**Take Charge of Your Health Now – Easier to Maintain and Improve than to Reclaim!**

You’ve heard the expressions “Good health is everything” and “You have nothing if you don’t have your health”. For the past few years, I’ve been on my soapbox trying to share easy ways for people to improve their health. Most people, including me, hate changes – especially ones that seem like too much work or any kind of depravation. Trust me, I’ve written articles about the negative impacts of eating sugar, processed foods and fast foods have on the body. However, I have not been able to give them up. What does it take for us to finally get serious about our health?

After 46 years of pretty good health, I had a few accidents last year that took away my health for several months. I ruptured a disc in my low back, had severe sciatic nerve pain down my leg and numbness is 3/4th of my right foot, and was in almost constant pain. After the final injury, I could not sit for more than 3 minutes at a time. Not being able to do what I enjoy and having my personality altered by the pain was horrible. I felt worthless and depressed. Eventually, I had to have surgery and deal with a brutal recovery. After 6 months very rough months, I’m finally feeling good. I believe that part of the reason I went through this was to have a greater empathy for the people I work with who have chronic pain. There were so many technologies and things that helped me during that time that I will share in future articles.

More importantly, it gave me the perspective to really share **how critical it is to take control of your health RIGHT NOW!** Don’t wait until you have hypertension, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, osteoporosis, arthritis, gastrointestinal issues, chronic pain, cancer, fatigue – just to name a few. Don’t wait until you are on numerous medications. Your body is nothing short of genius. Given the right tools – nutrients, exercise, hydration, healthy environment and sleep – your body is designed to heal itself. Granted, we can blame some of our health on our DNA, but you have complete control of so many other things. These include what you eat (processed food, fast foods, pesticides, herbicides, genetically modified foods, high fructose corn syrup, etc.), your environment (air, water, toxic cleaning and skin care products, electropollution, etc.), your exercise program, your sleep habits, your stress management techniques (stress is the root of many health problems) and more. If you have kids or grandkids, it is important to show them another way. It is predicted that our children will be the first generation that will not live as long as their parents. That's scary!

If that is not enough to get your attention, think about the **financial impacts of illness and disability**. My few months of disability cost me plenty – copay and deductibles, lost wages, time spent on the couch and at doctor appointments, rehabilitation and other expenses. One in 3 people will be disabled at some point in their working careers. It happens more often than you realize. Health problems are the main cause for bankruptcy. It definitely impacted my ability to save money, which has greater impacts towards retirement.

Trust me, it is so much easier to maintain and improve your health than it is to try to regain it. Don’t fall into that dark hole of poor health and depression. Don’t be cheap when it comes to your health. I know people who won’t spend a dime on their health, but have no trouble shopping or eating out. Every dollar you spend on preventative care and wellness will save you $3-7 in disease costs. What a great rate of return. You are worth it!

You don’t have to do it all at once either. Take small steps, write down goals and keep track of your progress. Enlist the help of family, friends or co-workers. Start by reading some of the past Healthier Living articles and tips on the Chat, Chew and Chocolate website as well as other great articles by the other experts. [www.livinghealthiernow.com](http://www.livinghealthiernow.com) has more info too. As you start to feel better by doing baby steps, you will want to continue on that path to better health. Do it for you and do it now!