

4 risky health habits - get started today making changes

Let this info from experts inspire you to make moves for better health

On the golf course, “Fore!” is an alert to people who are in danger of getting hit by a ball. When it comes to your health — and what course you’re on — you might consider this a valuable warning: “Four!” — as in four behaviors.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, four habits are the cause of much of the chronic disease in America, leading to illness and early death. They are:

1. Eating poorly.
2. Not getting physical activity.
3. Using tobacco.
4. Drinking too much alcohol.

Alone or together, they may cause or contribute to numerous chronic and serious conditions, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes and certain cancers.

Moving forward for better health

Inspired to rethink your habits? Keep reading for tips to help you start down the path to a healthier life.

You want to eat better.

Focus on fruits, veggies, whole grains, lean proteins and low-fat dairy foods. Go easy on sodium, sweets, saturated fat and trans fat.

Starter tip - Make one small, doable swap — something as simple as eating fruit as a snack or ordering whole-wheat bread for your sandwich. Once that’s a habit, move on to another positive change.

You want to be more active.

Most healthy adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week. Add strength exercises on two or more days a week.*

Starter tip - Begin with short 10-minute walks or workouts — and build from there.

You want to kick a tobacco habit.

Quitting for good will go a long way toward reducing your risk of disease. And if you've been exposing others to secondhand smoke, being a quitter will help protect their health as well.

Starter tip - [Make a plan to quit\(Opens a new window\)](#) — and set a date. It may help to use the time until that day to gradually cut down. Another wise move: Make an appointment to [talk with your doctor](#) about help to quit.

You want to cut back on drinking.

Moderate drinking means no more than one drink a day for women and no more than two for men. Some people should drink less or not use alcohol at all.

Starter tip - Try changing up the activities you associate with drinking. For example, instead of going out on the town with friends, plan alcohol-free activities like seeing a play, going ice skating or taking a dance class.

If you have difficulty drinking in moderation, talk with your doctor.