

Extend Your Life Expectancy By More Than 50 Percent

We've all read that leading a healthy lifestyle can prevent heart attacks, diabetes, and certain cancers. A new study shows that these same behaviors can help you live longer.

"A recent study of 125,000 Americans published in the American Heart Association's journal *Circulation* shows that people who adopt these five healthy lifestyles after the age of 50 can have their lives extended by more than 50 percent," Dr. Gabe Mirkin, author of "The Healthy Heart Miracle," tells *Health Radar*.

The Five Steps to Live Longer study presented new research gathered by Yanping Li Ph.D., a research scientist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. And it actually measured

how much impact these changes can make on life expectancy.

1. Eating a healthy diet. Filling your plate with whole grains, fruits, vegetables, fish, and foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids can reduce your risk of death by up to 17 percent, say researchers.

2. Exercising regularly. The study revealed that those who hit the recommended exercise target of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week lived as much as 4.5 years longer than their sedentary counterparts.

3. Maintaining a healthy body weight. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of health-related problems such as Type 2 diabetes

and heart disease. But researchers also found that for every unit increase in your body mass index (BMI), you have a seven month decrease in life expectancy.

4. Not drinking too much alcohol. While a moderate amount of alcohol has been associated with lower risk of cardiovascular disease, the study found that drinking more than 100 grams of alcohol weekly, or the equivalent of seven drinks, lowers life expectancy by five years.

5. Not smoking. Butting out, or never lighting up in the first place, could not only save your life, it can help you live longer. Smoking can reduce your lifespan by 10 years, say researchers. □

Are You Getting Enough Vitamin B12?

By Lynn Allison

Vitamin B12 is involved in many metabolic processes essential to health and wellness. Dr. Ellen Kamhi, Ph.D., R.N., a medical school instructor and the author of "The Natural Medicine Chest," tells *Health Radar* that B12 is involved in energy production, brain and nerve health, DNA replication, production of red blood cells, and myelin sheath formation. "The best sources of B12 are animal based, including dairy, eggs, shellfish, and red meat," she says.

Kamhi explains that B12 deficiency is common in vegans, but age and taking too many prescription drugs can also deplete B12. In fact, four out of every 100 women ages 40 to 59 are B12 deficient — and many more are borderline. Here are some common symptoms of vitamin B12 deficiency:

Fatigue. If you can barely stay awake in the afternoon, even if you got a good night's sleep, you may have a deficiency. This is because the body relies on B12 to make red blood cells, which carry oxygen throughout your body.

Memory fog. Have you ever left the keys in the fridge and then worried that you may have early dementia? It may just be low levels of B12 that are to blame. A simple blood test can assess the situation.

Dizziness. If you are feeling off balance, like 40 percent of vitamin B12 deficiency sufferers, you may get dizzy just walking up a flight of stairs.

You're seeing double. In extreme cases, lack of B12 can damage the optic nerve, causing blurry or double vision along with sensitivity to light. □