

Oral Health



"Best Advice I Ever Got"

BY: Stacey Colino

Good health advice is hard to come by. But when it does, it's worth keeping and passing on to those you care about. We asked a variety of health experts to offer you their best morsels of wisdom, based on the smartest advice they ever got. Here's what they said:

"See me as your dentist but tell me about the rest of you too."

Elisa Mello, cosmetic dentist, NYC Smile Design

Best advice I ever got: "The eyes may be the windows to your soul, but the mouth is the window to your overall health," my instructor said in my second year of dental school. From her, I learned to look at a patient from both a dental and a medical perspective, since underlying health issues often contribute to teeth and gum problems.

Best advice for you: Thoroughly fill out the medical forms your dentist gives you. Even if they seem irrelevant, tell your dentist about medical problems, such as diabetes, gastroesophageal reflux disease, bulimia, anemia or vitamin deficiencies.

"Take easy, breezy steps for sweeping changes."

Molly Kimball, registered dietitian, Elmwood Fitness Center, New Orleans

Best advice I ever got: Nudge clients out of their comfort zones -- without pushing them too hard to make drastic changes they're uncomfortable with. The behavioral therapist who told me this reconfirmed my own belief that gently steering people in a healthier direction rather than turning their world upside down has longer-lasting effects.

Best advice for you: You don't need to overhaul your lifestyle or have a perfect diet to be healthy. Instead, find small improvements that fit into your routine: Swap your usual high-calorie blended coffee for a skinny latte, for example, or keep frozen veggies on hand instead of constantly worrying about getting fresh produce. Small, easy steps can add up to lasting change.

"Tell your story like a two-minute Hollywood pitch."

Dr. Davis Liu, family physician and author, Sacramento, Calif.

Best advice I ever got: It was in my fourth year of medical school when my instructor said, "It's her story ... listen!" Indeed, 90 percent of nailing the right diagnosis is getting a patient's whole medical history, including current symptoms.

Best advice for you: When you share your history with your doctor, make it short but highlight important symptoms: when they started, where they're located, how they feel and how they affect you. Doctors interrupt many patients in 23 seconds because they think they've heard your story before. But if you tell your story right, your doctor can't help but listen, which means you're likely to get better care and treatment.

"Don't get everything done today."

Alice Domar, Ph.D., director of the Domar Center for Mind/Body Health, Waltham, Mass.

Best advice I ever got: Make the distinction between what's essential and what's optional -- my husband gave me this gem of advice on our honeymoon in Greece. He had gone for a run, and when he returned, he found me sitting in our hotel room, jotting down a detailed list of all the things I needed to do when we got home -- everything from sending thank-you notes to buying accent pillows for our couch! But he was right: Focusing only on the essential reduces stress magnificently.

Best advice for you: Separate the stuff you need to get done from what you'd like to get done, and prioritize. You're probably running around with a to-do list a mile long, but if you challenge the thoughts that say you need to do this and this and this, you'll be saving yourself unnecessary stress.