

Tahoe doc offers tips for a long, healthy life

By Kenneth Spielvogel

How can you live a longer, healthier life? The answer is complicated and simple. “Experts” claim every conceivable option: cleanses, hormones, pills, exercises, diets, the list goes on. The options are dizzying, even to healthcare professionals.

As a physician, I understand people want quick and easy answers. To be frank, consider the facts and what will likely be our demise. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease and cancer cause nearly half of all deaths. The risk of heart disease and the most common cancers, skin and lung cancer, can be greatly reduced with simple lifestyle choices.



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Consider this road map for a longer, healthier life.

If you use tobacco, quit. Tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes, and chewing tobacco. Twenty-eight percent of all cancer deaths can be attributed to lung cancer. Quitting isn't easy. Barton Health offers smoking cessation clinics. CT Scans of the lungs are also available at a reduced rate.

Exercise every day. Yes, every day. Break a sweat, breathe hard, stretch, lift weights, and move your body. Try a new sport: standup paddleboard, climb at the gym, or dance at Zumba.

Don't know how to start? Seek advice from a physician or professional trainer.

Eat whole foods. Avoid fast food and packaged food with ingredients you cannot pronounce. Eat fruits, vegetables, nuts, fish, chicken, soy, and lean protein. If needed, get help from a nutritionist.

Wear sunscreen and skin protection. Apply a minimum of SPF 30 and reapply every two hours. Hats and long sleeve shirts also provide extra protection.

Wear your seatbelt.

Get regular cancer screenings. Men and women over 50 should have regular colon cancer screenings. Men age 50 to 55 should start getting prostate cancer screenings. Women should have regular breast cancer screenings starting at age 40. If you have a family history, consider earlier screenings.

Check your cholesterol. If you have high cholesterol, decide with your medical provider what therapies are best.

Turn off the electronics. When you look back, you won't remember your high score in Candy Crush or the celebrity hashtag you followed this week. Spend face-to-face time with friends and family. Embrace your surroundings and the beautiful place we call home. A fulfilling life will feel like a much longer life lived.

Teach your children and other young people about the steps above. Encourage healthy lifestyle choices before unhealthy behaviors form habits.

Focus on these simple steps. Find support from others like

your healthcare provider, family, friends, or personal trainer. Their support is critical for success.

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