents as well as in childhood overweight by 2025 (9, 10). OverviewConsuming a healthy diet throughout the life-course helps to prevent malnutrition in all its forms as well as a range of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and conditions. However, increased production of processed foods, rapid urbanization and changing lifestyles have led to a shift in dietary patterns. People are now consuming more foods high in energy, fats, free sugars and salt/sodium, and many people do not eat enough fruit, vegetables and other dietary fibre such as whole grains. The exact make-up of a diversified, balanced and healthy diet will vary depending on individual characteristics (e.g. age, gender, lifestyle and degree of physical activity), cultural context, locally available foods and dietary customs. However, the basic principles of what constitutes a healthy diet remain the same. For adults a healthy diet includes the following: Fruit, vegetables, legumes (e.g. lentils and beans), nuts and whole grains (e.g. unprocessed maize, millet, oats, wheat and brown rice). At least 400g (i.e. five portions) of fruit and vegetables per day (2), excluding potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava and other starchy roots. Less than 10% of total energy intake from free sugars (2, 7), which is equivalent to 50g (or about 12 level teaspoons) for a person of healthy body weight consuming about 2000 calories per day, but ideally is less than 5% of total energy intake for additional health benefits (7). Free sugars are all sugars added to foods or drinks by the manufacturer, cook or consumer, as well as sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates. Less than 30% of total energy intake from fats (1, 2, 3). Unsaturated fats (found in fish, avocado and nuts, and in sunflower, soybean, canola and olive oils) are preferable to saturated fats (found in fatty meat, butter, palm and coconut oil, cream, cheese, ghee and lard) and trans-fats of all kinds, including both industrially-produced trans-fats (found in baked and fried foods, and pre-packaged snacks and foods, such as frozen pizza, pies, cookies, biscuits, wafers, and cooking oils and spreads) and ruminant trans-fats (found in meat and dairy foods from ruminant animals, such as cows, sheep, goats and camels). It is suggested that the intake of saturated fats be reduced to less than 10% of total energy intake and trans-fats to less than 1% of total energy intake (5). In particular, industrially-produced trans-fats are not part of a healthy diet and should be avoided (4, 6). Less than 5 g of salt (equivalent to about one teaspoon) per day (8). Salt should be iodized. For infants and young children In the first 2 years of a child's life, optimal nutrition fosters healthy growth and improves cognitive development. It also reduces the risk of becoming overweight or obese and developing NCDs later in life. Advice on a healthy diet for infants and children is similar to that for adults, but the following elements are also important: Infants should be breastfed exclusively during the first 6 months of life. Infants should be breastfed continuously until 2 years of age and beyond. From 6 months of age, breast milk should be complemented with a variety of adequate, safe and nutrient-dense foods. Salt and sugars should not be added to complementary foods. Practical advice on maintaining a healthy diet: Fruit and vegetables: Eating at least 400g, or five portions, of fruit and vegetables per day reduces the risk of NCDs (2) and helps to ensure an adequate daily intake of dietary fibre. Fruit and vegetable intake can be improved by: always including vegetables in meals; eating fresh fruit and raw vegetables as snacks; eating fresh fruit and vegetables that are in season; and eating a variety of fruit and vegetables. Fats: Reducing the amount of total fat intake to less than 30% of total energy intake helps to prevent unhealthy weight gain in the adult population (1, 2, 3). Also, the risk of developing NCDs is lowered by: reducing saturated fats to less than 10% of total energy intake; reducing trans-fats to less than 1% of total energy intake; and replacing both saturated fats and trans-fats with unsaturated fats (2, 3). In particular, with polyunsaturated fats. Fat intake, especially saturated fat and industrially-produced trans-fat intake, can be reduced by: steaming or boiling instead of frying when cooking; replacing butter, lard and ghee with oils rich in polyunsaturated fats, such as soybean, canola (rapeseed), corn, safflower and sunflower oils; eating reduced-fat dairy foods and lean meats, or trimming visible fat from meat; and limiting the consumption of baked and fried foods, and pre-packaged snacks and foods (e.g. doughnuts, cakes, pies, cookies, biscuits and wafers) that contain industrially-produced trans-fats. Salt, sodium and potassium: Most people consume too much sodium through salt (corresponding to consuming an average of 912g of salt per day) and not enough potassium (less than 3.5g). High sodium intake and insufficient potassium intake contribute to high blood pressure, which in turn increases the risk of heart disease and stroke (8, 11). Reducing salt intake to the recommended level of less than 5 g per day could prevent 1.7 million deaths each year (12). People are often unaware of the amount of salt they consume. In many countries, most salt comes from processed foods (e.g. ready meals; processed meats such as bacon, ham and salami; cheese; and salty snacks) or from foods consumed frequently in large amounts (e.g. bread). Salt is also added to foods during cooking (e.g. bouillon, stock cubes, soy sauce and fish sauce) or at the point of consumption (e.g. table salt). Salt intake can be reduced by: limiting the amount of salt and high-sodium condiments (e.g. soy sauce, fish sauce and bouillon) when cooking and preparing foods; not having salt or high-sodium sauces on the table; limiting the consumption of salty snacks; and choosing products with lower sodium content. Some food manufacturers are reformulating recipes to reduce the sodium content of their products, and people should be encouraged to check nutrition labels to see how much sodium is in a product before purchasing or consuming it. Potassium can mitigate the negative effects of elevated sodium consumption on blood pressure. Intake of potassium can be increased by consuming fresh fruit and vegetables. Sugars: In both adults and children, the intake of free sugars should be reduced to less than 10% of total energy intake (2, 7). A reduction to less than 5% of total energy intake would provide additional health benefits (7). Consuming free sugars increases the risk of dental caries (tooth decay). Excess calories from foods and drinks high in free sugars also contribute to unhealthy weight gain, which can lead to overweight and obesity. Recent evidence also shows that free sugars influence blood pressure and serum lipids, and suggests that a reduction in free sugars intake reduces risk factors for cardiovascular diseases (13). Sugars intake can be reduced by: limiting the consumption of foods and drinks containing high amounts of sugars, such as sugary snacks, candies and sugar-sweetened beverages (i.e. all types of beverages containing free sugars these include carbonated or noncarbonated soft drinks, fruit or vegetable juices and drinks, liquid and powder concentrates, flavoured water, energy and sports drinks, ready-to-drink tea, ready-to-drink coffee and flavoured milk drinks); and eating fresh fruit and raw vegetables as snacks instead of sugary snacks. How to promote healthy diets Diet evolves over time, being influenced by many social and economic factors that interact in a complex manner to shape individual dietary patterns. These factors include income, food prices (which will affect the availability and affordability of healthy foods), individual preferences and beliefs, cultural traditions, and geographical and environmental aspects (including climate change). Therefore, promoting a healthy food environment including food systems that promote a diversified, balanced and healthy diet requires the involvement of multiple sectors and stakeholders, including government, and the public and private sectors. Governments have a central role in creating a healthy food environment that enables people to adopt and maintain healthy dietary practices. Effective actions by policy-makers to create a healthy food environment include the following: Creating coherence in national policies and investment plans including trade, food and agricultural policies to promote a healthy diet and protect public health through: increasing incentives for producers and retailers to grow, use and sell fresh fruit and vegetables; reducing incentives for the food industry to continue or increase production of processed foods containing high levels of saturated fats, trans-fats, free sugars and salt/sodium; encouraging reformulation of food products to reduce the contents of saturated fats, trans-fats, free sugars and salt/sodium, with the goal of eliminating industrially-produced trans-fats; implementing the WHO recommendations on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children; establishing standards to foster healthy dietary practices through ensuring the availability of healthy, nutritious, safe and affordable foods in pre-schools, schools, other public institutions and the workplace; exploring regulatory and voluntary instruments (e.g. marketing regulations and nutrition labelling policies), and economic incentives or disincentives (e.g. taxation and subsidies) to promote a healthy diet; and encouraging transnational, national and local food services and catering outlets to improve the nutritional quality of their foods ensuring the availability and affordability of healthy choices and review portion sizes and pricing. Encouraging consumer demand for healthy foods and meals through: promoting consumer awareness of a healthy diet; developing school policies and programmes that encourage children to adopt and maintain a healthy diet; educating children, adolescents and adults about nutrition and healthy dietary practices; encouraging culinary skills, including in children through schools; supporting point-of-sale information, including through nutrition labelling that ensures accurate, standardized and comprehensible information on nutrient contents in foods (in line with the Codex Alimentarius Commission's guidelines), with the addition of pack labelling to facilitate consumer understanding; and providing dietary counselling at primary health-care facilities. Promoting appropriate infant and young child feeding practices through: implementing the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolutions; implementing policies and practices to promote protection of working mothers; and promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding in health services and the community, including through the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative. WHO response The WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (14) was adopted in 2004 by the Health Assembly. The strategy called on governments, WHO, international partners, the private sector and civil society to take action at global, regional and local levels to support healthy diets and physical activity. In 2010, the Health Assembly endorsed a set of recommendations on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children (15). These recommendations guide countries in designing new policies and improving existing ones to reduce the impact on children of the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children. WHO has also developed region-specific tools (such as regional nutrient profile models) that countries can use to implement the marketing recommendations. In 2012, the Health Assembly adopted a Comprehensive Implementation Plan on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition and six global nutrition targets to be achieved by 2025, including the reduction of stunting, wasting and overweight in children, the improvement of breastfeeding, and the reduction of anaemia and low birthweight (9). In 2013, the Health Assembly agreed to nine global voluntary targets for the prevention and control of NCDs. These targets include a halt to the rise in diabetes and obesity, and a 30% relative reduction in the intake of salt by 2025. The Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020 (10) provides guidance and policy options for Member States, WHO and other United Nations agencies to achieve the targets. With many countries now seeing a rapid rise in obesity among infants and children, in May 2014 WHO set up the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity. In 2016, the Commission produced a set of recommendations to successfully tackle childhood and adolescent obesity in different contexts around the world (16). In November 2014, WHO organized, jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2). ICN2 adopted the Rome Declaration on Nutrition (17), and the Framework for Action (18) which recommends a set of policy options and strategies to promote diversified, safe and healthy diets at all stages of life. WHO is helping countries to implement the commitments made at ICN2. In May 2018, the Health Assembly approved the 13th General Programme of Work (GPW13), which will guide the work of WHO in 2019-2023 (19). Reduction of salt/sodium intake and elimination of industrially-produced trans-fats from the food supply are identified in GPW13 as part of WHO's priority actions to achieve the aims of ensuring healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. To support Member States in taking necessary actions to eliminate industrially-produced trans-fats, WHO has developed a roadmap for countries (the REPLACE action package) to help accelerate actions (6). References (1) Hooper L, Abdelhamid A, Bunn D, Brown T, Summerbell CD, Skeaff CM. Effects of total fat intake on body weight. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*. 2015; (8):CD011834.(2) Diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases: report of a joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation. *WHO Technical Report Series*, No. 916. 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Geneva: World Health Organization; 2016.(17) Rome Declaration on Nutrition. Second International Conference on Nutrition. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/World Health Organization; 2014.(18) Thirteenth general programme of work, 2019-2023. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018. Skip to main content Start the new year with the evergreen resolution to lead a healthier lifestyle. Here are 10 practical health tips to help you start off towards healthy living in 2025. 1. Eat a healthy diet Photo: WHO/ Y. Shimizu Eat a combination of different foods, including fruit, vegetables, legumes, nuts and whole grains. Adults should eat at least five portions (400g) of fruit and vegetables per day. You can improve your intake of fruits and vegetables by always including veggies in your meal; eating fresh fruit and vegetables as snacks; eating a variety of fruits and vegetables; and eating them in season. Beating healthy, you will reduce your risk of malnutrition and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer. 2. Consume less salt and sugar Photo: WHO/C. Black Reduce your salt intake to 5g per day, equivalent to about one teaspoon. It's easier to do this by limiting the amount of salt, soy sauce, fish sauce and other high-sodium condiments when preparing meals; removing salt, seasonings and condiments from your meal table; avoiding salty snacks; and choosing low-sodium products. On the other hand, consuming excessive amounts of sugars increases the risk of tooth decay and unhealthy weight gain. In both adults and children, the intake of free sugars should be reduced. WHO recommends consuming less than 5% of total energy intake for additional health benefits. You can reduce your sugar intake by limiting the consumption of sugary snacks, candies and sugar-sweetened beverages. 3. Reduce intake of harmful fats Photo: WHO/S. Volkov Fats consumed should be less than 30% of your total energy intake. This will help prevent unhealthy weight gain and NCDs. There are different types of fats, but unsaturated fats are preferable over saturated fats and trans-fats. WHO recommends reducing saturated fats to less than 10% of total energy intake; reducing trans-fats to less than 1% of total energy intake; and replacing both saturated fats and trans-fats with unsaturated fats. The preferable unsaturated fats are found in fish, avocado and nuts, and in sunflower, soybean, canola and olive oils; saturated fats are found in fatty meat, butter, palm and coconut oil, cream, cheese, ghee and lard; and trans-fats are found in baked and fried foods, and pre-packaged snacks and foods, such as frozen pizza, cookies, biscuits, and cooking oils and spreads. 4. Don't smoke Photo: WHO/Y. Shimizu Smoking tobacco causes NCDs such as lung disease, heart disease and stroke. Tobacco kills not only the direct smokers but even non-smokers through second-hand exposure. If you are currently a smoker, it's not too late to quit. Once you do, you will experience immediate and long-term health benefits. If you are not a smoker, that's great! Do not start smoking and fight for your right to breathe tobacco-smoke-free air. 5. Be active Photo: WHO/Y. Shimizu Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. This includes exercise and activities undertaken while working, playing, carrying out household chores, travelling, and engaging in recreational pursuits. The amount of physical activity you need depends on your age group: adults aged 18-64 years should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity throughout the week. Increase moderate-intensity physical activity to 300 minutes per week for additional health benefits. 6. Check your blood pressure regularly Photo: WHO/ Ahmad Yusuf Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is called a silent killer. This is because many people who have hypertension may not be aware of the problem as it may not have any symptoms. If left uncontrolled, hypertension can lead to heart, brain, kidney and other diseases. Have your blood pressure checked regularly by a health worker so you know your numbers. If your blood pressure is high, get the advice of a health worker. This is vital in the prevention and control of hypertension. 7. Follow traffic laws Photo: WHO/D. Rodriguez Road crashes claim over one million lives around the world and millions more are injured. Road traffic injuries are preventable through a variety of measures implemented by the government such as strong legislation and enforcement, safer infrastructure and vehicle standards, and improved post-crash care. You yourself can also prevent road crashes by ensuring that you follow traffic laws such as using the seatbelt for adults and child restraint for your kids, wearing a helmet when riding a motorcycle or bicycle, not drinking and driving, and not using your mobile phone while driving. 8. Take antibiotics only as prescribed Photo: WHO/O. Tanggo Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest public health threats in our generation. When antibiotics lose their power, bacterial infections become harder to treat, leading to higher medical costs, prolonged hospital stays, and increased mortality. Antibiotics are losing their power because of misuse and overuse in humans and animals. Make sure you only take antibiotics if prescribed by a qualified health professional. And once prescribed, complete the treatment days as instructed. Never share antibiotics. 9. Clean your hands properly Photo: WHO/S. Price Hand hygiene is critical not only for health workers but for everyone. Clean hands can prevent the spread of infectious illnesses. You should wash using soap and water when your hands are visibly soiled or hand rub using an alcohol-based product. 10. Have regular check-ups Photo: WHO/Y. Shimizu Regular check-ups can help find health problems before they start. Health professionals can help find and diagnose health issues early, when your chances for treatment and cure are better. Go to your nearest health facility to check out the health services, screenings and treatment that are accessible to you. Skip to main content This page and linked pages display WHO publications in various digital formats, over and above what is available on Publications. This publication page will eventually replace Publications. If you are unable to find a publication through the search function on this page, please try the search bar by clicking on the magnifying glass at the top right of the site. Skip to main content Meaningful, small changes can have a big impact on your overall health and well-being. In 2024, commit to taking small steps to change your daily routines and habits to benefit your health. What a healthy diet looks like may differ from person to person, depending on your culture, where you live and what food is locally available. Yet, the principles are the same making informed choices can help you improve the way you eat. Cutting down on foods high in salt, free sugars, saturated fats and trans-fatty acids may sound overwhelming at first, but easy steps add up such as swapping a lunchtime soda for water. Eat at least five portions of a variety of fruits and vegetables every day. Think about a balanced and diversified diet, and keep fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts in mind as you plan your daily meals. Read WHO healthy diet recommendations. Being active every day can be challenging, but did you know that every move counts? Adding a walk after a meal, sweeping floors or taking the stairs can all help your cardiovascular health. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week if you are an adult. For additional health benefits, adults should increase their moderate-intensity physical activity to 300 minutes per week or the equivalent. If you have children or teenagers, be active together and help them reach their 60 minutes of exercise per day. There can be many environmental or mental barriers to physical activity, but always remember physical activity has significant health benefits for hearts, bodies and minds. Did you know that alcohol consumption is a contributor to more than 200 diseases, injuries, and other health conditions? Alcohol consumption increases your risk of injury, as well as longer-term effects like liver damage, cancer, heart disease and mental illness. Any level of alcohol consumption carries risk. If you drink alcohol, you may wish to discuss your alcohol consumption with a health-care professional. Learn more about alcohol in the Western Pacific. The benefits of quitting tobacco begin as quickly as 20 minutes after the last cigarette. Any tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke is harmful. Quitting tobacco reduces your risk of heart disease, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and other diseases. Quitting vaping can also be part of the step towards a healthier you. E-cigarettes are harmful to your health and have long-term consequences, especially for young people, because users are exposed to nicotine and other harmful chemicals. Sexual health is essential for a healthy life. Sex is much more than just physical connection it's about respect, pleasure and safety. Sexual activities involving other partners require explicit consent and should be free from coercion, discrimination and violence. It's also important to be safe during sex! Using condoms during sexual activity can help prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unplanned pregnancies and HIV. Loneliness is a serious health risk. A large body of research shows that social isolation and loneliness have a serious impact on physical and mental health, quality of life and longevity. Face-to-face or digital contact with friends or family can help you form meaningful social connections. It's also important to be kind to yourself and practise good mental health habits, to help manage any mental health conditions or stressful situations in your daily life. Make sure you and your family are up-to-date with routine vaccinations. Vaccines reduce the risks of getting a disease by working with your body's natural defences to build protection. If you have children who missed out on essential vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic, check with your health provider to help them catch up and protect their health. Bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites have changed over time and some no longer respond to medicines. Antimicrobial resistance makes infections harder or sometimes impossible to treat, increasing the risk of diseases spreading, severe illness and death. To do your part in combating antimicrobial resistance, take antibiotics and other antimicrobials only if prescribed by your health provider, complete your treatment days and don't share leftover antibiotics with others. Don't ask for antibiotics to treat common colds and flu antibiotics won't work against viral infections. Learn more about how WHO is combating antimicrobial resistance. Clean hands help stop the spread of infections. Make sure you wash your hands the right way using soap and water or an alcohol-based rub. Get more handwashing tips. See your health provider for regular, yearly check-ups. These visits can help you monitor your blood pressure to control and prevent hypertension the number one silent killer in the world. Many people don't know they have hypertension and without proper treatment, uncontrolled hypertension can lead to severe health complications later in life. Regular check-ups with your health provider will also help you keep track of your health status if you're at risk for hepatitis, HIV, tuberculosis or STIs. Essential tests, such as those measuring your cardiovascular health or sugar levels, can help with diagnosis and management of noncommunicable diseases like heart disease or diabetes early on. For women and men, health screenings like pap smears or prostate exams, respectively, can help detect cancer. Check with your health provider to find out which tests or screenings you need. Learn more about noncommunicable diseases. Lets all choose to be healthier in 2024! Skip to main content Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and mental health conditions are the biggest health threat in the WHO European Region and globally. NCDs are responsible for more than 80% of all deaths in the Region. These diseases are strongly linked to risk factors including unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, excess body weight (a body mass index over 25), and tobacco and alcohol use. Each year, tobacco kills 1.1 million people in the Region. Of those, 153 000 die from exposure to second-hand smoke. 7 of 10 lung cancers in men of the Region are related to tobacco use. 1 in every 11 deaths in the Region is due to alcohol consumption. About 800 000 deaths a year result from alcohol use almost a third of the global total of 2.6 million deaths. In most countries, salt intake is above the WHO-recommended maximum level (5 g per day). High salt intake raises blood pressure, which increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks, heart disease and strokes. Cardiovascular diseases cause more than two fifths (42.5%) of all deaths annually in the Region, which is around 10 000 deaths every day. Overweight and obesity are the fourth most common risk factor for NCDs in the Region, after high blood pressure, dietary risks and tobacco. 1 in 4 school-aged children lives with overweight or obesity. 27% of adults do not meet physical activity recommendations. Physical inactivity contributes to about 9% of all premature deaths. Tobacco is deadly in any form. Smoked tobacco products, including water pipes, contain over 7000 chemicals, including at least 250 chemicals known to be toxic or to cause cancer. Use of smokeless tobacco products can result in serious, sometimes fatal, health problems. Lifelong tobacco smokers lose at least 10 years of life on average. Tobacco use or exposure to tobacco smoking affects almost all organs of the human body and has a negative impact on health across the life course. Learn more about the harms of tobacco use in the WHO/Europe factsheet linked on this webpage. For your health, less alcohol is better, none is best! Alcohol is a toxic, psychoactive, dependence-producing substance. Alcohol consumption is causally linked to over 200 health conditions and other risks, including liver diseases, cancers, cardiovascular diseases, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, road injuries, violence and suicide. For all of these, there is a direct link between the amount of alcohol consumed and the likelihood of illness, injury or death the more alcohol you drink, the higher the risk. Learn more about the harms of alcohol use in the WHO/Europe factsheet linked on this webpage. Enjoy a healthy, balanced diet! A healthy diet helps to protect against malnutrition in all its forms, as well as NCDs such as cardiovascular diseases (including heart disease and stroke), type2 diabetes and some cancers. It is important to have a diet that includes a variety of foods across all food groups. Healthy dietary practices start early in life. Healthy diets can also contribute to an adequate body weight. Opting for a balanced, adequate and varied diet is an important step towards a healthy lifestyle. Healthy diet for infants and children Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first 6 months of life to ensure optimal growth, development and health. From 6 months onwards, breastfeeding should continue alongside the introduction of safe, diverse and nutrient-dense complementary foods. These foods should be prepared without added salt or sugar. Continued breastfeeding is encouraged up to 2 years of age and beyond, as it remains an important source of nutrition and immune protection. Healthy diet for pregnant and postpartum women Nutritious, safe diets are essential before and during pregnancy and while breastfeeding to support maternal and child health. Learn more about healthy nutrition in the WHO/Europe factsheet linked on this webpage. Stay physically active Physical activity includes any movement of the body that expends energy: walking, cycling, swimming, dancing, sports, exercise, taking the stairs, doing housework, etc. Benefits include: improved mental and physical health; reduced risk of cardiovascular diseases, cancers (especially breast and colon), diabetes, obesity, dementia, anxiety and depression; enhanced cognitive function and academic performance, especially in children and adolescents; and better mobility, balance, independence and quality of life in older adults. How can everyone lead an active lifestyle? Infants (under 1 year of age): Several active sessions daily, including at least 30 minutes in a prone position (tummy time) spread throughout the day. Children (14 years): At least 180 minutes of any physical activity per day. For children 34 years of age: at least 60 minutes of this time should be moderate- to vigorous-intensity activity. Children and adolescents (517 years): An average of 60 minutes per day of moderate- to vigorous-intensity activity. Include muscle- and bone-strengthening activities at least 3 times per week. Adults (1864 years): At least 150300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, or 75150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, or a mix of both. Include muscle-strengthening activities at least 2 times per week. Older adults (65+ years): Same as adults, with added focus on functional balance and strength training to prevent falls. Pregnant and postpartum women: At least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. Include a mix of aerobic activity, muscle-strengthening activities and gentle stretching. Learn more about the benefits of physical activity in the WHO/Europe factsheet linked on this webpage. WHO response in Europe WHO is committed to supporting countries in creating a healthier living environment for all citizens of the Region. Investing in policies and interventions that create enabling environments such as healthier food systems, opportunities for physical activity, and measures to reduce tobacco and alcohol use can contribute to a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous world. To address the overwhelming burden of NCDs in the Region, WHO/Europe identified the best buys proven, cost-effective measures to address NCDs. As a next step, WHO/Europe analysed how specific public health measures can have a positive impact on population health across Europe and central Asia in as little as 5 years. Based on this work, WHO/Europe introduced the quick buys the 25 policies targeting key risk factors (tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity) and disease groups (cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases and cancers). The quick buys clearly demonstrate how policy-makers and politicians can achieve measurable results in tackling NCDs within a single political cycle. WHO-recommended policies help achieve many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including better health (SDG3), quality education (SDG4.1 and SDG4.2), gender equality (SDG5), economic growth (SDG8), reduced inequalities (SDG10), stronger communities (SDG11), and climate action (SDG13). WHO/Europe is advancing NCD prevention by supporting countries to implement evidence-based policies that give measurable results. WHO works with countries to integrate best practices to prevent and treat NCDs at all levels of care. By promoting comprehensive strategies from legal frameworks and school-based programmes to digital policy regulation WHO helps countries create healthier environments that empower individuals to make informed choices and reduce NCD risks. >>\_

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