

# The Fayetteville Observer

## Columnist: Pivot to healthy lifestyle

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By Sid Gautam

These days, Washington is buzzing with a popular word: "pivot." News reporters use it to describe a significant change in American foreign policy.

We would like to make similar plea to residents of our community to "pivot" to healthy living.

The March 28 Fayetteville Observer carried a shocking headline: "Cumberland is 73rd in health and quality of life." The story said when it comes to being healthy, Cumberland County doesn't measure up in North Carolina. This was the conclusion of a state health care report that put Cumberland County near the bottom of the state's 100 counties.

This report should be a wake-up call. The religion of good health is coming slowly in America. Compared to most western countries, we spend twice as much as any other nation on health care. But our health care status is low in the developed world. Money is not the answer to our problem.

It is ironic in our country that whenever we talk about health, all emphasis is on curing and controlling disease. Neither our physicians nor our medical institutions give enough priority to prevention and improving general health. The old saying, "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure," is most relevant in health care. But it has never become the main priority of our health planners and medical professionals.

Healthy living is not impossible at any stage of life. The latest medical research proves that even serious problems of heart, brain, lungs or clogging of the arteries can be reversed if the individual changes his or her lifestyle and starts regular exercises.

Every pill-pushing commercial also recommends a change in lifestyle and eating habits. However, the primary focus of commercials is to sell drugs and create dependence for the long run. It helps drug companies' bottom lines and continuously increases our health expenditures.

Americans consume 20 percent of their calories from sugar, fructose and other chemical ingredients that contribute nothing to nutrition but cause obesity and all kinds of impairments. By avoiding sugary drinks, we can easily reduce obesity and maintain good health.

Changing lifestyle is never easy. But small changes can free us from a life overwhelmed by doctors' visits, repeated tests, electronic imaging and a variety of pills. Rather, we can enjoy everyday life by eating nutritious foods and living stress-free.

We've been given wonderful bodies, which silently suffer misuse and abuse until they reach a breaking point and we start suffering one ailment after another. As patients, we think our bodies are machines, and we carry them for repair and restoration from one specialist to another.

The body is a holistic thing. When we take any pill to cure an ailment, it may cure something, but it will have many side effects on other parts of the body. Overuse of antibiotics kills more good bacteria in the digestive system than bad ones.

### Health summit

We are organizing the first-ever holistic health summit on May 17 at the Horace Sisk Gym of Fayetteville Technical Community College. The primary focus of this summit is to create awareness about maintaining and improving your health by simple, easy and practical methods. We have planned body and mind exercises such as yoga, Pilates, tai chi, meditation and pranayama (science of breath control).

All attendees will have plenty of opportunities to learn the basics of breathing control exercises, which can energize our neurological systems. The invited speakers will discuss the causes and cures of stress and wellness, and how to use food as a medicine.

A monk coming all the way from India will discuss the blueprint for living a daily life free of stress and conflict and full of enjoyment. We will also have holistic food and a holistic lunch and demonstration of various herbs and spices that are frequently mentioned in the columns of this newspaper and other publications.

You can register for this program by visiting [steppress.org/events/HealthSummit/default.html](http://steppress.org/events/HealthSummit/default.html) or calling 867-0070. The program is free, but registration is required.

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