

# Health Day provides tips to live a longer, healthier life

*Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College Public Affairs Office*

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*Dr. Dean Ornish, president of the Preventive Medicine Research Institute, spoke about simple changes that can help people live longer and healthier lives during the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute Health Day Aug. 4 in Bliss Hall.*



Aug. 4, 2011 – The Army War College experience not only provides students the tools to think and operate at the strategic level, they also provide tools to help them lead longer and healthier lives.

Internationally experts who focus on motivating lifestyle and nutrition changes came to the USAWC for the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute Health Day Aug. 4 in Bliss Hall.

“We sincerely hope that you’ll take the time this year to focus on developing your leadership, health, and fitness not only for you, but for your families and those you’ll lead once you leave here,” said **Dr. Tom Williams**, APFRI director.

**Dr. Dean Ornish**, president of the Preventive Medicine Research Institute, opened the symposium with a discussion about the power of personalized lifestyle changes.

“We tend to think of advances in health as a new medicine, or procedure, but it can be just as beneficial to make simple changes in your lifestyle,” said Ornish. “We need to address the underlying cause of the problems, like heart disease. When we can treat the cause, the body has a remarkable ability to heal itself. Simple changes can not only prevent, but sometimes reverse the most severe medical conditions.”

One of the techniques he discussed was meditation and its ability to manage stress and make physical difference in your health.

“Not only can meditation make a dramatic difference in how your body handles stress, it can help how your body reacts to stress, lessening the physical damage it can do to your body,” he said.

He said that diets are commonly not the way to go.

“If you go on a diet, you are likely to go off a diet,” he said. “To the degree you can eat healthier foods, the better you will feel and the more likely you will continue to do it. You can force yourself to do anything for a period of time, but if it’s un-enjoyable it’s not sustainable. It’s not just about being healthier, it’s about living longer.”

“Don’t wait for a heart attack to make you make changes,” he said. “Be proactive.”

Ornish recommended these tips to make simple lifestyle changes:

- Consume mostly plants, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and soy products in the natural forms
- If it came from a plant, eat it, if it’s made in a plant, avoid it
- Use meat as a flavoring or as a special occasion food
- Reduce the intake of fat, saturated fats, hydrogenated fats and trans fats
- Reduce intake of sodium
- Consume 4 grams a day of fish oil or equivalent
- Organic is better, both taste and health
- Choose quality or quantity
- Avoid processed foods with ingredients a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader can’t pronounce
- Don’t eat breakfast cereals that change the color of milk
- Exercise is essential to improve your ability to fight off health problems. Make activity a regular part of your lifestyle.
- A glass of pomegranate juice every day can make a big difference in your health. It is packed with helpful antioxidants.
- Mental health affects physical health. People who manage stress well, focus on their relationships and take time to enjoy themselves live longer and happier lives.

### **Dr. Leslie Bonci discusses nutrition**

**Dr. Leslie Bonci**, a nationally-recognized sports dietitian and Director of Sports Nutrition in the Department of Orthopedic Surgery and the Center for Sports Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, followed Ornish with a discussion on strategies to eat healthy and how to stay healthy. She also works with the Pittsburgh Steelers, Pittsburgh Penguins and other sports teams in the

Pittsburgh area.

“You need to fuel your body with the proper foods and nutrients in order for your body to properly function,” she said. “Nutrition is the prescription for disease prevention and management. This isn’t about perfect eating, it’s about what’s doing best for the body.”

Bonci said that optimizing what goes into your body is key.

“Every one of us in the room needs a different amount of food,” she said. “So there is not a one-size-fits-all amount of food. You need to pay equal attention to the types and amounts of food, your eating habits, including what and how often you eat.”

Bonci provided some tips to establish a healthy eating pattern:

- At least three meals a day -- and breakfast is a must
- Calories are based upon energy expenditure and metabolic rate
- Portions are critical, less is more in general
- Need to choose an inclusive, not exclusive eating pattern
- Balanced eating is crucial, this means some fats are necessary
- Eat a variety of colors of vegetables and fruits
- Protein is important in your diet
- Yogurt is not a good source of milk
- You can eat meat, just choose the leanest meat you can find
- How and when you eat is just as important as what you eat
- Slow down when you eat. Sit down, use utensils and chew
- For fluids, 11-16 cups of 90-125 ounces per day, including water, milk, juice, coffee, tea, except alcohol. Think beyond the glass, many fruits and vegetables also have large amounts of fluids
- Be selective with your carbs, opt for higher fiber carbs
- The goal is not to eliminate fats, just be selective
- Think nutrient rich at home and at the grocery store

### **Dr. Tom Williams presents APFRI program overview**

Williams closed out the symposium with a talk on senior leader health and fitness.

“We hope that you are able to mitigate not only your own risks, but also for those that you are leading,” he said. “We want to help you in the coming year to increase your fitness level to optimize you for the demands of a strategic leader. Leaders set the tone. We help you focus on the complex interplay between leadership, health and fitness.”

A proactive approach is necessary said Williams.

“We want you to strategically think ahead on your own health and fitness, don’t wait until the risk factors kick in,” he said.

Williams outlined the APFRI programs available, including assessments of strength, fitness, and endurance, noon-time lectures, along with coaching and mentoring for optimal performance as leaders.

“The assessments provide a ‘snapshot’ of your current health and fitness status with a recommendation for improvement,” he said. The four- phase program is completely voluntary and students may opt out at any time. All data collected is confidential.

The APFRI program includes the following:

- Phase I- Comprehensive Health/Fitness Assessment
- State-of-the-art cardiorespiratory fitness level determination
- Screening for cardiovascular disease
- Body composition
- Muscle strength/flexibility
- Aerobic fitness using treadmill
- Use of War College norms to assess readiness relative to other leaders
- Phase II- Educational intervention and one-on-one coaching sessions
- Phase III- Assessment of Changes during War College year

Phase IV- Follow-up questionnaires and assessments

APFRI is an Army Leader Development Program initiative that provides assessments and education linked with Professional Military Education at the Army War College, U.S.Army Sergeants Major Academy, Command and General Staff College, and the Marine Corps War College. For more information on the APFRI program visit <https://apfri.carlisle.army.mil/>