

# Circles of Health

## Practical Tips for Wellbeing



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Hello!

Thank you for subscribing to my healthy living newsletters. As a way of saying thank you, I have written this free e-book, which contains a total of 20 practical tips that you can implement immediately to start living a healthier life in a simpler way.

In addition to this e-book, as a subscriber to Illuminated Health, you will now receive my newsletters, which contains information about health, wellbeing, nutrition, Ayurveda, and yoga. I also keep you up to date with any workshops or news related to health and/or my business.

I am on all social media sites and you can find me as follows:

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/illuminatedhealth>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/illuminatedheal>

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I hope that you will find this guide informative and practical. As always, I would love to hear from you about your thoughts about the e-book. Please do chime in via twitter, facebook, google plus, my blog, or email with any questions or comments you may have.

With that said, I now leave you to read this free e-book.

Health and Happiness,

Varsha

## **Circles of Health: Practical Tips for Wellbeing**

"The doctor of the future will give no medication, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, diet and in the cause and prevention of disease"  
~ Thomas Edison

There are many books about staying healthy, but this e-book is unique because in a quick, easy, and practical way, I lay out the basics of how to prevent disease and staying healthy. I will reveal the secrets to staying healthy in my four key areas of health.

Practicality is very important when it comes to health because unless it's a practical approach, the "diet" plan will fail. In fact, most diets out there don't work after the first few weeks or months because it is not a practical and long term approach. It works great while it lasts, but you need healthy tools that you can use for a lifetime. In this e-book, I will lay out the basics of preventing disease and how to stay healthy on a day-to-day basis that won't have you reading or referring to a specific diet plan the rest of your life. I will also reveal to you the secrets to staying healthy and my four areas of health. That's right, there are four circles that come together when it comes to your health, which will ultimately give you a stronger foundation for a healthier life. Why four circles? The four circles relate back to my logo and you don't really know which circle came first, because not one circle is more important than the other and similarly, not one part of wellbeing is more important than the other. They are all equally important.

The four key areas of health are Nutrition, Sleep, Exercise, and Immunity. Nutrition includes your diet (food) plan, what you eat, how much you eat, and when you eat. The word "diet" has such a negative ring to it that I never give my clients a "diet" plan, but rather a "nutrition" plan. Sleep is just as important as what you eat because without sleep, our bodies do not have the time to repair itself from all the damage we cause during the day. Exercise is again just as important because staying physically active and fit is important for overall heart health and for your digestive and immune systems. Of course, lastly, your immune system needs to stay strong so that it can fight off any foreign invaders and prevent us from getting ill. Without any further delay, here are the four circles of health and my five practical tips in each chapter to promote health for yourself and for your loved ones.

## Circle 1: Nutrition

“Without proper diet, herbs are of no use. With proper diet, herbs are of no need” – Charak Samhita (original text of Ayurveda)

Nutrition is an essential component to our health because without a healthy diet, our body will not have the proper energy to sustain itself. For example, a car requiring premium petrol should only be filled with premium petrol and filling it with regular unleaded petrol will cause problems to the engine of the car. Similarly, our bodies require only the best of fuel which comes from organic, fresh, and whole foods. I challenge you to eat only fresh and whole foods for an entire week and just notice how much better you are feeling.

It is definitely easier said than done when it comes to eating whole and fresh foods. However, making changes one day at a time is easier than trying to do it all in one go. Here are the top tips in improving your diet:

1) Eat your fruits, vegetables, and grains. You really should aim for your five fruits and vegetables a day. Each cooked vegetable serving is half a cup and each serving of a fruit is about a medium sized fruit. Half cup of fruit also counts as one serving. Therefore, if you have a salad, get 1 cup of vegetables in it and you just got 2 servings of your 5 servings in a single meal. Have 1 piece of fruit during the day and then have another 2 servings of vegetables with dinner. You have now reached your minimum of 5 servings, which I still feel isn't enough. However, don't be afraid to have more fruit and vegetables. In fact fruits and vegetables are high in fibre and therefore, they fill you up faster and promote a healthy digestive tract. As for grains, not all grains are bad for you and whole-grains are excellent for your health. Grains contain many vital nutrients such as magnesium and selenium, which are needed to maintain heart health. However, it's the refined and processed grains that you want to avoid. Its best to avoid pasta, white rice, and white flour, which are considered to be refined carbohydrates and these can lead to weight gain, obesity, and diabetes. Whole grains provide a steady release of energy.

2) Eat a rainbow of colours throughout the week and you will ensure that you get all your nutrients. You don't need to consume every single nutrient every day because our bodies use the nutrients as needed. As long as you eat a variety of colours throughout the week, you will get all the nutrients you need. Red would be beetroots, apples, raspberries, radishes and red peppers. Orange would be oranges, tangerines, cantaloupe, and carrots. Yellow would be lemons, onions, bananas, and yellow capsicum peppers. Green would include spinach, kale, cucumbers, avocados, kiwi, and asparagus. Blue and Purple would include blueberries, aubergines, blackberries, raisins, and elderberries.

3) Always combine protein and carbohydrates to regulate blood sugar levels and to maintain energy levels. When most people hear the word carbohydrates, they instantly think of grains, breads, and pastas. However, fruits and vegetables also count primarily as a carbohydrate. All carbohydrates contain naturally occurring sugars, which your body needs to give itself energy. Therefore, anything with sugar

will naturally give your body a natural sugar rush, which will cause your sugar and insulin levels to spike. To prevent the sugar spike and to keep your energy levels stable, always have some protein with your fruits, vegetables, and grains. For example, have grapes with cottage cheese. Have carrot sticks with hummus.

4) Have a variety and don't have the same foods everyday or every week. Food should be fresh, in season, and naturally cultivated. It is best to eat different foods on the different days of the week. Eating the same foods every day leads to your body getting too comfortable and then at some point, your body will not be able to handle new foods. Although it is great to have a steady routine, it's even better to throw a curve ball into the mix so that your digestive system and your immune system stay strong and resilient.

5) Don't eat until the previous meal has digested. In ensuring that you eat on time and eat regularly, often times, people make the mistake of eating before the previous meal has digested. On average, it takes about 3 hours for the food you ingest to past through your stomach and into your intestines. Therefore, it would be ideal to not eat in between meals. Most importantly, do not overeat. Eating before the previous meal has digested and overeating can lead to digestive imbalances and can give rise to indigestion such as acid reflux, upset stomach, feeling bloated, chronic diarrhoea, chronic constipation and ultimately, even irritable bowel syndrome, also known as IBS.

## **Circle 2: Sleep**

Sleep is the time when the body repairs itself. A quote I once came across said, "sometimes the most productive thing one can do is to sleep." Sleep is very important to health and wellbeing, but in the right amounts. For example, did you know that studies now show that those who get 6-7 hours of sleep a night live longer than those who get 8 or more and 6 hours or less? We live in a world where work seems to be a priority over personal wellbeing. Work will always be there, but you will actually be more productive if you keep a routine and go to bed on time. Here are my tips for ensuring that you get enough sleep every night.

1) If you have trouble sleeping, try going to bed before you hit your second wind, which is usually around 10pm. This means that you should avoid forcing yourself to stay up when you are feeling sleepy. Also be sure to drink plenty of water and avoid caffeine. Depending on how sensitive you are, you may want to avoid caffeine all together. I also recommend relaxing before bed by either reading, taking a bath, journaling, or other light activity. Drink warm milk (or warm almond milk) with some nutmeg and saffron or turmeric is a great home remedy to help you sleep.

2) Have a balance of rest and activity. Ayurveda states that one of the causes of illness and imbalances is the "overuse, underuse, and misuse of time, senses, and actions." The way we use our time, how we engage our senses, and the actions we take all in turn affect our health. For example, instead of going to bed on time on a weekday night, if you choose to stay up light to watch a rerun of your favourite

television show, you are now overusing and misusing your time, when you should be sleeping.

3) Avoid watching television or using a computer 30 minutes before bedtime. When you expose yourself to a bright screen or monitor shortly before bed, your brain sees light and immediately associates it as being daytime. Essentially, when your brain sees light, it immediately associates it as being daytime, and thus your circadian rhythm is now distorted. Therefore, 30 minutes to 1 hour before bed is the ideal time to relax by reading, or engaging in a light activity or conversation in a room with dimmed lights.

4) Have a daily routine. Ayurveda strongly emphasizes how important it is to have a daily routine. Having a structured routine will help to re-establish circadian rhythms so that your body becomes accustomed to sleeping at the same time and waking up at the same time. It is also just as important to have breakfast, lunch, and dinner at about the same time everyday. Just like the way children are encouraged to have a regular routine, as adults, you should also have a routine. When you have the regular routine, you will find that you don't need an alarm clock to wake you up, you will begin to wake up naturally feeling more fresh.

5) Prioritising sleep is perhaps the single most important point. Although it sounds easier to push sleep aside, but it does have adverse affects on your health. Proper sleep brings about happiness, nourishment, strength, and life. Sleep should never take a back seat because we all know what it feels like when you do not get a full night's sleep. With a lack of sleep, you feel tired and less productive. You also decrease your body's ability to work efficiently and you compromise your immune system. Therefore, make sleep a priority and do not push it aside.

### **Circle 3: Exercise**

Those who think they have no time for bodily exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness. ~ Edward Stanley. This is very true and exercise is one of those activities, that we can easily say, "oh, I'll do it tomorrow." However, when it comes to your health, exercise should be made a priority, just like your diet and sleep because it is one of the circles of health and is part of the remedy for prevention.

1) You have probably heard again and again about how exercise is good for your heart and managing your weight. However, did you know that exercise is the key to keeping your metabolism strong as you get older? Exercise boosts your metabolism, but you must eat according to your metabolism. This is key in weight loss as well. If you don't eat enough (or eat too much), then it doesn't matter how much exercise you do, it will be very challenging to lose the weight and keep it off.

2) Forget the creams and the botox. If you want to look younger naturally, get up and exercise. On top of boosting your metabolism, exercising also improves circulation. This means that exercise keeps your skin and internal organs younger and in better shape. You can only look naturally healthy on the outside if you are

naturally healthy on the inside. Inner really does reflect the outer, so do yourself a favour and move your body. And besides, it is cheaper to have a gym membership than it is to pay for expensive creams and surgeries.

3) There are many options out there when it comes to finding a form of exercise. You could go to a gym and use their equipment. Or you can hire a personal trainer, go to bootcamp classes, dance, yoga, pilates, kickboxing, bicycling, running, body pump classes and the list goes on. There are so many options out there. So if you don't like going to the gym, try something else. Stay active and try a variety of different classes, gyms, and activities until you find something that you love.

4) Once you find something you love to do, then do not over do it. Exercise should be in moderation. For example, do not go to the same class everyday because your body will get tired. It is ideal to take a day of rest to allow your muscles to recuperate. A balanced exercise regimen involves getting your heart rate up for 1 hour three to four times a week. You can however, add yoga or body balance classes in between your workout sessions to improve your flexibility.

5) Have your nutrition complement your exercise regimen. Have fruit before working out and protein after working out. Protein before working out is inefficient because it takes your body 4 times as much work to convert protein into energy than it does carbohydrates into energy. Regardless of your workout goals, it's never a good idea to exercise on a completely empty stomach, because your body needs energy for you to workout. Therefore, especially for weight loss, its best to have carbohydrates before working out, such as a banana and then have some protein afterwards, which will help to repair any tissue damage and build muscle.

## **Circle 4: Immunity**

We each have our own pharmaceutical company inside of us and that is known as our immune system. More than often, we are all told by government, society, parents, books, magazines, the media, and even social media that to prevent disease, we need to watch our diets, get enough exercise, and to sleep enough. However, the immune system is always left out. The immune system is ultimately what makes the diet, exercise, and sleep worth all the effort. Because you can do everything else, but if your immune system isn't strong and resilient enough, illness will find you. A balanced diet, sufficient sleep, and enough exercise will all promote a healthy immune system. On top of those three, here are my tips to keep your immune system strong.

1) Start your day off with hot water with lemon. The hot water wakes up your body and digestion and the lemon will cleanse your digestive tract. You can also drink hot water with lemon anytime during the day as it also cuts the "grease" on the inside of your body. Just like the way you use lemon to wash a greasy pan to dissolve the oil, the fresh lemon juice does the same to the inside of your body. Lemons may also have anti-cancer properties as well.

2) Your digestion is one of the most important keys to keeping your immune system strong. Ayurveda says an imbalanced digestion is the root cause of all illness because the weaker your digestion, the weaker your immune system is. Your immune system can work only as strong as your body can absorb nutrients, digest, metabolise, and eliminate foods and other impurities. You can keep your digestion strong by drinking hot water with lemon, avoid eating before the previous meal has digested, avoid overeating, and eating a proper balance of carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats. Make sure that the foods you eat do not cause any indigestion. If you experience any indigestion, then that is your first sign that your digestion is weak.

3) Keeping digestion strong means that your immune system stays balanced and strong. And this means that you can prevent allergies, both indoor and outdoor. By refining your diet and lifestyle, you can have your own recipe to prevent hay fever and all the other side affects of allergies. I also advise that you use natural and organic cleaning products, including air fresheners and laundry detergents.

4) Find balance in your life to keep your immune system strong. We all have stressors in life, but ultimately, it is about how you deal with the stress. Do not work too much and do not relax too much either. As I mentioned earlier, you need a balance of rest and activity, which will keep your body in parasympathetic mode (rest and digest) rather than in sympathetic mode (flight or fight). When you are constantly stressed, you weaken your immune system and thus making yourself more vulnerable to disease.

5) Lastly, happiness is one of the most important factors for keeping your immune system strong. In fact, Elizabeth Taylor once said, “A belly laugh increases the ability of your immune system to fight infections.” She is right. Laughter really is the best remedy. Do one thing everyday that brings you joy and makes you smile. My key recommendation is to spend at least 10 minutes a day doing something for yourself that brings you joy. Keeping your health stronger is really this simple.

## **Conclusion**

In this e-book, I have given you a total of 20 ways to take charge of your health in a simple and practical way in the areas of nutrition, sleep, exercise, and immunity. I recommend picking one area first and then making changes in one aspect of your life at a time so that you can be on the path to a healthier you.

Here is a summary of each section and tips on getting you started:

Nutrition - Start by favouring fresh vegetables over frozen vegetables. And then work your way up to having a rainbow of colours throughout the week. While you focus on the colours, you will also naturally begin to incorporate your 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day plus your grains.

Sleep – If you have insomnia or trouble sleeping, begin by establishing a daily routine. Then, be sure to avoid watching television or working late at night in front of your laptop. It's best to relax and engage in light activity. Also, be sure to avoid caffeine and perhaps even try warm milk or warm almond milk before bed.

Exercise – Start exercising by making time for it and find something that you love to do. The only sure way to continue to exercise is if you enjoy it. However, once you find what you love, do not overdo it. Be sure to give yourself days to relax and stretch. Remember, exercise is part of a great anti-aging regimen and works best when balanced with a proper nutrition plan.

Immunity – Remember to keep your immune system strong by starting your day off with hot water with lemon. Always keep an eye on your digestion and how foods make you feel. And lastly, do one thing a day, even if its just for a few minutes, that makes you truly happy and brings a smile to your face.

Remember, your health is in your hands. Take the time to care for yourself to ensure a healthier future.

If you need help making healthy changes to your diet and lifestyle, please do contact me today and we can get you started by having a nutrition consultation, which will include personalised recommendations to meet your health needs and goals.

For more information, please visit my website: [www.illuminatedhealth.com](http://www.illuminatedhealth.com)

My blog can be found on: [www.illuminatedhealth.com/ihblog](http://www.illuminatedhealth.com/ihblog)

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## About Varsha Khatri



“Destiny begins with choices made today,” is her motto in life. Each day, we make decisions and we only have today to create a healthier tomorrow. Her passion in life is health and wellness. Her focus is on health promotion and disease prevention. She always says that “If you are blessed with great health, appreciate it. If you have an imbalance, never give up and search for your healing.” Always put your energy on the positive aspects and always direct your energy towards a healthy living. Varsha’s approach to healing and living a healthy life is through the principles of Ayurveda, Nutrition, Health Education, and Yoga.

Varsha has a Masters in Holistic Health Education and Holistic Nutrition from John F. Kennedy University in California, USA, as well as a Bachelor’s degree in Physiology, Health, and Ayurveda. She has worked in the health and nutrition industry for over 7 years. Over the years her experience in the field of functional nutrition has enabled her to work with patients to reach their health goals through the power of healing foods. Varsha uses techniques accustomed to both Eastern and Western health practices.

Furthermore, Varsha is a certified Yoga Teacher also holds a certification as a Reiki Healer. She works as a nutritionist, health educator and wellness consultant. Her practice involves integrating both the western and the Ayurvedic approach to diet, nutrition, fitness, lifestyle, and spirituality.

Varsha runs her own business: Illuminated Health, from her office in Uxbridge, UK and is also based in London, UK. She is available for private nutrition consultations for all ages and for a variety of health conditions. She teaches her group yoga classes in Ruislip, Greater London, UK. Varsha is a Nutritionist, writer, health educator, mentor, and public speaker. She is currently working on her first book for publication in late 2014. Varsha is also available for group health education workshops and for corporate wellness sessions.

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