

Defining Health

Health. A small word. But a word for which different people have different meanings. Health is a relative term. To some, it is something you are born with while to others it is a choice and some may even say it is your lifestyle.

The whole concept of health varies through a wide angle indeed. To some, having the perfect physique is being healthy. Others say having a good metabolism is indication of sound health. There are others who think that having no disease is what it means to be healthy. While teen girls may think that having stick figures and glowing skin is all about a good health, their 'gentlemen' counterparts may say that having six pack abs is what defines good health.

So many perceptions and views on health, right?

Let us try to narrow down things a bit in order to come up with something that can be related to by all.

In 1948, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defined health with a phrase that is still used today.

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity," WHO, 1948.

In 1986, the WHO further clarified that health is:

"A resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities."

To put it simply, being healthy not only means being free from any kind of disease and any other kind of body anomaly, but also means having a sound mind, good relations with family, peers and surroundings. In addition, being healthy means having a good role to play in society.

Health can be classified as three types:

1. Physical Health- being fit physically, i.e.

having no disease, having good immunity to diseases, etc.

Components of physical health, that ensure that a person is physically fit or healthy, are

Physical activity: Most healthy children and adults should be active on a daily basis. This should be a mix of both leisurely physical activity and structured exercise. Examples of leisurely physical activity include hiking, biking, and walking. Examples of more structured forms of exercise include strength training, running, and



sports.

Nutrition and diet: A well-balanced diet should contain carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals. Restricting specific nutrients should only be done under the supervision of a licensed health professional. Fluid, ideally in the form of clean water, should be regularly consumed. Meals and snacks should be consumed throughout the day, and portion sizes should be sensible.

Alcohol and drugs: Substances that alter mood or other bodily processes should be limited or avoided. Those with addictive tendencies or other health risks should consider complete abstinence from these substances.

Medical self-care: Basic items, such as bandages, lozenges, and over-the-counter pain-relieving medications, should be easily accessible from home. Long-term coughing, fevers, or other ailments should be addressed through primary care. Emergency treatment should be sought

when signs and symptoms are significant or life-threatening.

Rest and sleep: While regular activity is essential for physical health, allowing the body to rest is just as important. Spending time relaxing or taking short naps can help rejuvenate the body. Sleep should take place in a quiet, dark environment and should last approximately 7-9 hours. Consistent sleep that is much shorter or longer than this duration, or is low quality,

may need to be addressed by a health professional.

2. Mental Health- Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

Mental health is not only the absence of depression, anxiety, or another disorder. It also depends on the ability to:

- enjoy life
- bounce back after difficult experiences
- achieve balance
- adapt to adversity
- feel safe and secure
- achieve your potential

3. Spiritual Health- Spiritual Wellness is a personal matter involving values and beliefs that provide a purpose in our lives. While different individuals may have different views of what spiritualism is, it is generally considered to be the search for meaning and purpose in human existence, leading one to strive for a state of harmony with oneself and others while working to balance inner needs with the rest of the world. The path to spiritual wellness may involve meditation, prayer, affirmations, or specific spiritual practices that support your connection to a higher power or belief system. Yoga and meditation can also help you develop spiritual wellness.

Having compassion, the capacity for love and forgiveness, altruism, joy, and fulfillment help you enjoy your spiritual health. Your religious faith, values, beliefs, principles, and morals define your spirituality.

There you have it — a better understanding of health and hopefully an outline of a path to it.

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