

Week 4: What does Healthy Really Mean?

“Healthy” is a word that gets used (and overused) in recipes, food packaging, and marketing! It’s also a word that many of us strive for but what does “Healthy” really mean? And how does your belief about what “healthy” really means affect your life?

Good health is central to handling stress and living a longer, more active life. Mental and Physical health are probably the two most frequently discussed types of health. Spiritual, emotional, and financial health also contribute to overall health. Medical experts have linked these to lower stress levels and improved mental and physical well-being.

It takes a lot to keep your body healthy. Getting your annual checkups, eating fruits and vegetables, staying away from processed foods and lots of sweets, exercising, getting a good night’s sleep, learning to deal with stress; the list could go on and on. There are many different parts of the body that can be affected by unhealthy habits. It does take willpower and discipline to have healthy habits and taking care of all aspects of your health.

Here are a few traits of a physically healthy person.

- **Weight:** It is important to maintain a healthy weight where one is not too skinny and not too big. It can be a factor in developing diseases like cancer or diabetes, and cardiovascular disease which can increase the chance of a heart attack.
- **Posture:** A person who is slouched over may have physical pain or problems. They could also be stressed, self-conscious, or anxious. Put your shoulders back, stand tall and strut your healthy self!
- **Skin:** Skin is the largest organ in the human body. It doesn’t have to be perfect to show great health, but it can be one to indicate trouble on the inside.
- **Flexibility:** This does not mean that you must be able to do a split, but a healthy person should be able to move easily and freely without much trouble. Being able to move easily can significantly impact a person’s life. If you are unable to move easily, it will be harder, or you may find it daunting to exercise.
- **Breathing:** Our bodies need oxygen, and healthy breathing brings the right amount of oxygen to all parts of the body. The normal breathing rate should be 12-20 breaths per minute.
- **Positive Attitude:** A healthy person often has a positive attitude. Their positive attitude is an indication of being happy and optimistic when things go wrong. If a person has a negative attitude, then it is difficult to take the steps necessary to become healthier. The good news is that someone who has a negative attitude can change if they want to or have the right support system.
- **Healthy Habits:** Exercising, eating healthy, getting plenty of sleep, and regularly going to the doctor shows that they are healthy. This doesn’t mean that a person is unhealthy if they have a bad habit or indulge occasionally. To remain healthy, the bad habits should be far and few between.