

Assess yourself

How Healthy Are You?

Although we all recognize the importance of being healthy, it can be a challenge to sort out which behaviors are most likely to cause problems or which ones pose the greatest risk. *Before* you decide where to start, it is important to look at your current health status.

By completing the following assessment, you will have a clearer picture of health areas in which you excel and those that could use some work. Taking this assessment will also help you reflect on components of health that you may not have thought about.

Answer each question, then total your score for each section and fill it in on the Personal Checklist at the end of the assessment. Think about the behaviors that influenced your score in each category. Would you like to change any of them? Choose the area that you'd like to improve, and then complete the Behavior Change Contract at the front of your book. Use the contract to



think through and implement a behavior change over the course of this class.

Each of the categories in this questionnaire is an important aspect of the total dimensions of health, but this is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified health care provider. Consider scheduling a thorough physical examination by a licensed physician or setting up an appointment with a mental health counselor at your school if you need help making a behavior change.

For each of the following, indicate how often you think the statements describe you.

1 Physical Health

	Never	Rarely	Some of the Time	Usually or Always
1. I am happy with my body size and weight.	1	2	3	4
2. I engage in vigorous exercises such as brisk walking, jogging, swimming, or running for at least 30 minutes per day, three to four times per week.	1	2	3	4
3. I get at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.	1	2	3	4
4. My immune system is strong, and my body heals itself quickly when I get sick or injured.	1	2	3	4
5. I listen to my body; when there is something wrong, I try to make adjustments to heal it or seek professional advice.	1	2	3	4

Total score for this section: _____

2 Social Health

1. I am open, honest, and get along well with others.	1	2	3	4
2. I participate in a wide variety of social activities and enjoy being with people who are different from me.	1	2	3	4

	Never	Rarely	Some of the Time	Usually or Always
3. I try to be a "better person" and decrease behaviors that have caused problems in my interactions with others.	1	2	3	4
4. I am open and accessible to a loving and responsible relationship.	1	2	3	4
5. I try to see the good in my friends and do whatever I can to support them and help them feel good about themselves.	1	2	3	4

Total score for this section: _____

3 Emotional Health

1. I find it easy to laugh, cry, and show emotions such as love, fear, and anger, and try to express these in positive, constructive ways.	1	2	3	4
2. I avoid using alcohol or other drugs as a means of helping me forget my problems.	1	2	3	4
3. I recognize when I am stressed and take steps to relax through exercise, quiet time, or other calming activities.	1	2	3	4



Never	Rarely	Some of the Time	Usually or Always
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- I try not to be too critical or judgmental of others and try to understand differences or quirks that I note in others.
- I am flexible and adapt or adjust to change in a positive way.

Total score for this section: _____

4 Environmental Health

- I buy recycled paper and purchase biodegradable detergents and cleaning agents, or make my own cleaning products, whenever possible.
- I recycle paper, plastic, and metals; purchase refillable containers when possible; and try to minimize the amount of paper and plastics that I use.
- I try to wear my clothes for longer periods between washing to reduce water consumption and the amount of detergents in our water sources.
- I vote for pro-environment candidates in elections.
- I minimize the amount of time that I run the faucet when I brush my teeth, shave, or shower.

Total score for this section: _____

5 Spiritual Health

- I take time alone to think about what's important in life—who I am, what I value, where I fit in, and where I'm going.
- I have faith in a greater power, be it a supreme being, nature, or the connectedness of all living things.
- I engage in acts of caring and goodwill without expecting something in return.
- I sympathize and empathize with those who are suffering and try to help them through difficult times.
- I go for the gusto and experience life to the fullest.

Total score for this section: _____

6 Intellectual Health

Never	Rarely	Some of the Time	Usually or Always
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- I carefully consider my options and possible consequences as I make choices in life.
- I learn from my mistakes and try to act differently the next time.
- I have at least one hobby, learning activity, or personal growth activity that I make time for each week, something that improves me as a person.
- I manage my time well rather than let time manage me.
- My friends and family trust my judgment.

Total score for this section: _____

Although each of these six aspects of health is important, there are some factors that don't readily fit in one category. As college students, you face some unique risks that others may not have. For this reason, we have added a section to this self-assessment that focuses on personal health promotion and disease prevention. Answer these questions and add your results to the Personal Checklist in the following section.

7 Personal Health Promotion/ Disease Prevention

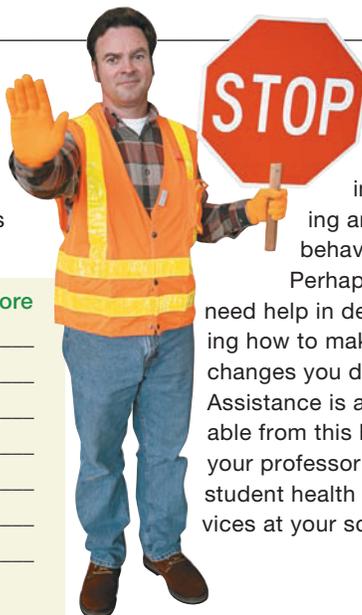
- If I were to be sexually active, I would use protection such as latex condoms, dental dams, and other means of reducing my risk of sexually transmitted infections.
- I can have a good time at parties or during happy hours without binge drinking.
- I have eaten too much in the last month and have forced myself to vomit to avoid gaining weight.
- If I were to get a tattoo or piercing, I would go to a reputable person who follows strict standards of sterilization and precautions against blood-borne disease transmission.
- I engage in extreme sports and find that I enjoy the highs that come with risking bodily harm through physical performance.

Total score for this section: _____

Personal Checklist

Now, total your scores for each section and compare them to what would be considered optimal scores. Are you surprised by your scores in any areas? Which areas do you need to work on?

	Ideal Score	Your Score
Physical health	20	_____
Social health	20	_____
Emotional health	20	_____
Environmental health	20	_____
Spiritual health	20	_____
Intellectual health	20	_____
Personal health promotion/disease prevention	20	_____



Scores of 10–14:

Your health risks are showing! Find information about the risks you are facing and why it is important to change these behaviors.

Perhaps you need help in deciding how to make the changes you desire. Assistance is available from this book, your professor, and student health services at your school.



Scores of 15–20:

Outstanding! Your answers show that you are aware of the importance of these behaviors in your overall health. More importantly, you are putting your knowledge to work by practicing good health habits that should reduce your overall risks. Although you received a very high score, you may want to consider areas in which your scores could be improved.



Scores below 10:

You may be taking unnecessary risks with your health. Perhaps you are not aware of the risks and what to do about them. Identify each risk area and make a mental note as you read the associated chapter in the book. Whenever possible, seek additional resources,

either on your campus or through your local community health resources, and make a serious commitment to behavior change. If any area is causing you to be less than functional in your class work or personal life, seek professional help. In this book you will find the information you need to help you improve your scores and your health. Remember that these scores are only indicators, not diagnostic tools.



YOUR PLAN FOR CHANGE

The **Assess yourself** activity gave you the chance to look at the status of your health in several dimensions. Now that you have considered these results, you can take steps toward changing certain behaviors that may be detrimental to your health.

Today, you can:

- Evaluate your behavior and identify patterns and specific things you are doing.
- Select one pattern of behavior that you want to change.
- Fill out the Behavior Change Contract at the front of your book. Be sure to include your long- and short-term goals for change, the rewards you'll give yourself for reaching these goals, the potential obstacles along the way, and the strategies for overcoming these obstacles.

For each goal, list the small steps and specific actions that you will take.

Within the next 2 weeks, you can:

- Start a journal and begin charting your progress toward your behavior change goal.
- Tell a friend or family member about your behavior change goal, and ask him or her to support you along the way.
- Reward yourself for reaching your short-term goals, and reevaluate your plan if you find they are too ambitious.

By the end of the semester, you can:

- Review your journal entries and consider how successful you have been in following your plan. What helped you be successful? What made change more difficult? What will you do differently next week?
- Revise your plan as needed: Are the goals attainable? Are the rewards satisfying? Do you have enough support and motivation?