

The Healthspan10™ – Ten Essentials to a Long and Vital Life

HOW TO ADD 12 OR MORE YEARS TO YOUR LIFE



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How is your health?

For most of us, the truth is, our health isn't where we want it to be. We do our best, but it's a challenge these days. It's no secret the world is an unhealthy place and the result is that more than 60% of adults are sick with diseases like high blood pressure, unhealthy weight, high blood sugar, and heart disease. And all that disease is costing us big time. We are taking tons of medications - spending too much time in doctor's offices and hospitals - and not living life to the fullest.

As a physician, I find this completely unacceptable. And the reason it's unacceptable is that I know something most people do not.

I know that many of these diseases - diseases that are increasing at epidemic levels and affecting more people than not - are mostly preventable. Or treatable. Or even reversible.

Here's what I tell all my patients: You don't have to settle for a life of taking more medications, spending too much time in doctor's offices and hospitals, and not living your best life. But to get there, you can't accept the default option. You need more than a ten-minute office visit, another prescription, and unclear instructions to "eat healthier" or "lose weight" or "get some exercise."

HealthspanMD provides the tools you need to live a long and vital life.

My goal is to give everyone the healthcare that research shows can decrease their chances of:

- Heart disease by over 90%
- Stroke and cancer by 50%
- Dementia by 41%
- And add 12-14 years of healthy life

Yes, I know these are stunning numbers – almost unbelievable.

But even more impressive, research shows these remarkable benefits come from optimizing just ten simple things. What I call the Healthspan10™

HealthspanMD™ focuses on the ten essentials of a long and vital life for every patient in our practice. If you or your loved ones have:

- High blood pressure
- Prediabetes, diabetes, or high blood sugar levels
- Heart disease
- Unhealthy weight
- Unhealthy cholesterol levels
- Fatty liver
- Atrial fibrillation

Or you just want an evidence-based, effective strategy to live a long and vital life, then HealthspanMD™ was created for you.

The research evidence is clear – if your goal is to live a long, healthy, vital life, you MUST pay attention to these ten factors:

Disclaimer: It is essential to understand nothing in this guide should be considered medical advice. The information here is for general information only. No changes in your treatment plan should be taken without consulting your physician first.



1. Blood Pressure

Although high blood pressure doesn't cause symptoms most of the time, it has a devastating effect on our health. More than 1,100 people die daily in the US from high blood pressure – a preventable death every 40 seconds. It's one of the leading causes of two of our most feared diseases, heart attack and stroke, and also increases the risk of dementia and kidney failure.

These numbers are frightening, but here is something even more striking. Almost all death, disease, and disability caused by high blood pressure are preventable.

We just aren't doing it.

We have effective and inexpensive treatments for high blood pressure, yet less than half of those with high blood pressure have it under control.

It is critically important to work with your doctor to have a strategy for treating your blood pressure that makes sense to you and controls your blood pressure.

Action item: The blood pressure goal that optimally lowers the risk for heart attack, stroke, and dementia is generally less than 130/80 mm Hg. At HealthspanMD™, we specialize in assessing blood pressure and recommending a comprehensive approach to lowering your risk for heart disease, stroke, and dementia.

2. Cholesterol

Cholesterol is an integral part of our body's metabolism, but it's also fuel for building blockages in arteries that lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Measuring cholesterol is complex, but there are four numbers in a standard cholesterol test to pay attention to:

- **LDL cholesterol** - Sometimes called "bad cholesterol," your LDL is the number your doctor pays the most attention to because it is most strongly associated with heart attack and stroke risk.
- **Triglycerides** are also associated with heart disease. Triglycerides can be increased by high blood sugars, an unhealthy diet, or excess alcohol.
- **Total cholesterol** - Less helpful for doctors than the LDL and triglyceride numbers.
- **HDL cholesterol** is a risk marker, but no effective medications raise HDL and significantly lower heart attacks.

There are several effective strategies for improving cholesterol numbers. Nutrition and physical activity changes can significantly change cholesterol (particularly triglycerides and HDL cholesterol), but cholesterol medications can be effective - and even life-saving - for certain people.

Action item: Know the cholesterol levels that are best for you, as the optimal cholesterol goals depend on your heart disease and stroke risk. At HealthspanMD™, we specialize in assessing cholesterol levels and recommending a comprehensive approach to lowering your heart disease and stroke risk.



3. Blood Sugar (Glucose)

Impaired sugar metabolism goes by many names - diabetes, prediabetes, metabolic syndrome, insulin resistance, glucose intolerance - but regardless of what we call it, impaired metabolism of glucose and insulin is arguably the most important problem in healthcare.

Metabolic disease affects most of us. More than 50% of adults have either prediabetes or diabetes, and more than 90% have at least one sign of metabolic disease. The reason these numbers are frightening is because metabolic disease is THE leading driver of heart disease, cancer, dementia, stroke, obesity, heart failure, atrial fibrillation, and early death.

Despite the devastating effect high blood sugar/metabolic disease has on our health, research shows that a comprehensive approach to treating metabolic disease (optimizing the Healthspan10™) is highly effective in treating and even reversing prediabetes, diabetes, and metabolic disease. A comprehensive approach can also dramatically lower the risk of heart disease, cancer, dementia, stroke, and early death.

Action item: If you have increased blood sugar (glucose) levels or other signs of metabolic disease such as high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol levels, or unhealthy weight, it's important to understand that you are at increased risk - and that you can lower that risk dramatically. At HealthspanMD™, we specialize in a comprehensive approach to treating high blood sugar levels and lowering your risk for heart disease, cancer, stroke, dementia, and early death.

4. Unhealthy weight/Too much fat

We all know unhealthy weight (more specifically, too much fat) has sky-rocketed in the last several decades. Today, more than 70% of adults are classified as being overweight or obese.

While we think you're beautiful no matter your body fat percentage, it's important to understand that carrying too much fat (particularly visceral fat in the belly) is a major risk factor for heart disease, cancer, stroke, atrial fibrillation, heart failure, dementia, and dying too young.

This is a big problem because most weight loss treatments fail in the long run. Up to 90% of people who try to lose weight gain it back within a year or two.

Weight loss is hard when it's NOT done right. And most weight loss programs don't do it right.

However, here's something that may surprise you. Lasting weight loss is not only possible; it occurs by achieving just one thing:

Being insulin sensitive.

The opposite of being insulin sensitive is being insulin resistant. And insulin resistance (also known as metabolic disease) is not only the root cause of the diseases that make us sick and kill us. Insulin resistance is also why we can't lose weight.

How do you become insulin sensitive?

Probably the answer is not surprising to you now - optimize the Healthspan10™.

The key to lasting weight loss is NOT more information - or willpower or motivation. Instead, the key is to build a system that helps you create the habits - and identity - that help you optimize your **Healthspan10™**.

Action item: If you have an unhealthy amount of fat, it's important to understand that you are highly likely to have insulin resistance. And it's insulin resistance that is preventing you from achieving lasting weight loss. At HealthspanMD™, we specialize in a comprehensive approach to treating insulin resistance so you can achieve your health, weight, and longevity goals.



5. Nutrition

We all want to know – what is the “best diet.” But there isn’t one diet that is best for everyone. In fact, the best “diet” for you is unique to you. However, the foundational principles are the same for everyone: ***Find a sustainable nutrition system that fuels a healthy metabolism and makes you insulin sensitive.***

We all have a unique chemistry and **finding the best “diet” for you is a discovery process.** At HealthspanMD™, we create a nutrition system that is unique to you by carefully considering:

- **Your likes/dislikes.** You will have a thoughtful discussion with your care team about what foods you most enjoy and which foods you do not want to be part of your nutrition system. If you don’t enjoy it – it won’t last.
- **Your metabolism.** Our body chemistry responds to different foods in different ways. We will use lab testing and other tools to determine which foods are best for your metabolism.
- **Your health goals.** Based on your goals, we will help you get clear on what types of foods are best for you (quality), how much to eat (quantity), and when to eat (timing) that optimizes your metabolism.

Action item: Build a sustainable nutrition system that helps you achieve your health, weight, and longevity goals that you enjoy. At HealthspanMD™, we specialize in helping people discover the foods that are best (and worst) for their metabolism and how to eat in a way that promotes health and the enjoyment of life.



6. Movement

Let's get straight to the main point. Movement is the most effective anti-aging intervention available, primarily because of its power to improve metabolic health. There are mountains of evidence showing if you are regularly active, you will:

- Live longer.
- Dramatically lower your risk from cancer, stroke, heart attack, diabetes, high blood pressure, and dozens of other diseases.
- Feel better, have more energy, have less anxiety and depression, and think more clearly.
- Lose weight.
- Sleep better.
- Be stronger and maintain your independence and ability to take care of yourself longer.
- Look better, have higher self-esteem, and be more attractive to yourself and others.

Only imagine if there was a medication that had all those benefits. It would be the best-selling medication of all time, and likely very expensive. Yet, movement is inexpensive with few side effects.

However, for most of us, being regularly active is a struggle. But what I've learned is that when people have expert guidance, start slow, and focus on the movement that is best for their metabolism, they can experience the amazing benefits of regular movement.

At HealthspanMD™, we will discover which types of movement are best for your metabolic health focusing on four areas:

- Aerobic movement
- Core and Stability
- Strength
- Non-exercise activity thermogenesis (a fancy term for not sitting)

Action item: Build your movement system that optimizes your metabolic health. At HealthspanMD™, we will work with you to create a simple plan to ease you into a physical activity regimen that allows your metabolism to flourish.

7. Sleep

We've all know how a sleepless night can make us feel irritable and unfocused, but what you may not be aware of is how chronic sleep problems can be why you can't lose weight, lower your blood pressure, or fix your insulin resistance. Chronic lack of sleep can even be deadly.

Why lack of sleep is so important to your health is still being worked out. What we know is that when you're sleep-deprived, your metabolism resists your best efforts at improving your health and weight loss. Sleep deprivation drives up appetite by stimulating ghrelin (hunger hormone) and cortisol (stress hormone) and decreasing leptin (fullness hormone). The result? We're hungrier, more stressed and have a hard time getting full.

Lack of sleep can also makes us more likely to eat emotionally, eat low-quality "comfort" food and drink more alcohol. All of which fuels insulin resistance.

So, while prioritizing sleep is often viewed as a weakness in our *"There's time for sleep when I'm dead."* society. The reality is, without adequate sleep, death may come sooner than you would like.

Action item: Prioritize regular restorative sleep. At HealthspanMD™, we specialize in helping you discover opportunities to get the healthy sleep you need to achieve your health, weight, and longevity goals.



8. Stress

Stress is an inevitable part of life. Some stress is ordinary and necessary, but many people struggle with long-term, chronic stress. In fact, chronic stress has sky-rocketed - we see it in the terrible stories of increases in substance abuse, suicide, depression, and anxiety disorders in our society today.

Most know that chronic stress enormously impacts our health and metabolism, and research confirms this. Chronic stress has been shown to increase blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and obesity. However, it's not always easy to recognize stress's impact on our own health. Often, untreated chronic stress is the foundational problem holding people back from losing weight, fixing their metabolism, and achieving their health goals, and they don't realize it.

Managing stress is a key aspect of the HealthspanMD™ system. There are many effective ways to manage stress, such as gratitude, mindfulness/meditation, and resilience training, among many others.

Action item: Recognize how stress may be impacting your health and build a stress management system that optimizes your health and metabolism. At HealthspanMD™, we specialize in helping you discover your best system for managing stress and healing metabolism.



9. Toxins

Toxins that negatively affect our health are not just tobacco and excess alcohol. Today, toxins are everywhere and can take the form of highly processed foods, substances and medications (including prescription ones), social media, watching the news, or streaming services like Netflix, among others.

At HealthspanMD™, we recognize that toxins are nearly impossible to avoid these days, and we are all susceptible. We focus on a non-judgmental approach to help our patients recognize how toxins impact their health and help them when ready to build their toxin avoidance system.

Action item: Recognize how toxins in all their forms impact your health and build your toxin avoidance system. At HealthspanMD™, we specialize in helping you discover your best system for avoiding toxins.



10. Connection & Contribution

Connection and contribution aren't often considered when people talk about improving health, weight, and longevity. However, research has shown social isolation or loneliness can be as bad for our health as smoking and obesity.

Being socially connected lowers your risk of death, improves your immune system, improves mental sharpness, and recovery from being sick. Unfortunately, social disconnect is on the rise – often called the "loneliness epidemic." One report found that 50% of baby boomers, 71% of Millennials, and 79% of Gen Z reported feeling lonely.

At HealthspanMD™, we understand the importance of relationships, purpose, and contribution to helping our patients achieve their health, weight, and longevity goals.

Action item: Write down your purpose statement. What is most important to you? What contribution are you most passionate about giving to the world? What people do you impact the most and hope to spend more quality years with? Keep it short and powerful. And then review it regularly – daily or weekly.

Medications and Supplements

Medications and supplements can be powerful tools for healing metabolism and lowering your risk for disease and early death. But too often, they are used as the only solution without considering the other opportunities outside the doctors office.

At HealthspanMD™, we believe you deserve more than a "medicate and operate" approach to your health.

That's why we provide comprehensive (the Healthspan10™) and connected (dedicated care team) healthcare..

HealthspanMD™ is the way healthcare is supposed to be - an ongoing partnership between you and your expert healthcare team that guides you step-by-step on the best **opportunities** to achieve your long-term health, weight, and longevity goals.

Becoming a patient of HealthspanMD™ means:

- You get the best opportunities to **lower your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar**, including natural solutions like nutrition, physical activity, and medications when indicated.
- You are building your system to become **insulin-sensitive, heal your metabolism** and achieve **lasting weight loss**.
- Daily access to your healthcare team, including a **dedicated health coach**, who works with you step-by-step to best support your health goals.
- **Minimize your medications** and your time in doctor's offices and hospitals.
- You are building a **nutrition** system that fits you, so you never have to be confused about what to eat again.
- Learning how to **be active in an enjoyable way** that gives you the best chance to stay energetic and strong for a long and vital life.
- Getting the approach science tells us dramatically lowers the risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, dementia, diabetes, and atrial fibrillation - and **adds 12-14 years of healthy life**.
- Feel the strength, energy, and vitality you've been missing.

If you are concerned about your health - or your future health - and you're looking for a partner with expertise and experience helping people achieve their health, weight, and longevity goals - then HealthspanMD™ was created for you.

Contact us to schedule your appointment today by calling our Phoenix office at **480-847-2575** or going to **HealthspanMD.com**.



To summarize, the traditional "medicate and operate" approach is not enough to achieve your best health. HealthspanMD partners with patients to provide **expert medical care** AND the **guidance and support needed to create habits** that are critically important to living a long and vital life

Our comprehensive approach focuses on the ten most powerful factors for reducing the risk – and reversing – the most common and deadly diseases.

The Healthspan10™ are:

1. Normal blood pressure
2. Normal blood sugar/insulin levels
3. Healthy cholesterol levels
4. Healthy body weight or body composition
5. Healthy nutrition
6. Regular physical activity
7. Avoid toxins such as tobacco and excess alcohol among others
8. Restorative sleep
9. Manage stress
10. Stay connected – socially and to your purpose

Healthcare the way it is supposed to be: *comprehensive and connected.*

Contact us to schedule an appointment



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HealthspanMD is a preventive cardiology practice specializing in treating, preventing and reversing chronic illness comprehensively, combining expert medical care with improving habits at home that most impact conditions such as:

- High blood pressure
- Prediabetes/high blood sugar
- Insulin resistance
- Weight loss
- Unhealthy cholesterol
- Reversal of diabetes, fatty liver, or atrial fibrillation
- Prevention of heart disease/family history/high coronary artery calcium
- Metabolic disease, metabolic syndrome

At HealthspanMD, each patient partners with a dedicated health coach to improve the daily habits that impact metabolic health, like physical activity and nutrition.

About the author

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Hi, I'm Robert Todd Hurst, MD, FACC, FASE, a board-certified preventive cardiologist and founder of HealthspanMD(TM). When I learned early in my career that more than 90% of heart disease is preventable, it completely changed my career. Helping people achieve their best health became my passion and purpose.

I left my dream job at the Mayo Clinic because I was frustrated all traditional healthcare provides is pills and procedures when research proves a comprehensive treatment approach dramatically improves wellness and longevity.

HealthspanMD™ is the way healthcare is supposed to be - an ongoing partnership between you and your expert healthcare team that guides you step-by-step on the best opportunities to achieve your health, weight, and longevity goals.