A **balanced diet** and **regular exercise** are an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Healthy eating means developing good nutritional habits, such as adding more fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meat to our daily intake and cutting back on processed foods that have a lot of fat, salt and sugar. Most nutritionist consider a diet that is low in fat, sodium, and sugar while high in fibre, vitamins, minerals and protein to be a healthy one. Also, by eating a variety of foods we should be able to ensure that our body gets all the nutrients it needs. By making small changes in our diets, by controlling portion sizes and making better choices we can achieve the advantages of healthy eating.

The benefits of eating a healthy diet are many and varied. When you choose healthy foods that are low in fat, sodium and cholesterol and are nutrient rich with essential vitamins, you are doing your best to keep your body working efficiently. One of the greatest benefits of eating healthy is protection from diseases such as cancer, heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure. Additional benefits include increased resistance to infections, improved quality of sleep, better skin tone and an overall better quality of life.

Regular exercise not only makes us physically fit, it also improves our mental health and general sense of well-being. People who lead active lives are less likely to get ill and more likely to live longer. The *psychological* benefits of exercise include increased self-esteem and self-confidence – when you look good and feel happy your confidence level rises. There is also a sense of alertness, improved concentration and memory. People who exercise often are better able to deal with stress and fatigue.

Exercising does not have to be a rigorous workout in the gym. If you are thinking of starting an exercise routine don’t do anything strenuous at first: even small steps can make a difference. Simple exercise such as walking, running or swimming can leave you refreshed and energized. Whatever your goal, it is important that you do something that you can enjoy.

Remember! Even though you may exercise consistently, your body needs the proper nourishment in order to maximize the benefits of exercise.