

Chronic Disease Prevention

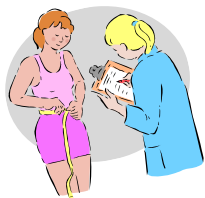
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Chronic disease is the leading cause of death and disability in Florida and in the nation. Chronic diseases are also a growing burden to the economy of the United States, especially as the number of uninsured individuals continues to rise. Heart disease, cancer and diabetes are responsible for 7 out of every 10 deaths of Americans. Chronic diseases have a long course of illness, are rarely resolved quickly, and are usually not cured by medication or prevented by vaccines.



Chronic diseases are the most common and most costly, however, they are also the most preventable. The most prevalent include heart disease and stroke, diabetes, cancer, obesity and arthritis. Programs, initiatives, and partnerships throughout the state of Florida are aimed at assessing behaviors, changing risk factors that are modifiable, promotion of early detection and supporting policy and environmental changes at the state and local levels, including worksites, communities, and homes in an effort to change the lives of Floridians.

Modifiable risk factors include nutrition, tobacco usage, physical inactivity, excess weight, and unprotected sun exposure. These are all issues that we can work on changing about ourselves, unlike risk factors such as heredity, genetics, etc.



To help Americans with "modifiable" risk factors there has been much research, multiple programs and partnerships put together and millions of \$\$ from consumers spent in an effort to transform ourselves. Many times someone will not succeed the first time they try to make a lifestyle change and this can turn into a very discouraging especially when a person has their hopes put into something.

Programs may or may not be successful for several reasons so always look at these components before choosing a program that you hope will "*change your life*":

- Is this a temporary "fix" or something that you will use for the rest of your life?
- Cost of program. Consider ALL of the things that are needed in order to follow the program i.e. new equipment, special foods, hidden charges, monthly or weekly fees, etc.
- Convenience. How much time is it going to take? Preparation of food, time away from family, shopping for specialty items, can it be done during non-family time, are you going to be able to stick to it while away on trips?
- Are you TRULY ready to commit to this change? Or are you just excited about trying something new?
- Is this a healthy program? Are there adverse effects of this program?
- Is there accountability in the program? Do you work with others in an effort to form a feeling of comradeship?

Steps to preventing and decreasing the severity of chronic diseases can be taken at any phase in your life. The most important thing is to take it one step at a time. Don't overwhelm yourself with dramatic changes that you have to start all at one time. When you get off track, just step back on without carrying around guilt and condemnation for your previous choices.

Links to get more info:

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/arthritis/index.html>

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/cancer/index.html>

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/dcp/index.html>

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/heart/index.html>

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/obesity/index.html>

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