

# Chapter 1: Self Responsibility for Wellness

## Introduction



## 1.1 Introduction

A study by the centers for disease control shows that **53%** of an individual's ability to cope with disease is determined by **his lifestyle**, **21%** by **his environment**, and **10%** by **his physician**. Thus fully **84%** of the ability to cope with, and reduce the risk of disease and premature mortality is under the control of the individual and his society. Only **16%** is beyond this control or determined by **heredity**. This percentage may further be reduced by the possibility to replace defective genes inherited from parents through genetic engineering.

- **Acquiring the knowledge** and skill to become an independent adult and to achieve optimum health is an individual responsibility.
- **Health:** is a quality of life that includes an individual's physical, mental, and social well-being.
- **Wellness:** is a holistic concept that includes all areas of life and how they interact through positive and/or negative feedback loops.
- **healthful behavior;** action that 1) helps prevent illness or accident 2) promotes health, yours and others and/or 3) improves the quality of the environment.
- **Risk behavior:** the opposite of healthful behavior.
- **Health promotion:** informing and motivating people to adopt/maintain healthful behaviors.

## Definition



## 1.2 Definition

**Health is not just absence of disease.** It is part of a **wider concept of wellness** which emphasizes: 1) **being well physically** (condition of the body), **mentally** (condition of the mind), and **socially** (relation to others); and 2) the interrelatedness of all aspects of life and how behavior in one area can affect other areas.

Self  
Responsibility  
Health

## 1.3 Self-Responsibility for Health



An individual who is informed and motivated to **adopt/maintain healthful behavior** is more likely to **achieve optimum health** (by **choosing healthful behavior** and making the most of his heredity and environment).

The wellness approach to health implies that **the individual is responsible for choosing healthful behavior** (e.g., wearing seat belt, exercising regularly, eating judiciously...), **avoiding risk behavior** (e.g., smoking cigarettes, using illegal drugs...), and **adopting a balanced life-style** as illustrated in Figure 1.1 of the health triangle.

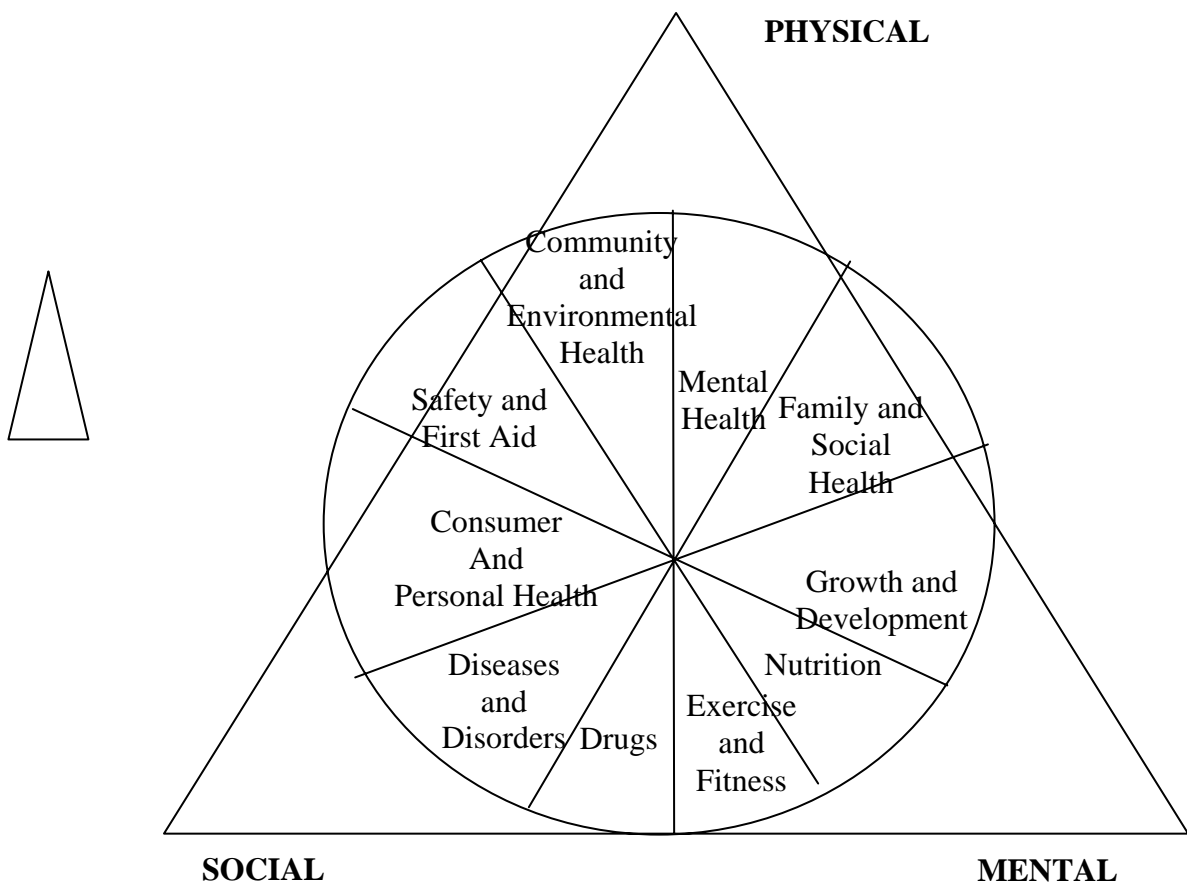


Figure 1.1: Health triangle

The **triangle** has three **points**—**physical, mental, and social**, representing the components of a **balanced lifestyle**, and an **inscribed circle** (behavior wheel) divided into **10 sectors** related to wellness. The centre where the sectors *intersect symbolizes the holistic effect of a single healthful or risk factor on one's lifestyle*; e.g., **exercising regularly affects**: 1) **mental health** (by releasing endorphins which relieve stress and create a feeling of well-being), 2) **nutrition** (by burning calories and helping to control weight) and 3) **diseases and disorders** (by strengthening the heart and improving its capacity to use oxygen).

Achieving  
Optimum  
Health



## 1.4 Achieving Optimum Health

### 1.4.1 The Four Steps towards Achieving the Optimum Health

- 1) **Acquire** health knowledge (to know which behaviors are healthy and which are not).
- 2) **Examine** your behaviors to develop health awareness through health appraisal (one way is to set up a health behavior inventory, as shown in Table 1.1).
- 3) **Set** personal health goals and design specific plans to reach each goal, (to reinforce/acquire healthful behaviors and avoid/eliminate risk ones).
- 4) **Make** responsible health decisions, using a problem-solving approach, to choose the **most healthful behavior**, (i.e., a behavior that is also safe, legal, shows respect for self and others and follows accepted guidelines), if several alternatives are available.

**Table 1.1: Health behavior inventory**

<b>Mental Health</b>
1. I have a plan to relieve the effects of stress 2. I like myself
<b>Family and Social Health</b>
3. I have at least one close friend 4. I am able to share some of my feelings with my parents
<b>Growth and Development</b>
5. I maintain my desirable weight 6. I have correct sitting posture
<b>Nutrition</b>
7. I eat a well-balanced diet from the four healthful food groups 8. I limit my intake of fatty foods
<b>Exercise and Fitness</b>
9. I get at least six to eight hours of sleep each night 10. I Participate in a regular exercise program to strengthen my heart
<b>Drugs</b>
11. I refrain from drinking alcohol 12. I avoid smoking

Table 1.1: Health behavior inventory (Cont.)

<b>Diseases and Disorders</b>
13. I know the seven warning signals for cancer 14. I avoid spreading germs when I have a cold
<b>Consumer and Personal Health</b>
15. I read labels on food cans and packages to determine the ingredients 16. I select television shows that promote mental health and stimulate my mind
<b>Safety and First Aid</b>
17. I wear a seat belt when riding in an automobile 18. I have smoke detectors in my home
<b>Community and Environmental Health</b>
19. I buy returnable bottles whenever possible 20. I properly dispose of trash

Achieving  
Optimum  
Health:  
National  
Goals



### 1.4.2 Achieving Optimum Health: National Goals

Health authorities should identify the major health problems in the country and set goals and plans to overcome them. **Sanitation measures and effective mass vaccination programmers** have reduced **mortality from infectious diseases**. The leading causes of death in **advanced countries** are **heart disease, strokes, and cancer (72%)**, followed by **accidents**.

National goals and strategies to achieve them could include:

- 1) **Preventive health services** delivered to individuals by health providers:
  - a-family planning
  - b-pregnancy and infant care
  - c-immunizations
  - d-high blood pressure control
  - e-sexually-transmitted disease service
  
- 2) **Health protection measures** used by governmental and other agencies as well as industry to protect people from harm:
  - a-toxic agent control
  - b-occupational safety and health
  - c-accidental injury control
  - d-fluoridation of community water supplies
  - e-infectious agent control

- 3) **Health promotion activities** that individuals and communities can use to promote healthy lifestyles:
  - a-eliminate use of tobacco
  - b-reduce misuse of alcohol and drugs
  - c-improve nutrition
  - d-encourage exercise and fitness
  - e-control stress

Focus on Life  
Management  
Skills



## 1.5 Focus on Life Management Skills

### Focus on Life Management Skills

- 1) **Set health goals** and make and follow plans to reach them.
- 2) **Be aware of current health information** and regularly engage in health appraisal.
- 3) **Use the problem-solving** approach to make responsible decisions that lead to actions that are healthful, safe, legal, and show respect for self and others.
- 4) **Use commitment and self-discipline** in your lifestyle to engage in healthful behaviors and to avoid risk behaviors.