



## **HEALTH – TECHNOLOGY IS NOT THE ANSWER**

Most of us would readily admit that one of the biggest things we take for granted is our health. We get something like the common cold, albeit a nasty strain this year, and we bemoan the runny nose and coughing vowing to ourselves to appreciate our health when we get better only to forget again until next time we are sick. In the end what does it matter how successful you are or money you have, how good looking or popular you are or even how many computers you have if you don't have your health. With modern Western medicine turning its focus to gene and stem cell research to provide hope to many, alternative therapies growing in popularity by the day and the Internet providing each of us a medical resource and choice we never had before you could say we should well placed to keep ourselves healthy. However preventable problems like obesity and skin cancer are only growing in number, mental and physical breakdowns from overworked people are at alarming levels, more kids than ever are on behaviour modification medications and it is thought the younger generation for the first time in history may have shorter life-span than their parents.

While modern technology has helped the medical industry in so many wonderful ways, it has at the same time removed basic healthy habits from our lifestyle. Technology has not replaced fresh air, human interaction, fresh food and physical exercise which are the basic elements for a healthy mind and body.

Now the following story might sound like a typical example for many in Western society currently in the middle part of their life. In your adolescent years you were encouraged to play outside with friends and at school and extra curricular engagements, energetic activities were the norm keeping us in good physical shape. Junk food, TV and computer games were a part of life but by no means a dominating facet. As you moved into the latter part of school and either work or study beyond high school, the amount of physical activity probably diminished, a car replaced your walking, alcohol and smoking may have entered your life but the fact that your metabolism was working at its greatest rate and many were trying to keep in reasonable shape to impress and attract a mate meant that your health was still reasonable. Soon the demands of work would take over leaving less time to be active and to interact with the new family you have. Now with a partner, you have let yourself go a little and with time being a precious commodity, it is easier to put the kids in paid child care and eat fast food in your dual income household. The media, school counsellors and teachers, your own parents and the government are bombarding you with messages about ADHD, divorce rates, the evils of too much TV, private health insurance, obesity, new diseases like Bird Flu and all you are trying to do is enjoy the little bit of spare time you have and provide a good life for your family.

If that sounds familiar and bad news well spare a thought for your kids' generation because a lot of those healthy habits that were a normal part of your early childhood are not for them and other issues like the environment, heart disease in their 20s and Ritalin are a reality for them. If anything speaks volumes about the sad state of our society it would have to be the number of young kids on prescribed medication because of supposed personality disorders. It is hard to believe that suddenly our youth is going through an epidemic of personality issues requiring chemical intervention when for all previous generations most young people turned into healthy functioning adults. This medication should be the absolute final resort and not the first point of call as it seems today just because it is the quick fix. It is this quick fix mentality you see with "ab machines" that give us a six pack while we sit in our lounge chair and the new fad diet flavour of the month that says a lot of how we try and solve our problems.

Maybe regarding health we might have to actually put in a bit of effort and be a bit more respectful to our bodies and who knows not only will we be more healthy but we might also stop taking our health for granted.

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