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LIFESTYLE CHOICES TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLNESS  
AND TO LESSEN CHRONIC PAIN ISSUES

I. Health Impact of Lifestyle Choices

1. Positive Influences:
  - a. Getting regular exercise
  - b. Eating a healthful diet
  - c. Getting adequate sleep
  - d. Being sufficiently hydrated
  - e. Maintaining a strong social network
2. Negative Influences
  - a. Using tobacco
  - b. Consuming alcohol above recommended levels
  - c. Maintaining an undesirable body weight
  - d. Consuming highly processed, refined and fast foods

II. Role of Inflammation in Health and Disease, and in Chronic Pain

1. Certain lifestyle behaviors promote chronic inflammation
2. Chronic inflammation in turn contributes to most of the leading causes of death including coronary vascular disease, cancer, diabetes mellitus, autoimmune diseases, etc
3. Some research indicates that you can lessen chronic pain and side effects of medications with an anti-inflammation diet, regular exercise and stress management.

III. Positive Lifestyle Choices to Reduce Chronic Pain

1. An anti-inflammation diet: Consume a Mediterranean-style diet with high intake of green, leafy vegetables, fruits, berries, seafood, nuts, and other high-anti-oxidant foods. Avoid refined carbohydrates, packaged foods, sugar, processed meats, and fatty meats in general
2. Exercise: Get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity each week. (300 minutes/week provides even greater benefits. Do strength training exercises for all major muscle groups at least two times/week. Minimize sitting time.
3. Sleep: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the average adult needs 7-9 hours sleep in general.
4. Adequate hydration: the urine test (pale yellow vs dark yellow)
5. Maintaining strong social networks

IV. Selected References

1. Rhoades and McDonald: Mind-Body-Spirit Connections. Your Pathway to Better Health. Dog Ear Publishing, 2015.
2. National Library of Medicine. PubMed.gov. Lifestyle and Chronic Pain Across the Lifespan: An Inconvenient Truth? Nijs, et al, April 2020.
3. Harvard Health Publishing. Foods that Fight Inflammation. Nov 16, 2021.
4. International Association for the Study of Pain. Nutrition and Chronic Pain. July, 2021.