

BASIC HEALTH FACTS



When asked, "How are you today?" you probably respond automatically with, "Fine, thank you!" But are you really fine? You might have a headache, be angry with your best friend, and not have had your devotions for over a month. Can you be considered fine with all these problems? It depends on your definition of *fine*. If you mean that you feel fine, your answer may be correct. But if you mean you are in fine health, your answer may be very wrong.

CHAPTER

1

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

III John 2

What is health? Some people think of health as the absence of disease. Others think of health as living a long time. While both of these ideas are included in a definition of health, health is more than not being sick or living a long time. **Health** is the process of attaining spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being.

COMPONENTS OF HEALTH

Health is divided into at least five components: spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and social. While it is useful to study these areas separately, it is important to remember that they cannot be separated completely.



Spiritual Health

Yielding Yourself to God—The most important part of your health is your spiritual health. “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). There is nothing in this world as important as yielding yourself to God. Everything else lasts only for the short time you live on this earth. Your spiritual health affects you for eternity.

Spiritual health begins when you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Nicodemus, a wealthy and influential Jew, came to Christ by night to inquire about his own spiritual health. Christ told Nicodemus that there was only one solution to his problem: “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). What Christ told Nicodemus applies to everyone today. There is no remedy for those who are spiritually dead except to be born again.

Once you have been born again, you can progress to greater spiritual health. Studying God’s Word, applying its principles to your life, fellowshiping with God in prayer, and uniting with other believers in worship are examples of things you should do. As you incorporate these practices into your life, you will become a stronger, more mature Christian. To be spiritually mature and holy should be the goal for spiritual health.

Physical Health

Maintaining Your Body—Physical health deals with your overall physical condition. It includes such things as the ability of your body to resist infection, to complete daily tasks, and to participate in strenuous activities. By establishing habits that improve your physical health, you can increase your energy level, sharpen your alertness, improve your muscle tone, resist infection, and reduce extra body fat. Because you are the steward, God’s trusted servant, you should want to do what is best to maintain your temple.



Physical fitness takes work. A Christian’s goal should reflect the concept of being fit to serve.

Mental Health

Evaluating Information—Many people today are mentally lazy. They would rather watch a worthless television program than read a good book. Thinking is a labor that many avoid because it is difficult. It takes effort and work to learn to analyze and develop creative ideas. In II Corinthians 10:5 the Apostle Paul admonishes, “Cast . . . down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring . . . into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” You cannot reason or evaluate accurately without learning and understanding what God’s Word teaches. Mental health requires discipline in the things you think about.

Emotional Health

Controlling Reactions—Your emotional health deals with your responses. It includes feelings such as anger, hate, love, and joy. To be emotionally healthy you should be satisfied with the life and conditions the Lord has given you. A Christian realizes that God is in control of the circumstances and looks past the situation to see what God is accomplishing. Good spiritual and emotional health will produce satisfaction and peace.

Social Health

Getting Along with Others—It is a Christian’s responsibility to develop sound relationships. A sound relationship is one that is free from moral defect and worthy of confidence. Social health does not focus merely on a few friendships. Social health includes getting along with parents, **siblings** (SIB lings; brothers and sisters), **peers** (people of equal standing in age, class, or rank), friends, and acquaintances.

Components Work Together

Each component of health (spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and social) has a great influence on your body’s total health. Much of this influence results from the fact that each component can affect every other component. For example, if you break an arm (physical), you might become frustrated and



angry (emotional) because you cannot play your clarinet and will have to miss the upcoming band trip. As the day of the band’s departure approaches, your frustration may continue to build and you may become argumentative (social). Finally, you may be so upset that you blame God and find that you cannot pray effectively (spiritual). It is easy to see how problems or benefits in one area of health often affect another. In all areas of life, keep your focus on Christ and not on people, situations, or circumstances.

Section Review

1. Is the best definition of health “not getting sick”? Support your answer.
2. What are the five components of health and how do they differ?
3. What is the difference between siblings and peers?

Although the treatment of disease is important, there is a need to do more to prevent problems from occurring in the first place.

Doctor! Doctor!

Allergist—allergies
Anesthesiologist—anesthetics
Cardiologist—heart
Dentist—teeth
Dermatologist—skin
Endocrinologist—internal secretion glands
Family practitioner—general health
Gastroenterologist—digestive system
Geriatrician—elderly
Gynecologist—female reproductive system
Hematologist—blood
Internist—nonsurgical diseases
Nephrologist—kidneys
Neurologist—nervous system
Obstetrician—childbirth
Oncologist—cancer
Ophthalmologist—eyes
Orthopedist—skeletal system
Otolaryngologist—ear, throat
Otorhinolaryngologist—ear, nose, and throat
Pathologist—disease in tissues
Pediatrician—children
Podiatrist—feet
Pulmonologist—lungs
Radiologist—x-rays
Surgeon—operative procedures
Urologist—urinary tract

IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH CARE

You may be thinking, “Why worry about my health now? I am still young. Health is something for old people to worry about.” While it may be true that the elderly are concerned about their health, health should be important to everyone. Some of your health problems may have already begun. For



From the look of it, this doctor could be in which practice? (Use the chart on the left.)

example, if you have a mouth full of cavities, you cannot restore the tissue that has been destroyed. Fillings and good oral hygiene may prevent your cavities from getting worse, but the damage has already been done.

You do not have to be in your forties to have some serious **health risks**. A health risk is any factor (habits, traits, or conditions) that increases the chance of having a health problem. Many young people already have at least one factor that could contribute to heart disease, a stroke, or cancer. Even though a health risk does not always result in poor health, it is important to reduce health risks whenever possible and avoid creating habits which may lead to health risks.

Section Review

1. What are four factors that affect your health?
2. Define *lifestyle* and explain how it affects your health.
3. What is a *predisposition*, and why should you take notice of it?
4. Five poor health habits contribute to eighty percent of disease and disability in the United States today. List three of these habits.