

The ECOH Board of Directors has been very concerned about the rising costs of health care. Along with working with physicians and hospitals to constantly strive for better care at fair costs, it is obvious that much more could be accomplished if individuals would take more responsibility for their own health.

Preventing health problems is the best way to keep health care costs low. Anyone can do this by eating the right foods, controlling calories, exercising, and not engaging in risky behavior. You can do this or not. If not, you end up suffering long illness and spending a lot of money.

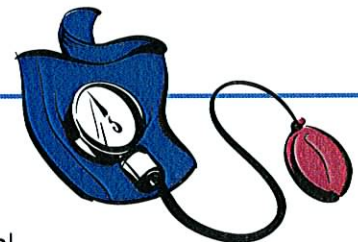
Most problems that add up to big dollars in health care over a life time are hypertension, obesity, diabetes mellitus, high lipids (cholesterol and triglyceride), and heart disease. They are all connected and they are all avoidable or controllable to a great degree by how you eat and if you exercise.

Let's Start

Let's start with hypertension (high blood pressure). It is the #1 cause of death in the U.S. You die by having a heart attack, heart failure, stroke, or kidney failure.



Here's what to do:



- Keep weight normal
- Eat the right foods-low calorie, low fat, low simple carbohydrates, and small portions of 4-6 oz. of non-red meat
- Keep salt low-about 3 grams of salt per day
- Don't smoke
- Minimum alcohol-1 drink or less per day
- See your doctor and follow his or her advice
- Check and keep a record of your blood pressure. Omron is a good blood pressure cuff for home use.
- As a general rule, if your blood pressure is higher than 135/85 on either number, see your doctor

We will write more in the coming months about what you can do yourself to stay healthy. *But you need to decide now to take charge.* Here is a website for more information on hypertension:

www.americanheart.org/bptools