

Chapter 5

Where Are You Now?

Evaluating Your Current Health Status

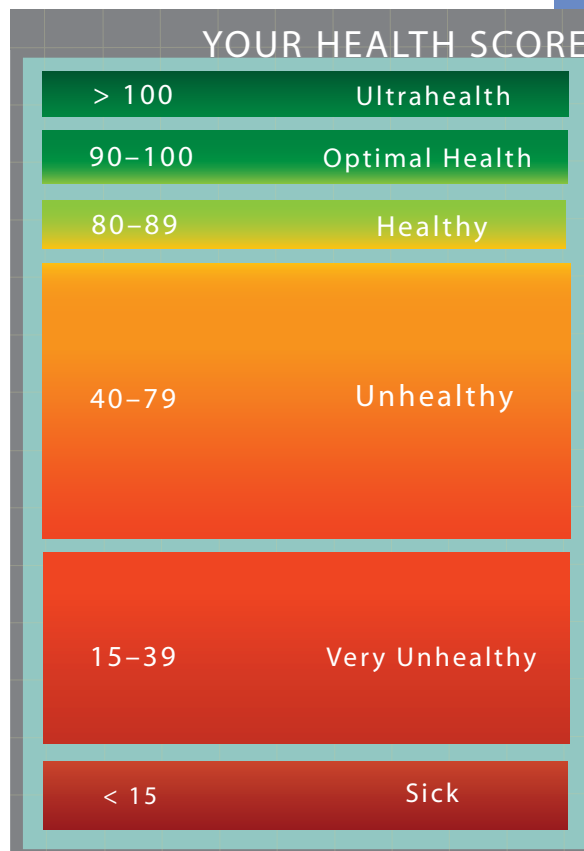
Your answers to the following questions will give us valuable information on your current health status—something I believe is very important for you to know. That’s why I urge you not to skip this step! In fact, many people have told me that this assessment has played a pivotal role in helping them understand how their daily choices have affected the reality of their health and their lives.

You and I are embarking on a journey—your journey toward optimal health. And as with any journey, to reach our destination we need to know our starting point. Understanding your health status as it is right now is an important part of building your personal health plan.

The following questionnaire is all about you. Be sure to give it your full focus, away from noise, interruptions, cell phones, and other distractions. Answer each question as truthfully as possible, basing your response on your most current and consistent behavior—what you’re doing now, not what you did last week or last month.

Before you begin, take a look at the chart on the right. It depicts the health continuum, from sick, to non-sick, to optimal health. The higher the number, the healthier you are. Using a pencil, mark the spot that you think most accurately represents the state of your health right now. (Most people find themselves somewhere in the unhealthy range of scores, in the non-sick zone between sick and optimal health.)

Now let’s get on with our evaluation and find out how well you guessed!



Your Predicted Health Score. Where do you fall on the health continuum: sick (red zone), healthy (green zone), or somewhere in between, in the unhealthy zone? Our goal is to move you toward the green zone and optimal health.



Note: Some questions may have multiple correct selections

1. You Are What You Eat

What you eat—and how much you eat—is critical to your health. Eating more calories than you use leads to weight gain; high-glycemic foods overwork your pancreas; and foods that stimulate inflammation such as saturated fats create chaos throughout your body. On the other hand, eating lots of fruits and vegetables turns off fat storage, satisfies hunger, stabilizes blood sugar, lowers insulin, and quells inflammatory fires.

In the previous twelve months, I have:

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Lost more than 5 pounds | +5 |
| Lost 2 to 5 pounds | +2 |
| Stayed the same weight | 0 |
| Gained 2 to 5 pounds | -2 |
| Gained more than 5 pounds | -5 |

I eat breakfast:

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Every day | +3 |
| Most days | +1 |
| Occasionally | -1 |
| Never | -2 |

I eat ___ small healthy meals or snacks a day.

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| 6 or more | +3 |
| 4–5 | +1 |
| 2–3 | -1 |
| 1 huge meal a day | -3 |

In general, I eat ___ of my calories after 5:00 P.M.

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Less than 35% | +3 |
| 35–50% | 0 |
| More than 50% | -2 |

I eat red meat:

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Never | +3 |
| 2–3 times a week | -1 |
| More than 3 times a week | -3 |

I eat fish that's high in omega-3, such as salmon, mackerel, or sardines:

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| More than 2–3 times a week | +3 |
| 1–2 times a week | +1 |
| Less than once a week | -1 |
| Never | -3 |
| I take fish oil daily | +3 |

I eat dairy products that are:

| | |
|--|----|
| Low-fat or skim | +2 |
| Full fat (whole milk) | -1 |
| I don't eat dairy (but get calcium from other sources) | +1 |

I prefer my poultry:

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Skinless | +1 |
| White meat only | +1 |
| Dark and white meat | -1 |
| Skin on | -2 |



| | |
|---|----|
| I usually like my meat or fish: | |
| Baked or steamed | +3 |
| Broiled | +1 |
| Grilled | -1 |
| Charred | -3 |
| Fried in unsaturated fats (olive oil or other vegetable oils) | -5 |
| Fried in saturated or trans-fats (butter or solid shortening) | -8 |
| I eat ___ servings of vegetables a day: | |
| More than 5 | +5 |
| 3–5 | +3 |
| 1–3 | +1 |
| 0 | -3 |
| I eat ___ servings of fresh fruit a day: | |
| More than 3 | +3 |
| 1–3 | +1 |
| 0 | -2 |
| I get my sugar primarily from: | |
| Natural fruits | +3 |
| Fructose | 0 |
| Table sugar | -1 |
| High-fructose corn syrup | -3 |
| I eat white starches such as white bread, white rice, tortillas, and pastas: | |
| Never | +5 |
| Less than 1–2 times a week | 0 |
| 2–5 times a week | -2 |
| 1–2 times a day | -3 |
| More than 2 times a day | -5 |
| I eat unprocessed, natural grains, cereals, and rice: | |
| More than 2 times a day | +3 |
| 1–2 times a day | 0 |
| Never | -2 |
| The type of fat or oil I use most often is: | |
| Olive or canola oil | +3 |
| Margarine spreads with no trans-fats (Smart Balance, Promise, Benecol, Enova) | +1 |
| Margarine or vegetable oil | -1 |
| Butter, lard, or vegetable shortening | -3 |
| I drink alcohol: | |
| Never | +5 |
| 1 glass of red wine with dinner | +3 |
| Between 1 drink a week and 1 drink a month | +2 |
| Less than 1 drink a day | +1 |
| 1–2 drinks a day | -1 |
| 3 or more drinks a day | -5 |
| I salt my food: | |
| Never | +3 |
| Occasionally | 0 |
| Always | -2 |
| I take vitamin and mineral supplements: | |
| Daily | +3 |
| When I remember | 0 |
| Never | -2 |

Total points for section 1: _____

Dr. A Says. . .

Extra-virgin olive oil (olive oil that's unrefined) contains powerful antioxidants including vitamin E and is my first choice of oils. Just be careful, because it packs 119 calories per tablespoon!



.....



2. On the Move!

If you're like most of us, with our computer-driven, sedentary lifestyles, you're probably not very active at the moment. I understand! When you're tired and overweight, it takes a lot of effort to move your body. Just answer the following questions as best you can, and know that help is on the way. Once you've reached your healthy weight, we'll get you moving gradually through fun activities—including some cutting-edge calorie-burning methods you've probably never even heard of.

I walk:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| At least 30 minutes a day | +5 |
| Sometimes, but not every day | +1 |
| To my car and my desk—that's it! | -3 |

I do aerobic activities (aerobics class, running, sports):

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Daily | +5 |
| Occasionally | +2 |
| You kidding? I'd rather die! | -2 |

I do weight resistance training:

| | |
|---|----|
| 3 or more times a week | +5 |
| Occasionally | +2 |
| Does lifting a quarter-pounder with cheese count? | -2 |

On the weekend I usually:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Go for bike rides in the country | +3 |
| Take a walk or walk my dog | +3 |
| Sit on the sofa and watch TV | -3 |

When outdoor activity exposes me to the sun:

| | |
|--|----|
| I always cover myself and use sunscreen of at least 30 SPF | +2 |
| I avoid the sun at all times | -1 |
| I put on sunscreen when I think of it | -1 |
| I go out in the sun but never protect myself | -3 |

At my job, I'm:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Active and perform manual labor | +5 |
| Usually walking and moving | +2 |
| Sometimes walking, sometimes sitting | +1 |
| In a chair seven hours a day | -5 |

During lunch and breaks:

| | |
|---|----|
| I walk or take the stairs | +5 |
| I go out to lunch or eat at the cafeteria | +2 |
| I work at my desk, but get up and walk around whenever possible | 0 |
| I eat lunch at my desk—usually fast food that's brought in | -2 |

Total points for section 2: _____

3. The Inner You

Today's chaotic schedules leave us with too much stress, too little free time, too little sleep, and not enough fun. We're just not enjoying ourselves like we used to! Many people shrug it off, but medical science is beginning to understand the impact of our emotional life on our health and our longevity.

My job:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Brings me lots of satisfaction | +5 |
| Is OK, but I live for the weekends | 0 |
| Makes me really despise going to work | -5 |

At work, I find myself getting upset:

| | |
|------------------|----|
| Never | +3 |
| 1–2 times a week | 0 |
| Most days | -5 |

My commute to work:

| | |
|--|----|
| Isn't a factor—I work out of my house | +5 |
| Is short, and I enjoy the drive | +2 |
| Takes at least 30 minutes, and there's sometimes traffic | 0 |
| Is something I dread due to the length and traffic jams | -3 |

When I get home from work, I usually:

| | |
|---|----|
| Relax in the garden or do something fun | +3 |
| Read a good book and go for a walk | +3 |
| Take a hot bath and play some music | +3 |
| Chauffer kids to various activities | +2 |
| Go home and get on the computer | 0 |
| Fight with my spouse and usually grab a drink | -3 |

I take part in some type of relaxation or spiritual endeavor:

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Every day | +3 |
| Occasionally, when I find time | 0 |
| Never | -3 |

The last time I had a really good laugh was:

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| This week | +2 |
| A few weeks ago | +1 |
| Last month | 0 |
| Can't remember | -3 |

I have ___ close personal friends.

| | |
|--------------|----|
| More than 5 | +3 |
| 2–5 | +2 |
| Fewer than 2 | -2 |

I would describe my marriage or significant relationship as:

| | |
|---|----|
| The best | +5 |
| Happy | +3 |
| Pretty good | +1 |
| OK | -1 |
| I'm unhappily married or recently separated | -5 |



“Formerly flabulous. . .now fabulous!”

NANCY PETTIT *Over six years at optimal health*



At 5' 6" and 267 pounds, I was morbidly obese. I hated how I looked, hated how I felt; I hated myself. Ever since age twelve, I've been a weight watcher—watching as my weight steadily climbed northward. Six times, I lost more than 70 pounds. I joined gyms, signed up for weight-loss seminars, tried out the diet of the week from the supermarket magazine rack. I even considered gastric bypass surgery! But no matter what I did, I couldn't keep the pounds off. I wanted to, but I didn't know how.

My prayers were answered when a man at our church told us about the program Take Shape for Life™, which had helped him lose 35 pounds. The program was so easy to follow! Soon I began to lose weight using the Medifast® meal replacements and more importantly, I felt great, better than I had for years. And because I kept losing weight steadily, I felt encouraged, and actually looked forward to jumping on the scale each day. My hunger went away, and I no longer craved food . . . and in just seven months, I lost 135 pounds!

It's been six years since I started the journey to optimal health, and now with Dr. A's Habits of Health I have all the tools necessary to stay healthy. It has made a radical difference in my health, self-esteem, marriage, and my relationships with others. ■

I get together with a group of friends for fun and companionship:

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Two or more times a week | +3 |
| Occasionally | 0 |
| Hardly ever | -2 |

My experience with pets is best described as:

| | |
|---|----|
| I have a dog or cat that loves me | +3 |
| I've had a pet in the past, but not currently | 0 |
| I don't like animals | -3 |

I sleep:

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| More than 7 hours a night | +5 |
| 6–7 hours a night | 0 |
| Less than 6 hours a night | -2 |
| Less than 5 hours a night | -5 |

When I go to bed:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| I fall asleep almost immediately | +3 |
| It takes me a while to fall asleep | 0 |
| I toss and turn until I'm exhausted | -3 |

Once I fall asleep:

| | |
|---|----|
| I sleep soundly through the night | +5 |
| I wake up too early in the morning and can't always get back to sleep | -2 |
| I wake up after a few hours and can't get back to sleep | -5 |

I wake up:

| | |
|---|----|
| Totally refreshed and ready to attack the day | +5 |
| Rested | +3 |
| Feeling OK | 0 |
| Only if the alarm wakes me up | -1 |
| Tired | -3 |
| Exhausted | -5 |

Total points for section 3: _____

4. Breathe Deep!

You probably don't need to be told that smoking is devastating to your health. In fact, it's the single most important *controllable* health determinant—even more so than diet and physical activity. If you're a smoker, I recommend you make quitting your very first step, even before learning the other Habits of Health. Chapters 3 and 4 on motivation and choice can help you make a fresh start.

I've smoked:

Never +5

I'm currently a smoker or I smoked at one point but have quit:

1. **First, calculate the number of *pack/years* that you smoked:**

Multiply the number of packs you smoked per day by the total number of years you smoked, and make the result a negative number.

For example: If you smoked two packs a day for fifteen years, multiply 2 by 15 for a score of -30 pack/years

Packs per day \times years = _____ pack/years

2. **Now, if you're no longer smoking, modify your score using the following formula:**

_____ pack/years \times healing factor (HF) = recovery points

If you quit more than 10 years ago, your HF is .75

If you quit 2–10 years ago, your HF is .5

If you quit less than 2 years ago, your HF is .25

For example: If your score is -30 and you quit smoking eleven years ago, multiply 30 by .75 = 22.5

3. **Finally, calculate your total points using the following formula:**

_____ pack/years (a negative number) + _____ recovery points (a positive number) = _____ total points (a negative number)

For example: -30 + 22.5 = -7.5 (final score)

I'm exposed to secondhand smoke:

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Never | 0 |
| Occasionally | -1 |
| Often | -5 |
| Daily | -8 |

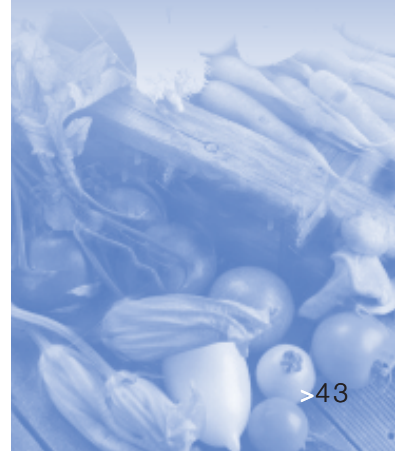
I live:

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| In the country | +3 |
| In the suburbs | 0 |
| In a major city | -3 |

I work:

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| In the country | +3 |
| In the suburbs | 0 |
| In a major city | -3 |

Total points for section 4: _____



5. Weighing You Down

Your current weight and the amount of abdominal fat you're carrying are key health predictors. Knowing your body mass index (BMI), waist circumference, and waist-to-hip ratio can tell you whether your current habits are on target or weighing you down.

Body mass index (BMI) is an important measure of disease risk and a helpful way to track your progress as you lose weight. Here are two alternative ways to find out your BMI.

1. Use the following formula:

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight in pounds} \times 703}{(\text{height in inches}) \times (\text{height in inches})}$$

OR

2. Find the correct number on this table:

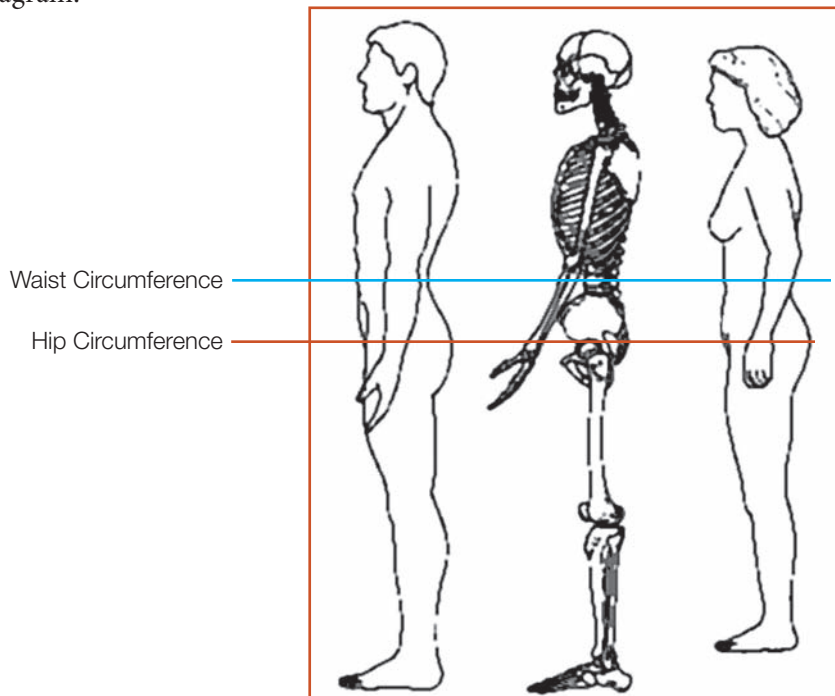
| | Normal | | | | | Overweight | | | | | Obese | | | | | Extreme Obesity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| BMI | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 |
| Height (inches) | Body Weight (pounds) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 58 | 91 | 96 | 100 | 105 | 110 | 115 | 119 | 124 | 129 | 134 | 138 | 143 | 148 | 153 | 158 | 162 | 167 | 172 | 177 | 181 | 186 | 191 | 196 | 201 | 205 | 210 | 215 | 220 | 224 | 229 | 234 | 239 | 244 | 248 | 253 | 258 |
| 59 | 94 | 99 | 104 | 109 | 114 | 119 | 124 | 128 | 133 | 138 | 143 | 148 | 153 | 158 | 163 | 168 | 173 | 178 | 183 | 188 | 193 | 198 | 203 | 208 | 212 | 217 | 222 | 227 | 232 | 237 | 242 | 247 | 252 | 257 | 262 | 267 |
| 60 | 97 | 102 | 107 | 112 | 118 | 123 | 128 | 133 | 138 | 143 | 148 | 153 | 158 | 163 | 168 | 174 | 179 | 184 | 189 | 194 | 199 | 204 | 209 | 215 | 220 | 225 | 230 | 235 | 240 | 245 | 250 | 255 | 261 | 266 | 271 | 276 |
| 61 | 100 | 106 | 111 | 116 | 122 | 127 | 132 | 137 | 143 | 148 | 153 | 158 | 164 | 169 | 174 | 180 | 185 | 190 | 195 | 201 | 206 | 211 | 217 | 222 | 227 | 232 | 238 | 243 | 248 | 254 | 259 | 264 | 269 | 275 | 280 | 285 |
| 62 | 104 | 109 | 115 | 120 | 126 | 131 | 136 | 142 | 147 | 153 | 158 | 164 | 169 | 175 | 180 | 186 | 191 | 196 | 202 | 207 | 213 | 218 | 224 | 229 | 235 | 240 | 246 | 251 | 256 | 262 | 267 | 273 | 278 | 284 | 289 | 295 |
| 63 | 107 | 113 | 118 | 124 | 130 | 135 | 141 | 146 | 152 | 158 | 163 | 169 | 175 | 180 | 186 | 191 | 197 | 203 | 208 | 214 | 220 | 225 | 231 | 237 | 242 | 248 | 254 | 259 | 265 | 270 | 278 | 282 | 287 | 293 | 299 | 304 |
| 64 | 110 | 116 | 122 | 128 | 134 | 140 | 145 | 151 | 157 | 163 | 169 | 174 | 180 | 186 | 192 | 197 | 204 | 209 | 215 | 221 | 227 | 232 | 238 | 244 | 250 | 256 | 262 | 267 | 273 | 279 | 285 | 291 | 296 | 302 | 308 | 314 |
| 65 | 114 | 120 | 126 | 132 | 138 | 144 | 150 | 156 | 162 | 168 | 174 | 180 | 186 | 192 | 198 | 204 | 210 | 216 | 222 | 228 | 234 | 240 | 246 | 252 | 258 | 264 | 270 | 276 | 282 | 288 | 294 | 300 | 306 | 312 | 318 | 324 |
| 66 | 118 | 124 | 130 | 136 | 142 | 148 | 155 | 161 | 167 | 173 | 179 | 186 | 192 | 198 | 204 | 210 | 216 | 223 | 229 | 235 | 241 | 247 | 253 | 260 | 266 | 272 | 278 | 284 | 291 | 297 | 303 | 309 | 315 | 322 | 328 | 334 |
| 67 | 121 | 127 | 134 | 140 | 146 | 153 | 159 | 166 | 172 | 178 | 185 | 191 | 198 | 204 | 211 | 217 | 223 | 230 | 236 | 242 | 249 | 255 | 261 | 268 | 274 | 280 | 287 | 293 | 299 | 306 | 312 | 319 | 325 | 331 | 338 | 344 |
| 68 | 125 | 131 | 138 | 144 | 151 | 158 | 164 | 171 | 177 | 184 | 190 | 197 | 203 | 210 | 216 | 223 | 230 | 236 | 243 | 249 | 256 | 262 | 269 | 276 | 282 | 289 | 295 | 302 | 308 | 315 | 322 | 328 | 335 | 341 | 348 | 354 |
| 69 | 128 | 135 | 142 | 149 | 155 | 162 | 169 | 176 | 182 | 189 | 196 | 203 | 209 | 216 | 223 | 230 | 236 | 243 | 250 | 257 | 263 | 270 | 277 | 284 | 291 | 297 | 304 | 311 | 318 | 324 | 331 | 338 | 345 | 351 | 358 | 365 |
| 70 | 132 | 139 | 146 | 153 | 160 | 167 | 174 | 181 | 188 | 195 | 202 | 209 | 216 | 222 | 229 | 236 | 243 | 250 | 257 | 264 | 271 | 278 | 285 | 292 | 299 | 306 | 313 | 320 | 327 | 334 | 341 | 348 | 355 | 362 | 369 | 376 |
| 71 | 136 | 143 | 150 | 157 | 165 | 172 | 179 | 186 | 193 | 200 | 208 | 215 | 222 | 229 | 236 | 243 | 250 | 257 | 265 | 272 | 279 | 286 | 293 | 301 | 308 | 315 | 322 | 329 | 338 | 343 | 351 | 358 | 365 | 372 | 379 | 386 |
| 72 | 140 | 147 | 154 | 162 | 169 | 177 | 184 | 191 | 199 | 206 | 213 | 221 | 228 | 235 | 242 | 250 | 258 | 265 | 272 | 279 | 287 | 294 | 302 | 309 | 316 | 324 | 331 | 338 | 346 | 353 | 361 | 368 | 375 | 383 | 390 | 397 |
| 73 | 144 | 151 | 159 | 166 | 174 | 182 | 189 | 197 | 204 | 212 | 219 | 227 | 235 | 242 | 250 | 257 | 265 | 272 | 280 | 288 | 295 | 302 | 310 | 318 | 325 | 333 | 340 | 348 | 355 | 363 | 371 | 378 | 386 | 393 | 401 | 408 |
| 74 | 148 | 155 | 163 | 171 | 179 | 186 | 194 | 202 | 210 | 218 | 225 | 233 | 241 | 249 | 256 | 264 | 272 | 280 | 287 | 295 | 303 | 311 | 319 | 326 | 334 | 342 | 350 | 358 | 365 | 373 | 381 | 389 | 396 | 404 | 412 | 420 |
| 75 | 152 | 160 | 168 | 176 | 184 | 192 | 200 | 208 | 216 | 224 | 232 | 240 | 248 | 256 | 264 | 272 | 279 | 287 | 295 | 303 | 311 | 319 | 327 | 335 | 343 | 351 | 359 | 367 | 375 | 383 | 391 | 399 | 407 | 415 | 423 | 431 |
| 76 | 156 | 164 | 172 | 180 | 189 | 197 | 205 | 213 | 221 | 230 | 238 | 246 | 254 | 263 | 271 | 279 | 287 | 295 | 304 | 312 | 320 | 328 | 336 | 344 | 353 | 361 | 369 | 377 | 385 | 394 | 402 | 410 | 418 | 426 | 435 | 443 |

Source: Adapted from Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: The Evidence Report.

Now find your BMI on the chart below and enter the corresponding number of points here: _____

| | BMI | Points | |
|------------------------|---------|--------|----|
| Ultrahealthy | 20 | +10 | |
| | 21 | +8 | |
| | 22 | +6 | |
| | 23 | +4 | |
| Healthy | 24 | +2 | |
| | 24–24.9 | +1 | |
| Overweight (pre-obese) | 25 | -1 | |
| | 26 | -2 | |
| | 27 | -3 | |
| | 28 | -4 | |
| | 29 | -5 | |
| | Obese | 30 | -6 |
| | | 31 | -7 |
| 32 | | -8 | |
| 33 | | -9 | |
| 34 | | -10 | |
| 35 | | -11 | |
| | 36 | -12 | |
| | 37 | -13 | |
| | 38 | -14 | |
| | 39 | -15 | |
| | Over 40 | -20 | |

Waist circumference measures your abdominal fat—both a predictor and a cause of poor health and disease. Use a tape measurer to determine your waist circumference in inches by placing it just on top of your hip—the blue line in the diagram.





Now find your waist measurement in inches on the chart below and enter the corresponding number of points here: _____

| Waist circumference (in inches) | Male | Female | Points |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| <32 | <29 | <29 | +10 |
| 32–34.9 | 29–31 | 29–31 | + 5 |
| 35–37 | 31–32.5 | 31–32.5 | 0 |
| 37.1–39.9 | 32.6–34.9 | 32.6–34.9 | -3 |
| 40+ | 35+ | 35+ | -10 |

Waist-to-hip ratio (WHR) compares the circumference of your waist to the circumference of your hips to see how much dangerous fat you're carrying. Carrying extra weight around your lower hips—sometimes called the pear shape—is much less harmful to your health than extra weight around your waist.

To find your waist-to-hip ratio:

1. Measure your hip circumference in inches.
2. Take your waist circumference from the previous question and divide it by your hip circumference. This is your WHR.
3. Now find your WHR on the chart below and enter the corresponding number of points here: _____

| WHR | Male | Female | Points |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------|
| Over .90 | Over .90 | Over .80 | -2 |
| .90 | .90 | .80 | 0 |
| Less than .90 | Less than .90 | Less than .80 | +2 |

Total points for section 5: _____

6. Testing, testing

Had a check-up recently? If so, your doctor may have tested your blood for four types of fats that help assess your risk for heart disease: total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL, the “good” cholesterol), low-density lipoprotein (LDL, the “bad” cholesterol), and triglycerides. He may have also checked your metabolic health by testing your fasting blood sugar and your hs-CRP, an important measure of your current health.

If you have these numbers, you can use them to answer the following questions. If not, just skip this section—but I highly recommend you have your doctor check these levels. Just ask to have a *lipid profile* done at your next visit, along with blood glucose and hs-CRP.

But if you don't have them, don't worry. Although these numbers give us a little more information, they almost always parallel your lifestyle scores, so we

can get an accurate assessment even without them. And the Habits of Health you're about to learn are more powerful than the medications your doctor would use to treat you anyway! (Though it's fun to get the tests done so we can watch your scores improve!)

Total cholesterol helps the body form hormones, vitamin D, and other important substances—but too much of it can clog and damage blood vessels. Find your *total cholesterol* level on the chart below and enter the corresponding number of points here: _____

| Total cholesterol | Points |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Less than 100 (Ultra) | +10 |
| 100–149 | +5 |
| 150–179 | +2 |
| 199–180 | 0 |
| 200–239 | -3 |
| 240+ | -5 |

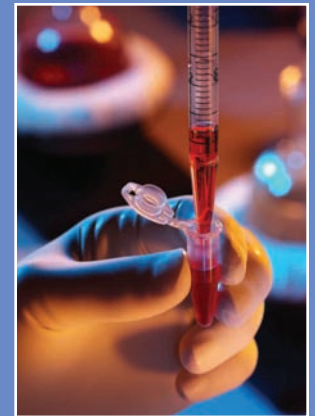
Low-density lipoproteins (LDLs) build up in the blood and increase your risk of heart disease. Find your *LDL* level on the chart below and enter the corresponding number of points here: _____

| | LDL | Points |
|-------------|---------------------|--------|
| Ultra: | Less than 70 mg/dL | +10 |
| Very good: | 70–100 mg/dL | +5 |
| Good: | 100–129 mg/dL | +3 |
| Borderline: | 130–159 mg/dL | 0 |
| High: | 160–189 mg/dL | -3 |
| Very high: | 190 mg/dL or higher | -5 |

High-density lipoproteins (HDLs) carry cholesterol to the liver, where it is removed from the body. Find your *HDL* level on the chart below and enter the corresponding number of points here: _____

| | HDL | Points |
|------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Low: | Less than 40 mg/dL | -5 |
| Medium: | 41–59 mg/dL | 0 |
| Very Good: | 60–80 mg/dL or higher | +5 |
| Ultra: | 80 mg/dL or higher | +10 |

Triglycerides store energy for your body to use when needed. Too many triglycerides can block blood vessels and cause other health problems, such as abdominal pain and pancreatitis. Find your *triglyceride* level on the following chart and enter the corresponding number of points here: _____



PART ONE

PREPARING FOR YOUR JOURNEY

“We have our life back!”



GARY SHAW

Over five years at optimal health

My wife and I both lost over 55 pounds each on our journey to optimal health—and best of all, Dr. Andersen, as our personal coach, has given us the education, tools, and support to keep it off.

Adopting this healthy new lifestyle has been an incredible blessing in our lives! ■



Josephine Shaw

continued on next page . . .

| | Triglycerides | Points |
|-------------|---------------------|--------|
| Ultra: | Less than 100 mg/dL | +10 |
| Good: | 100–150 mg/dL | +5 |
| Borderline: | 150–199 mg/dL | 0 |
| High: | 200–499 mg/dL | -3 |
| Very high: | 500 mg/dl or higher | -10 |

Fasting blood glucose (sugar) measures the ability of your body to regulate your blood sugar and is an indicator of your metabolic health, as well as whether you’re at risk for diabetes. Find your *blood glucose* level on the chart below and enter the corresponding number of points here: _____

| | Blood glucose | Points |
|------------------|---------------------|--------|
| Ultra: | Less than 80 mg/dL | +10 |
| Very good: | 80–100 mg/dL | +5 |
| Normal | 100–110 mg/dL | +1 |
| Borderline: | 111–126 mg/dL | -1 |
| High (diabetic): | 126–150 mg/dL | -5 |
| Very high: | 150 mg/dl or higher | -10 |

High-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP) evaluates the inflammatory state of your blood and body. This important test is a common measurement of your risk for a number of diseases, especially heart disease—but it also lets us know how healthy you are. If you haven’t had this test, you’ll want to once you read this book! Make sure you get the *high-sensitivity* version (*hs-CRP*). Find your *hs-CRP* level on the chart below and enter the corresponding number of points here: _____

| | hs-CRP | Points |
|----------------|--------------------|--------|
| Ultra | Less than .5 mg/L | +10 |
| Very good | .5–1.0 mg/L | +5 |
| Normal | 1.0–1.9 mg/L | 0 |
| Borderline | 2.0–2.9 mg/L | -1 |
| (inflammation) | | |
| High | 3.0–4.9 | -5 |
| Very high | 5.0 mg/L or higher | -10 |

Total points for section 6: _____

7. Start Where You Are

Any medical conditions you have at the moment are, naturally, a major factor in your current health status. But don’t be discouraged! *Remember, your health status isn’t fixed—it’s only the starting point of your journey.* By changing your health habits, we can neutralize and even eliminate many health problems and in some cases reduce or completely phase out your need for medication.

I've been to my primary care physician for my Periodic Health Examination (i.e., check-up):

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| At least once a year | +2 |
| Sometime in the past | -1 |
| Never | -2 |

I've been diagnosed with:

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Pre-diabetes | -3 |
| Gestational diabetes | -3 |
| Pre-hypertension | -3 |

I currently take:

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Over-the-counter medications for allergy, sinus, headache, etc. | -1 per medication |
| Birth control pills | -2 |
| Birth control pills (and I smoke) | -5 |
| No medications | 0 |

I take a daily, low-dose aspirin of around 162 mg and:

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| I'm a male over 35 | +2 |
| I'm a female over 40 | +2 |
| I have metabolic syndrome | +2 |
| I don't take daily aspirin | 0 |

I have the following health conditions (*Choose as many as apply. Add -5 if you need medication to control these conditions, for a maximum of -15 per condition*):

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------------|------------|
| High blood pressure | mild -5 | moderate -8 | severe -10 |
| Metabolic syndrome | mild -5 | moderate -8 | severe -10 |
| Polycystic ovarian syndrome | mild -5 | moderate -8 | severe -10 |
| Diabetes | mild -5 | moderate -8 | severe -10 |
| Thyroid condition | mild -5 | moderate -8 | severe -10 |

I have the following advanced health conditions (*Choose as many as apply. Add -5 for each condition that requires medication, for a maximum of -15 per condition*):

| | |
|--|-----|
| Heart disease (e.g., heart attack, CHF, stroke) | -10 |
| Lung disease (e.g., COPD, severe asthma) | -10 |
| Kidney disease (e.g., renal failure) | -10 |
| Immune disease (e.g., lupus) | -10 |
| Gastrointestinal disease (e.g., Crohn's disease) | -10 |
| Other significant disease | -10 |

Total points for section 7: _____

"The difference between life and death."

JOSEPHINE SHAW

Over five years at optimal health

I was always an energetic person, but in my forties, my health began to deteriorate. I was overweight, and I couldn't even walk across the room without effort. I had incurable lung disease, diabetes, depression, fibromyalgia, and chronic fatigue. I remember thinking, "I'll probably just die this way."

It was then that Dr. A and his wife, Lori, told me about a way to regain my health. After one week, my energy level began to climb and my blood sugar leveled out to normal. My doctor took me off my medications for cholesterol and high blood pressure.

Today, I can run upstairs if I want to! I haven't felt like this in years. I'm no longer watching life go by from inside my bedroom window... and in the process of getting better, I lost 55 pounds!

I didn't even realize how sick I really was until I started learning how to eat right and adopted a whole new set of healthy habits. But now, thanks to Dr. A, my grandchildren will have their grandma for many more years to come! This has been a miracle in my life. ■



8. All in the Family

Your family’s medical history reflects your genetic programming and is a big influence on your current health status and future risk. It can even affect your ability to control your weight. To find out your *genetic factor* (GF), add the points in the chart below for each condition that any of your parents or grandparents developed *before age 60*. Your GF is 1 minus that total.

For example: Your mother and grandmother had diabetes (.04 + .04) and your father had heart disease (.04), all diagnosed before age 60. Add .04 + .04 + .04, for a total of .12. Your GF is .88 (1 – .12 = .88).

| | Mother | Maternal Grandfather | Maternal Grandmother | Father | Paternal Grandfather | Paternal Grandmother |
|----------------|--------|----------------------|----------------------|--------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Heart Disease | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 |
| Stroke | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 |
| Diabetes | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 |
| Colon Cancer | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 |
| Breast Cancer | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 |
| Ovarian Cancer | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 |
| Alzheimer's | .04 | .02 | .02 | .04 | .02 | .02 |
| Obesity | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .04 |

Total from chart = _____

Genetic Factor = 1 – total from chart = _____

Genetic Factor (GF) from section 8: _____

To Total Your Score

1. Add your points from sections 1–7: _____
2. Multiply your result by your GF from section 8 for your Actual Health Score: _____

For example, if your total points from section 1–7 are 78, to calculate your Actual Health Score, multiply your total points by your genetic factor: 78 x .88 = 68.

As you can see from this example, your genetic history can move you from the healthy zone into the unhealthy zone—emphasizing the importance of optimizing your behaviors and environment in order to offset genetic risk!

Now that you’ve completed the questionnaire, place a mark on the following chart on the spot that corresponds to your Actual Health Score. Compare this chart to the one on page 37. How close was your prediction?

Your Current Health Score Status

So what does your health score mean and what can you do about it? Let's find out.

Less than 15

Health Status: Sick

You probably already have significant medical conditions that are affecting your health, or are on the verge of becoming ill. But we can help change all that.

I don't view sickness as a progressive and inevitable decay in quality and length of life, nor as a condition that should be "fixed" simply by dialing up more medications. Those beliefs are for practitioners in the world of "sick care" not health care. Rather, I believe that if you're willing to take control of your health and learn new habits, we can get you out of this sick state, despite any underlying disease. By making a fundamental decision to become healthy you'll fuel a whole new array of choices that can quickly improve your health, and you may soon be able to reduce or eliminate your medications and free yourself from their daily side effects—just by applying the Habits of Health to your life!

15–39

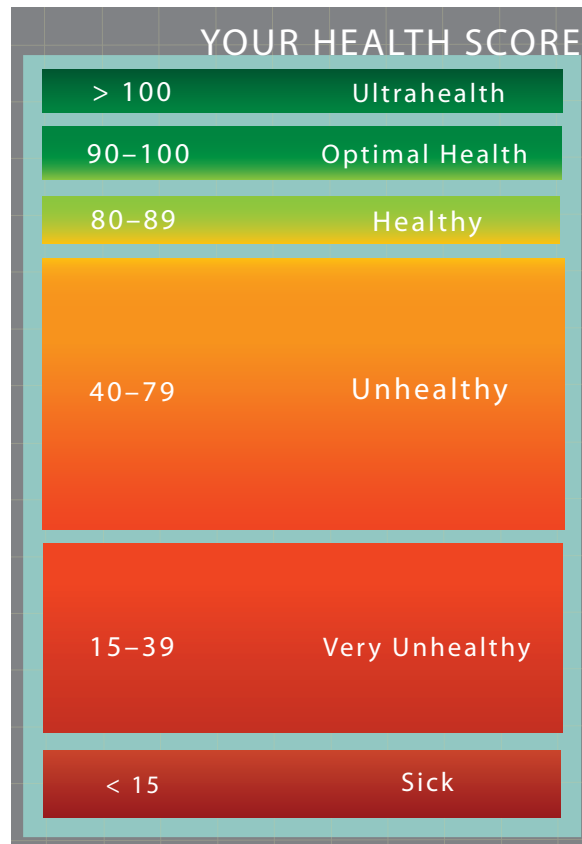
Health Status: Very Unhealthy

If you're not already suffering from significant disease, you're on track to develop it in the near future. But you can create dramatic changes in your health and in your life by adopting the Habits of Health—change that can alter your current health path and even save your life.

40–79

Health Status: Unhealthy

You may not suffer from disease at the moment, but your current condition is no recipe for optimal health. Over time, your poor daily choices and lack of discipline are sure to lead you down the path to disease. The good news is that your body will respond quickly to the changes we're going to help you make in your life!



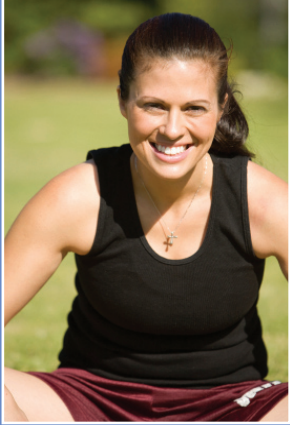
Your Actual Health

Score. Now that you've completed the health assessment, compare your actual health score to your prediction on page 37. How close were you?

Dr. A Says . . .

Remember that making healthy choices—the kinds of behaviors you'll be learning with the Habits of Health—can help you overcome your genetic history and raise your health score.





80–89

Health Status: Healthy

Congratulations! You have a number of positive habits that have helped keep you free from disease and within the healthy range. But don't get too comfortable—without constant vigilance and improvement, it's all too easy to slip. And working to make even better choices can put you firmly on the path toward the best possible health you can achieve.

90–100

Health Status: Optimal Health

You're in the small group of individuals who have made a conscious effort to create health for yourself . . . or you're still eighteen! But remember, optimal health is a journey that continues throughout your life. So there are still some areas where you can improve your health status, even within this optimal range. The techniques in this book will help you in areas you've mastered as well as in areas that need improvement, and will teach you ways to organize the Habits of Health into a system for continual growth.

In fact, our ultimate goal is to continue your optimal health growth into a state of Ultrahealth.

More than 100

Health Status: Ultrahealth

You naturally subscribe to a lifestyle that supports Ultrahealth—a state of health and behaviors that prevents disease, helps your body slow down aging, and has the potential to extend your lifetime.

In Part Three, we'll discuss ways to improve your Ultrahealth status and help you remain there indefinitely. Together, we can work on not just reaching and maintaining optimal health but actually extending this thriving life much longer than you ever thought possible!

Where Do We Go from Here?

As you can probably tell from the questions you've just answered, I'm interested in much more than just your medical history—I'm interested in the dynamics of your life. That's because in order to create health, *you* need to take an active role. Your daily choices can support or undermine your health. And that's good news—because it means that in each and every question where you scored zero or lower, you can improve immediately. But your ability to completely reverse the effects of your current choices weakens with age. It's critical that you examine the choices you're making right away—in fact, there will never be a better time.

How many of the healthy choices above are you incapable of making? What's stopping you? Maybe making healthy choices didn't seem to make much difference in the past. Not today, perhaps, and not tomorrow. But over time those choices add up—and together they've given you the health score you have today. But we can change all that.

Did you know that your body today is made up of entirely new cells than were there twelve months ago? Change your nutrient intake, add a little physical activity—and imagine where you could be twelve months from now! We can't pick our parents and our genetic background, but we *can* take control over the state of our health. If you're a spectator in your own life, you leave yourself open to sickness and disease. But if you're ready to play, we have all the equipment you need to get in the game. We have the Habits of Health.

The First Step

I've prepared you for your journey. Now it's time to take the first step. As with any new adventure, this is a time of excitement and perhaps some anxiety. Will this plan work? Can I do it? Will I end up back where I started?

It's not unusual to be afraid as you move out of your comfort zone. Our current habits are secure, familiar, and efficient—they've been part of us for so long that we do them automatically, every day, without thinking. When they're mostly healthy habits, they make us stronger. Unfortunately, for most people that's just not the case.

The Habits of Health will give you those healthy habits—if you're willing to change. Let me start by helping to allay any concerns or fears you might have.

First and foremost, let me assure you that all the principles and techniques I'm teaching you to improve your health are safe. They're based on clinically proven methods, with sound scientific research to validate their effectiveness.

Second, everything in my plan is doable. I've paid particular attention to making sure these new habits are convenient and can be incorporated into our time-starved lives.

And third, I've chosen the first step very carefully—because I know that if I can help you succeed right off the bat, you can use that success to build a lifetime of health. That first step changes everything.

Shall we begin?



Dr. A Says . . .

The Habits of Health will give you healthy habits if you're willing to change. I'm here to help allay any concerns or fears you might have.

