



## THE WINGS OF THE SUN

Traditional Jewish Healing in Theory and Practice

By [Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum](#)

### Healthcare Advice from Rambam

Adapted from Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot De'ot, Chapter 4.

#### Eating:

Eat only when hungry. Drink only when thirsty. Don't keep eating until your stomach is full. Eat approximately a quarter less than the amount that would make you fully satisfied. In the summer eat cooling foods and don't use excessive seasoning. In the winter months eat warming foods with plenty of spices. Don't drink with your meal except for a little water mixed with wine. When the food starts to be digested, drink as much water as you need, but even then don't drink water to excess. Always sit down to eat. Don't walk about, ride, take exercise or engage in any other kind of demanding physical activity until the food is digested. Physical exertion immediately after meals can cause serious illness.

#### Exercise:

Before you eat, walk about to warm up your body, or engage in some other form of physical activity. Every morning you should exercise until your body is warm. Then rest a little, and after this have your meal. If you wash with warm water after your exercise, so much the better. After washing, wait a little and then eat.

#### Bowel movements:

When you need to relieve yourself, do so immediately. You should check to see if you need to relieve yourself before and after meals, exercise, bathing, sexual intercourse and going to sleep.

#### Sleep:

It is sufficient to sleep for eight hours a day. Don't sleep on your front or back but on your side: at the beginning of the night on the left side, and at the end of the night on the right side. Don't go to sleep directly after eating: wait about three or four hours after your meal.

#### Bathing:

Don't bathe immediately after eating, or when you are hungry, but when the food begins to be digested. Wash your entire body with water that is hot but not scalding. After this, wash your body with lukewarm water, then with tepid water, until you finally wash with cold water.

Don't stay in the bath too long: as soon as you perspire and your body becomes supple, rinse yourself and leave the bath. Then dress and cover your head so as not to be caught in a cold draft. This applies even in the summer. After your bath, wait till you are calm, your body is rested and the warmth of the bath has dissipated. You may then eat. If you sleep a little after your bath and before eating, this is excellent. Don't drink cold water after bathing, and certainly not while in the bath. If you are thirsty after leaving the bath and cannot restrain yourself, drink water mixed with a little wine or honey.

#### Sexual intercourse:

The semen is the life and strength of the body and the light of the eyes. Whenever semen is emitted to excess the body becomes wasted and its life and strength fail. Someone who is sunken in sexual activity will age prematurely. His strength will wane, his eyes will weaken, and a bad odor will emit from his mouth and armpits... All kinds of maladies will afflict him. Someone who wants to live a wholesome life should be very cautious about this. One should not cohabit unless one's body is strong and healthy and one experiences repeated involuntary erections which persist even when one diverts one's thoughts to something else. One should not cohabit when either sated or hungry but only after one's meal is digested.

#### General healthcare:

As long as a person exercises, takes care not to eat to the point of satiation and keeps his bowels soft, he will not fall ill and his strength will be fortified, even if he eats unhealthy foods. But the opposite is true of someone who leads a sedentary life, takes no exercise, fails to relieve himself when necessary and allows himself to remain constipated. Even if such a person eats good food and takes care of himself according to proper medical principles, all his days will be full of pain and his strength will wane. Excessive intake of food is a deadly poison to the body and one of the main causes of illness. Most of the illnesses to which man is prey are caused by eating the wrong foods or by excessive eating even of good foods.

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