



Wellness

“The Complete Picture”

July 2012

Wellness is the condition of good physical *and* mental health, when maintained by a proper diet, exercise, and “good life habits”.

To achieve complete wellness we need to focus our attention on the three major body processes, **nutrition, mind, and physical being**, as a whole. One without regard to the other two is not complete wellness.

Nutrition is keeping the body functioning well by providing it with healthy, well balanced food, vitamins, and minerals.

- **Eating habits** make up the majority of our daily nutritional intake. What, when and how we consume food and beverages goes a long way to keeping our bodies fit.
- **Fitness nutrition** is the “nutritional value” including vitamins and minerals of our food choices.
- Often, **our nutritional needs out-weigh our caloric needs in the food we eat**. In these instances, we can supplement our diet with vitamins and minerals to fill the gap.

Mental and Emotional health is a feeling of complete well-being. This includes **dealing with stress effectively**, having the ability to adjust to life’s challenges, maintaining healthy relationships, and having good coping skills. There are several things that play a role in mental health.

- **Nutrition** has a significant effect on our mental health. With a healthy diet, the proper nutrients will help sustain ones body *and* mind.
- **Daily physical exercise** benefits the body as a whole. Exercise helps eliminate the “damaging” stress hormones **and** releases endorphins, which are the natural “feel good” hormones.
- **Sleep** is also important to mental health. Getting enough sleep provides our body and minds the time to recover from daily activities.

Exercise conditions our body to stay in optimal shape; to keep muscles functioning correctly and to build muscle mass. The more muscle mass we have, the more calories we burn. The more calories we burn, the better our metabolism uses the calories we take in through food.

- Exercise is vital for shedding and keeping off excess weight. *The body is meant to be active*, which is a challenge in today’s often-sedentary lifestyles. It gives our body energy (rather than depleting it) and, along with plenty of fluids and stretching, eases sore muscles.
- Any **regular exercise** that raises your heart rate for at least 20 minutes straight will do wonders for your body. Simply taking a walk, starting out slowly and working your way up to power walking, is an excellent example of exercise. You may want to engage in **a variety of activities** to make sure that boredom or weather does not stop you from getting your daily exercise.

Educate yourself about the things your body needs. With gradual changes and patience, overall wellness can be achieved over the course of your life.