

Aging Healthfully With Naturopathic Medicine

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Outline

- ▶ Physiology of aging
 - ▶ Areas of concern
 - ▶ Digestion
 - ▶ Heart health
 - ▶ Cognitive health
 - ▶ Immune health
 - ▶ Musculoskeletal health
 - ▶ Bone health
 - ▶ How we age
 - ▶ Role of inflammation
- ▶ The stress and environment connection
- ▶ Where to start?
 - ▶ Hint: it's NEVER too late
 - ▶ Role of diet
 - ▶ Role of exercise
 - ▶ Spirituality
 - ▶ Relationships
- ▶ Putting it all together

Healthy living Healthy aging



Physiology of aging: Digestion

- ▶ Reduced stomach acid
- ▶ Reduced enzymatic activity
 - ▶ Reduced absorption
- ▶ Reduced sense of smell, taste and teeth
 - ▶ Diminished appetite
- ▶ Lack a variety of foods
 - ▶ Think: tea and toast
 - ▶ Diminished nutrition
 - ▶ Reduced protein – lean muscle mass
 - ▶ Reduced caloric intake
 - ▶ Dehydration
- ▶ Low fibre diet
 - ▶ Poor colon health
 - ▶ Increased use of laxatives
 - ▶ Depletion of minerals
- ▶ Vitamin and mineral deficiencies
 - ▶ A,D,E,K
 - ▶ B1, B2, B6, B12, Folate and Vitamin C
 - ▶ Calcium, Magnesium, Zinc, Iron, Copper, Potassium, Chromium
- ▶ Under nutrition is VERY common

Physiology of Aging: Heart Health

- ▶ Atrophy of heart muscle
- ▶ Calcification of valves
- ▶ Loss of arterial elasticity
- ▶ Intra-arterial deposits
 - ▶ Plaques
- ▶ Reduced elasticity in airways and lung tissue
- ▶ Nutrient exchange is diminished



Physiology of Aging...Cognitive Health



- ▶ B vitamin and amino acid deficiency
 - ▶ Reduction of Ach, GABA, glycine, L-glutamine, NE, and serotonin
- ▶ EFA deficiency
- ▶ Blood flow
- ▶ Nerve cell loss increases with age

Physiology of Aging: Musculoskeletal Health

- ▶ Changes in body composition
 - ▶ Decrease in lean muscle mass
 - ▶ Increase in fatty tissue
- ▶ Decreased elasticity of tissue
- ▶ Increased laxity of ligaments and tendons
- ▶ Delayed wound healing



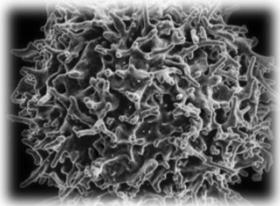
Physiology of Aging: Bone Health

- ▶ Peak bone mass in 20s begins to decline
- ▶ Bone loss is multifactorial
 - ▶ Body weight
 - ▶ Exercise
 - ▶ Diet
 - ▶ Fluoridated water
 - ▶ Stress
 - ▶ Hormonal status



Physiology of Aging: Immune Health

- ▶ Decreased activity of Thymus gland
 - ▶ Educates 'T-cells'
- ▶ Decreased number of T-cells
 - ▶ Part of adaptive immune response
- ▶ Decreased production and activity of white blood cells
 - ▶ Via IL-2



How does this happen?

- ▶ Again is largely affected by our genetic makeup
 - ▶ However,...
 - ▶ Inflammation and free radical formation are the vehicle by which our cells get damaged
 - ▶ Unstable 'reactive oxygen species', or ROS, will cause cumulative damage to cells over time
 - ▶ Known collectively as 'oxidative stress'.
 - ▶ Free radical formations is responsible for:
 - ▶ Cancer
 - ▶ Wrinkles
 - ▶ Plaque formation in blood vessels

Contributing Factors: Stress

- ▶ Not just a buzz word
- ▶ Long term chronic stress is the most harmful
 - ▶ Social isolation
 - ▶ Financial limitations
- ▶ Body in a 'catabolic' state
 - ▶ Raises blood sugar
 - ▶ Stimulates breakdown of protein
 - ▶ Increase in metabolic waste
 - ▶ Increase free radicals
- ▶ Contributes to memory loss
- ▶ Contributes to depression and anxiety
- ▶ Role in inflammation
 - ▶ Chronic disease
 - ▶ Diabetes
 - ▶ Cancer
 - ▶ Heart disease
 - ▶ Alzheimer's
 - ▶ Fibromyalgia
 - ▶ Chronic fatigue syndrome

Contributing Factors: The Environment

- ▶ Long term exposure to harmful compounds in industrialized society
 - ▶ Signs of toxic burden begins to manifest in 4th decade of life
 - ▶ Problem is compounded by
 - ▶ Impaired detoxification
 - ▶ Reduced size and blood flow to liver
 - ▶ Increased excretion of minerals by kidneys
 - ▶ Heavy metals significantly impact cognition
 - ▶ Predisposes to senility, memory loss, and neurological dysfunction



So What to Do? Start Early!

"Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it, you've got to start young"

– Fred Astaire



Role of Exercise

- ▶ Maintains muscle mass
 - ▶ Use it or lose it
- ▶ Increases metabolism
 - ▶ Less fatty tissue
- ▶ Increase blood flow
 - ▶ To liver – detoxification
 - ▶ To brain – cognition and mood
- ▶ Mitigates stress response
 - ▶ Rids excess cortisol
 - ▶ Improves sleep quality
 - ▶ Improves immune function
- ▶ Improved bowel function
 - ▶ Detoxification
- ▶ Elevates mood and reduces pain
 - ▶ Endorphin production
- ▶ Protects against heart disease
 - ▶ Increases production of body's natural antioxidants
- ▶ Can maintain relationships and form new ones

Role of Exercise

- ▶ Start young and keep it up
 - ▶ Healthy habits
- ▶ Work with your body
- ▶ Work up gradually
- ▶ Every bit counts
- ▶ Consult your medical doctor before starting an exercise program
- ▶ Increased level of activity = increased life expectancy



Spirituality and Balance



- ▶ It's not easy...
 - ▶ Loss of friends and family members
 - ▶ Isolation
 - ▶ Diminishing independence
 - ▶ Identity changes (work, children, activities)
 - ▶ Thoughts of past, of mortality and life purpose
- ▶ Embracing change
 - ▶ Wisdom and depth
 - ▶ Cross culturally age brings greater respect and divine blessing
 - ▶ Need to question cultural norms and expectations
 - ▶ Connect with your own version of spirituality
 - ▶ Prayer, meditation, yoga, creativity, living with nature

It's Never Too Late...

- ▶ To aid digestion:
 - ▶ No water with meals
 - ▶ Chew well
 - ▶ Sound fiber sources
 - ▶ Add sprouts
 - ▶ Eat breakfast
 - ▶ Consider enzymes/bitters
- ▶ To strengthen bones
 - ▶ Alternate Ca sources: broccoli, almonds, tahini
 - ▶ Avoid pop
 - ▶ Vary protein sources
 - ▶ Alkalinize your diet
 - ▶ Address lifestyle factors – don't just sit there :)
 - ▶ Ca supplement if necessary – choose wisely
- ▶ To aid sleep
 - ▶ No eating 2 hours before bed
 - ▶ Avoid coffee and alcohol
 - ▶ Sex before sleep
 - ▶ Sleepy time teas: chamomile
 - ▶ Essential oils: lavender
- ▶ To support heart health
 - ▶ Don't smoke
 - ▶ Bioflavonoids in berries
 - ▶ Lots of garlic and ginger
 - ▶ Avoid poor quality fats
 - ▶ Omega 3 fatty acids
 - ▶ Oats for breakfast
- ▶ To kick-start your noggin
 - ▶ Get your omega 3s
 - ▶ B vitamins: leafy greens
 - ▶ Antioxidants in food: eat a 'rainbow'
 - ▶ Avoid possible neurotoxins

It's Never Too Late...

- ▶ Remember: Food is your medicine
 - ▶ "White ain't right"
 - ▶ Cook in large amounts
 - ▶ Soups, stews
 - ▶ Make 1/2 your plate veggies
 - ▶ Stoke your curiosity
 - ▶ Take a cooking class
 - ▶ Meet new people
 - ▶ Avoid excessive sugar, salt, coffee, and alcohol
- ▶ Include super foods:
 - ▶ Tomato
 - ▶ Broccoli
 - ▶ Kale
 - ▶ Ginger
 - ▶ Mushrooms
 - ▶ Garlic
 - ▶ Green tea
 - ▶ Flax seeds
 - ▶ Avocado

It's Never Too Late...

- ▶ Work with what you have
- ▶ Move every day –
 - ▶ Dance, walk, cycle, yoga, tai chi or qi gong, stretch, belly dance, ski, snowshoe
 - ▶ 90 minutes of exercise per week necessary to preserve or build bone density
- ▶ Prioritize sleep
 - ▶ Dark room, before midnight, down time before bed, sex and sleep only, avoid stimulants

It's Never Too Late...

- ▶ Drink lots of water
 - ▶ Non-fluoridated
- ▶ Educate and empower
 - ▶ Know your medications and supplements
 - ▶ Learn about your body
 - ▶ Monitor BP, cholesterol, weight, blood sugar
- ▶ Regular check ups (bones, hormones, prostate)
- ▶ Reduce stress
 - ▶ Meditate, pray, breathe, cry
 - ▶ Get out into the community, avoid isolation
 - ▶ Rethink perspective and respect change

Aging Healthfully...

"The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, nor to worry about the future, but to live the present moment wisely and earnestly."

~Buddha~

