**Unhealthier today?**

Considering that we are living longer (by 5 years) than we used to live 40 years ago, and we seem to be more conscious with exercise and eating better, why are obesity rates still skyrocketing, cancer rates are rising, and lifestyle choices are still poorly made?

It’s very interesting to me that the more we know and with the ease of becoming in the know in our world today, how is it possible that we continue to be unhealthier than we ever were? While I was flipping through the internet this past weekend an article title caught my eye; “40 ways we’re unhealthier today than we were 40 years ago,” Crow, S. 3/30/2019, BestLifeonline.com. With this article as my guide, here are my added two-cents.

We are drinking more alcohol. According to the journal of JAMA Psychiatry, alcohol use has increased in recent years and cirrhosis rates are reaching epidemic levels. We’ve also started to vape, and cannabis is on the increase. Which has been linked to an eight percent increase in lung cancer.

We are eating more sugar and fructose. Sugar consumption is linked to everything from obesity, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

We are spending less time outdoors. Environmental research found that spending time outside is linked to lower blood pressure, lower rates of heart disease and reduced depression. This has also led to a vitamin D deficiency in the U.S. because of our increased hours inside and fewer hours out in the sunshine.

And, according to a report from NASA, the amount of UV radiation reaching the earth’s surface has gone up significantly in the past 30 years, which is what causes certain cancers, like melanoma. American Cancer Society reports that melanoma rates have been rising steadily.

We are getting less sleep. Too many distractions prior to bedtime, too many worries in our brains and simply not enough hours in that deep, restorative sleep.

We are sitting more. More than one quarter of American adults spend over eight hours a day sitting and 45 percent of them admit that they are largely inactive (JAMA Network study). Interesting fact from the Mayo Clinic Proceedings say that the number of high-activity jobs have decreased since 1970 and we are spending more time behind the wheel; commuting and driving instead of walking or taking public transportation.

We weigh more. Nearly 40 percent of US adults are classified as obese. Which has led to an increase in diabetes. These unhealthy habits have caused the diagnosed diabetes to triple from 2.49 in 1979 to 7.4 percent in 2015.

Overdoses are on the rise. Drug-related mortality in the U.S. was just over 1 per 100,000 in 1979 and in 2016 it was 17 per 100,000.

Plastic. A study conducted by Orb Media revealed that from water samples taken around the world, more than 80 percent had microscopic plastic fibers in them, which come from plastic bags and bottles. This can’t possibly be good for our bodies?

We are eating more fast food. Up from 20 percent to 36.6 percent! Direct correlation to the increased obesity! This also correlates to increased consumption of added fats in our diets! The USDA reported that Americans consumed just over 50 pounds of added fats in 1970 which increased to 80 pounds by 2010.

We are eating fewer calories from vegetables each day and more red meat than ever. We’re drinking more coffee as well, up from 56 percent in 1981 to 64 percent today. “While the occasional cup may be fine for some folks, too much coffee can contribute to sleeplessness, heart arrhythmia, irritability and increased blood pressure.”

Too much screen time. In 1979, Nielsen data says that the average American typically watched 6 hours and 36 minutes of TV per household. Now it’s up to 11 hours and six minutes of interacting with media via phones, tablets, TVs and computers causing health issues, vision problems, weight gain and anxiety.

We’re spending more time alone causing increased loneliness, which is linked to everything from depression to early death.

Skipping vaccinations, using too much hand sanitizer, taking too many antibiotics; the list goes on and on. It’s sad to think we’re unhealthier now then we were 40 years ago. Food for thought!