

**The Cost of Being Sick –
Prevention is the Key to Lowering Health Care Costs**

A HyperStrike White Paper

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INTRODUCTION

Obesity is a growing problem in our country and it seems that the smarter we get and the more technological and scientific advances we make, the worse the problem becomes. This doesn't make a lot of sense, does it?

What is being done to prevent obesity? Clearly not enough. More than 65% of Americans are now considered overweight or obese. Many diseases that are leading killers in our society are preventable. That is correct. I am talking about diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and even certain types of cancer. The medical community has convinced the general public that treatments for these diseases are readily available instead of focusing on the prevention of them. Why? Because these treatments are what put money into the healthcare system, not the prevention of the disease itself.

One of the most startling statistics of all...70% of all cancers are lifestyle related. They are not genetic or caused by environmental factors, they are lifestyle related which means if we would make changes to our lifestyles, the development of the cancer could be prevented. Read on to determine ways that you can make changes and prevent some life threatening illnesses as well as lower your health care costs!

PREVENTION AND HEALTHY HABITS

The hardest step to take is the first one. However, if you set a goal of creating healthier habits for you and your family, just like a goal of painting your family room, you will get it done. If you never plan for it, you will never make the changes. Goal setting is the first step to healthier habits. Healthier habits are the first step to prevention and prevention is the first step to saving health care dollars. Most of us are investing in some sort of a retirement fund. We think of places we want to go, things we want to do and things we want to see when we retire. We dream of the things we don't have time for now. However, if we don't take the steps to prevent obesity, heart disease, diabetes, cancer and a host of other health issues, our retirement funds will end up being spent on medication and health care instead of traveling and enjoying life's golden years.

Here are some keys that you can incorporate into your lifestyle starting today to make changes that can lengthen your life, improve the quality and keep some healthcare dollars in your pocket.

- ❖ **Get Started...Today.** Hockey legend Wayne Gretzkey said that in his early years a coach once made a great impression by sharing these words of wisdom: "You miss 100% of the shots you never take". This is so true and applies to just about any situation in life, including creating healthier habits. If you never make the choice to start, you will never incorporate the healthy habits. All it takes is making the choice and moving ahead one step at a time.

- ❖ **Plan. It is that simple.** We have all heard the old saying “failing to plan is planning to fail” and that applies here as well. You must have a plan of what you intend to do, how you want to incorporate healthier choices and then simply follow the plan.
- ❖ **Know where you are.** Get a benchmark of how healthy you are right now. In order to determine the progress you make, you need to know where you are right now.
- ❖ **Know where you are going.** Use a journal to track your progress. This will help you stay on track and on the days you feel like you aren’t making any progress, you can look back at the last 30 (60 or 90) days and see how far you have come.
- ❖ **Be Patient.** Change takes time and seeing progress is going to take time as well. Chances are you didn’t see the “bad” changes happening to your body overnight and it will take time to see the positive ones as well.
- ❖ **Keep it fun!** Trying to follow a plan that is too strict or regimented is a sure fire way to fail. Keep a fun attitude, involve family and friends and make your new habits something that you look forward to.
- ❖ **Expect obstacles.** Just as knowing where road construction is happening can get you to your destination more quickly, knowing that obstacles are going to appear on your path to creating healthier habits will help you plan for them and get back on the path to your goal faster. Holidays, birthdays, celebrations, parties, emotional situations such as death, divorce or loss of a job are all things that can get us off track. As long as you expect some obstacles and plan for them, you will be better equipped to handle them and move on.

- ❖ **Sleep.** Sleep is underestimated in the role it plays in good health. We think that staying up an extra hour or two to complete a task is the best way to be productive. In fact, if we would “hit the hay” for some good rest we would wake up in a much more productive state and not only get the tasks from the night before completed but be in a better frame of mind for today’s tasks as well. Studies show that we are more likely to make poor eating choices or overeat when we are tired as well.
- ❖ **Get support from friends and family.** Engaging your network of friends and family is a great way to ensure your success. And, you might help them create some healthy habits along the way to add years to their life and life to their years! Accountability goes a long way in staying on track and creating a healthy lifestyle.
- ❖ **Consult your doctor.** Anytime you are planning to start a new eating/exercise plan it is a good idea to let your doctor in on your plan and your goals. Your doctor can help keep you on track and monitor your progress. Doctors can also help you monitor things that you can’t see or monitor on your own such as cholesterol and sugar levels.
- ❖ **Exercise!** In addition to eating better, make an effort to move your body for 30-60 minutes three to five days a week. This is the best medicine available.

FINAL WORD

Visualize how the world would be if everyone adopted healthier habits. Think about the 70% of those cancers that are lifestyle related. Think about the obesity problem that would no longer be an issue. Think about the average size of a women going from 14 to 8, and men going from a 44 inch waist to a 38 inch waist. Diabetes and heart disease would no longer be the killers that they are today. Each person has the power to make the changes and prevent these terrible diseases before they start. You have a plan, you know what to do. Find some good resources to help you and keep you accountable, such as the programs at www.hyperstrike.com. You are well on your way and you can make it happen!

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