

# Chronic diseases can kill, cause disability and negatively affect your quality of life.

**The good news is that there are steps you can take to help prevent medical complications from chronic diseases and conditions, and improve the quality of your life.**

## 1 Get the proper medical care.

Take the initiative to establish a strong relationship with your physician by visiting regularly, calling attention to any changes in your condition and taking prescribed medications as directed. Be sure to follow your physician's advice.

## 2 Know your disease or condition.

There are nonprofit organizations focused on your disease or condition. They generally have a wide array of information about your condition and how to live more successfully with it. Use their resources and programs. Learn more about your condition from the Internet or other sources, but make sure that your source is reliable.

## 3 Maintain your health through proper diet, weight control and exercise.

If you smoke, stop. Seek professional advice regarding diet and exercise. Even small steps will help you to improve your health.



## 4 Reduce stress and maintain good mental health.

Stress can aggravate chronic disease while a positive outlook can help you cope. Learn about stress reduction techniques and practice them. Seek out community-based support groups for both your chronic condition and for stress, depression, etc.

## 5 Know your body.

Watch for warning signs of disease like fatigue and changes in lumps, moles or bodily functions. Report warning signs and changes to your doctor.

## 6 Make sensible, necessary adjustments in your life.

You may have to work fewer hours or give up driving at night. Pay attention to posture and look for ergonomically engineered products that can support your body.

## 7 Know what resources are available in your community that may be able to help you with special problems.

Nonprofit organizations and community-based programs

provided by hospitals and state and local governments offer a wide variety of programs and services like prescription help and transportation.

## 8 Avoid risky behaviors.

Don't smoke and limit alcohol consumption.



Protect yourself against sexually transmitted diseases.

## 9 Talk with your employer about any accommodations you might need.

Perhaps a change in your work schedule and/or work environment can help you be more productive. Participate in employee-focused wellness initiatives at work or ask your employer to start such a program.

## 10 Seek guidance.

Look for information and resources to help enhance your life. Start with the member agencies of Community Health Charities of Maryland. Visit [www.healthmattersatwork.org](http://www.healthmattersatwork.org).