



# LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

Lifestyle medicine is a medical specialty that uses therapeutic lifestyle interventions as a primary modality to treat chronic conditions including, but not limited to, **cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, and obesity**. Applying the six pillars of lifestyle medicine—a whole-food, plant-predominant eating pattern, physical activity, restorative sleep, stress management, avoidance of risky substances and positive social connections—also **provides effective prevention for these conditions**.

## Step 1: Whole Food, Plant-Based Nutrition

Extensive scientific evidence supports the use of a wholefood, predominantly plant-based diet as an important strategy in prevention of chronic disease, treatment of chronic conditions and, in intensive therapeutic doses, reversal of chronic illness. Such a diet is rich in fiber, antioxidants, and nutrient dense. **Choose a variety of minimally processed vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds.**

## Step 2: Physical Activity

Regular and consistent physical activity combats the negative effects of sedentary behavior. It is important that adults engage in both general physical activity as well as purposeful **exercise weekly as part of overall health and resiliency.**

## Step 3: Stress Management

Stress can lead to improved health and productivity - or it can lead to anxiety, depression, obesity, immune dysfunction and more. Helping patients **recognize negative stress responses**, identify coping mechanisms and **reduction techniques leads to improved wellbeing.**

## Step 4: Avoidance of Risky Substances

Use of tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption have been shown to **increase the risk of chronic diseases and death**. Treatments often take time, different approaches and many attempts. Patience and support are an important part of breaking risky substance habits.

## Step 5: Restorative Sleep

Sleep delays/interruptions have been shown to cause sluggishness, low attention span, decreased sociability, depressed mood, decreased deep sleep, decreased caloric burn during the day, increased hunger and decreased feeling of fullness, insulin resistance and decreased performance. Strive for **7 or more hours per night for optimal health.**

## Step 6: Social Connection

**Positive social connections and relationships affect our physical, mental and emotional health.** Leveraging the power of relationships and social networks can help reinforce healthy behaviors.