



# You 2.0

## Simple Changes to Improve Your Health Now

*You have the power to improve your health. Relish this quick e-guide to take control more control, starting today.*

*With Love,*

*Cora Spaulding, MD*

## Be The Expert in You

**Can I get that number?** Important measurements to know!

### Blood Pressure

- [More than 40% of African Americans over the age of 20 have hypertension](#) (high blood pressure, HBP). It is important to check and know your BP reading.
- BP < 120/80, is considered normal.
- When BP > 120-129/80, elevated blood pressure is present.
- BP > 130/80 is defined as [hypertension](#).
- Untreated HBP can increase your risk for complications like stroke, chronic kidney disease, heart failure, and heart disease.
- If you have HBP, check your BP at home with an automated BP monitoring device and take it with you to your doctor's appointments to calibrate against their devices.
- Take medications as prescribed by your doctor and discuss any problems or side effects so that appropriate adjustments can be made.

### Waist Circumference

- Determine your waist circumference using a measuring tape.
- [Increased abdominal obesity](#) (>35 inches in women, >40 inches in men) is associated with an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol.

### Blood Glucose (blood sugar)

- [13% of African-American men and women over the age of 18 have diabetes.](#)
- African Americans should discuss screening for diabetes with their provider, especially if they also have obesity, hypertension, high cholesterol or a family history of diabetes.

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## Be The Expert in You (cont'd)

**Can I get that number?** Important measurements to know!

### **Body Mass Index (BMI)**

- More than 1/3 of black men and 1/2 of black women men over the age of 20 are obese (BMI > 30).
- Obesity is a chronic medical condition and the number one cause of preventable disease and disability. It is associated with a higher risk of hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and multiple types of cancer.
- If your BMI is elevated, develop a plan to modify your diet and to move more. Small changes made consistently over time can make a big difference.
- Enlist the help of medical professionals, including physicians, health coaches and nutritionists, if you are not achieving your goals.

## Make That Change

### **Stress Management - Take a deep breath and a mental vacation**

- Recognize that negative stress can contribute to a wide array of medical problems, even though not always recognized or addressed.
- Know that you can change how your body reacts to stress by learning relaxation techniques.
- Start with a simple breathing technique that can be used to counter stress and then teach your children.
- Recognize that you have the ability to reduce the impact of chronic stress.
- Take a regular vacation (mentally) - use visualization and guided imagery.
- Kaiser Permanente offers free guided imagery MP3s on their website.
- Take advantage of free YouTube videos to find 2 or 3 techniques that work for you - try yoga, meditation, guided imagery, or hypnosis.
- Several paid apps, including Calm, Headspace, 10% Happier, and InsightTimer, are available for both iOS and Android phones.
- Engage in rhythmic exercises like dance, running, jump rope or spinning to reduce stress, even if only for the length of one song.
- If you feel overwhelmed by stress, speak with your primary care provider or a mental health professional.
- There are also apps like Talkspace that allow you to use video chat or text to speak with a mental health professional when it's convenient for you, often at a lower cost.

## Make That Change (cont'd)

### Sleep Optimization - Early to bed, early to rise

- Most people need at least 7 hours of sleep but many don't get it. Commit to having a regular bedtime that you maintain even on the weekend.
- Develop a pre-bedtime ritual that you look forward to, whether it is a warm bath, a cup of tea, or doing another activity you find relaxing.
- Turn off all electronic devices 2 hours before bed, and place them away from the bedside at bedtime.
- You can't will yourself to sleep. Invite sleep by creating a desirable environment: a comfortable bed and pillow, essential oils, relaxing music and dim lighting.
- The bedroom should be a no TV zone. Use the bedroom for sex and sleep only.
- If you snore and have fatigue during the day, consider getting screened for sleep apnea. Untreated sleep apnea can increase the risk of developing hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, depression and stroke.

### Nutrition - Think of food as great tasting medicine

- [Eat the rainbow](#) (and I don't mean Skittles). Eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables to get fiber, vitamins, and nutrients all in one place.
- If possible, add [2-3 vegetables and fruits](#) to every meal. Fresh is great, but if not feasible, use frozen. Puree them and add to soups or any entrée (your kids may not even notice).
- Make smoothies using fresh or unsweetened frozen fruits or vegetables, a liquid of your choice and protein powder for a quick, delicious, and nutritious breakfast.
- Adding [fiber](#) from fruits and veggies to every meal can decrease spikes in your blood sugar.
- If you want to lose weight, downsize to a smaller plate for all meals.
- If you eat out, automatically box half of your food as soon as you get it to save for a later meal.
- Use a free mobile app like [MyFitnessPal](#) to track meals and calories, since most of us have inaccurate recall of what we eat.
- Shop around the [periphery of the store](#) as much as possible; avoid the packaged and processed food that's usually found in the middle.
- [Learn how to read a food label](#) and avoid foods with added sugar and unhealthy fats.
- Ask your doctor about diets that have been shown to be useful in hypertension and heart disease, like the [DASH](#) or [Mediterranean diet](#).
- Avoid fad diets and focus on fact diets, those known to be associated with some positive health outcome in research studies.
- If cooking with oil, choose olive oil when possible because of its anti-inflammatory effects.
- Spice up your life with health-promoting spices like turmeric, cinnamon, curry, garlic, cayenne pepper (and avoid adding salt). If you purchase in smaller amounts from the bulk bin, they are more affordable.
- Be adventurous! Experiment with yogurt, kimchee, sauerkraut, kefir and tempeh, foods that naturally contain healthy bacteria called [probiotics](#).

## Make That Change (cont'd)

### Movement - You are never too old for recess

- [More than half of African Americans 18+ are considered inactive.](#)
- Reimagine exercise as adult recess. Recall what you enjoyed as a child (jump rope, dancing, dodgeball) and then figure out what is closest to it.
- Take 5: Commit to moving in some way that you enjoy for 5 minutes (or for 1 song) daily for 30 days. Frequency and consistency are key to developing the habit. You can always increase duration and intensity over time. Just start today.
- If you can't think of an activity that you like, pick whatever is easiest and pair it with something that you love. Walk, dance in place, or jump rope while listening to music, watching your favorite tv show, or catching up on Facebook.
- Add [weight training](#) to your routine twice a week to prevent bone loss and control age-related weight gain. Begin with 1 body part daily for 5 minutes using items that you already have around the house as weights (like soup cans).
- Be more physically active. [Work up to at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week,](#) or a combination of both. Start slow if you need to, but be consistent and keep progressing.
- Invest in a [fitness tracker](#) to monitor your movement and to make sure that you are making progress toward your activity goals.
- Take advantage of paid and free exercise videos on YouTube. You don't have to go to a gym or pay for a membership to get in a good workout.
- Add extra movement to your routine by taking the stairs, parking away from building entrances or filling a grocery cart with heavy items that you can push around the store.

### Social Support - Create your own dream team

- Think about your personal support group like a sports team. Who is on your team and what role do they play? Who can you draft?
- No biological family? Create your own. There are lots of adults looking to be part of an adopted family.
- Identify someone you think is a role model for you and then ask them to mentor you. Teach your children to do the same.
- Understand that we all need help and support to thrive. Think about one person you can add to your support team this week and then talk with them.
- Encourage or thank someone today. There is an epidemic of loneliness in spite of social connection through the internet.
- Nurture and invest in [healthy relationships.](#) If you are in an unhealthy one, evaluate what keeps you there and what needs to change.

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## Make That Change (cont'd)

### Be SMART When Setting Goals

- **Specific:** Identify both the desired behavior and outcome.
- **Measurable:** Decide how you will measure and track progress.
- **Attainable:** Start with small achievable goals and be specific about the steps required to be successful.
- **Realistic and Relevant:** Begin with a behavior that you are ready and willing to change and be specific about your why- what is motivating you.
- **Timely:** Give yourself a reasonable timeline to achieve goals, and go at a steady, consistent pace.

### Your Goal

**Specific:**

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**Measurable:**

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**Attainable:**

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**Realistic and Relevant:**

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**Timely:**

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### Making changes in our lifestyle can be as simple as ABC

- **A**ct now and start with the behavior that seems easiest to modify.
- **B**uild a new habit at a pace that works for you, with a focus on consistency.
- **C**ommit to progressively adding healthy behaviors while maintaining changes already made.

For more tips and health information follow

@coraspauldingmd on  Instagram.