

How Can People Remain Disease-Free Longer?

Answer: Maintain a healthy weight, never smoke, drink alcohol only in moderation and stay physically active.

April 16, 2020 By [Alicia Green](#)

There's really no secret to good health. Specifically, in order to stay healthier and disease-free longer new [study](#) findings published in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine suggests that achieving these positive outcomes is as simple as maintaining a normal body weight, never smoking, exercising and drinking only moderate amounts of alcohol, reports [Medical News Today](#).

For the study, researchers reviewed the data of more than 116,000 participants from 12 different European studies. Scientists assessed which participants experienced the most disease-free years between ages 40 and 75 and which lifestyle profiles and modifiable factors contributed to this effect.

Investigators monitored individuals for 12.5 years to see whether they developed cancer, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Researchers also identified four lifestyle profiles with varying combinations of factors associated with continued overall well-being. (How factors were combined didn't seem to affect the positive connection.)

Results showed that the factor most associated with good health was having a body mass index (BMI) below 25; a BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 is indicative of a normal weight, according to the National Institutes of Health.

But people who remained disease-free for longer also had least two of the following lifestyle factors in their profiles: never smoked, engaged in regular physical activity and consumed only moderate alcohol.

In addition, researchers noted that other factors might also play a role in prolonged good health, including age and socioeconomic status. (Those who were younger and of higher social standing were more likely to have better healthy lifestyle scores.)

Researchers concluded that despite some study limitations, including variations in questionnaires, the findings could be useful for disease prevention and bolster the evidence to support healthy choices in everyday life.

For related coverage, read "[Being Overweight Raises Cancer Risk Twice as Much as Previously Thought](#)" and "[It's Not Too Late for Middle-Aged Women to Lower Stroke Risk.](#)"

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