

September 2013

September: Healthy Aging Month

You're Never Too Old Keep Active as You Age

We've all heard that exercise is good for you. Did you know that it's as true for older people as it is for any age group? You're never too old to get moving, get stronger and improve your health. Fitting exercise and physical activity into your day can enhance your life in so many ways. Regular physical activity can improve your balance and boost or maintain your strength and fitness. It may also improve your mood and help you manage or lessen the impact of conditions like diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis and depression.

Experts recommend 4 types of exercise for older adults: endurance, balance, strength and flexibility. Brisk walking, dancing and other endurance exercises improve the health of your heart, lungs and circulatory system. These exercises can make it easier for you to mow the lawn, climb stairs and do other daily activities. Strength exercises include lifting weights or using resistance bands. They can increase muscle strength to help with activities such as carrying groceries or lifting grandchildren. Balance exercises can help prevent falls—a major health risk for older adults. Stretching, or flexibility exercises, can give you more freedom of movement for bending to tie your shoes or looking over your shoulder as you back out of the driveway. “Even if you haven't been active previously, it's important to get started and stay active,” says Dr. Richard J. Hodes, director of the National Institute on Aging (NIA). “By exercising regularly and including more physical activity in their daily routine, older people can preserve their physical function, which is key to doing the everyday things they want to do.”

Some of the nation's experts on aging, exercise and motivation came together to develop a guide to exercise for older adults called *Go4Life*. “Older adults can exercise safely, even those who have physical limitations,” Hodes says. “*Go4Life* is based on studies showing the benefits of exercise and physical activity for older people, including those with chronic health conditions.” *Go4Life* exercises are designed to be done safely at home without special equipment or clothing. The free book *Exercise & Physical Activity: Your Everyday Guide from the National Institute on Aging* is the core resource for the campaign. Other free materials, such as an exercise DVD and tip sheets, are also available. *Workout to Go*, a mini exercise guide, shows you how you can be active anytime, anywhere. To learn more, visit the Go4Life website at <http://go4life.nia.nih.gov/>.

Source: *NIH News in Health*
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<http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/issue/dec2011/feature2>

Healthy Aging Website

Healthy Aging® is a national health initiative developed to help individuals think more positively about growing older.

Visitors to the site (<http://www.healthyaging.net/index.htm>) can sign up for a free Healthy Aging Newsletter as well as access online information (related to aging) on topics such as:

- Healthcare News
- Physical Fitness
- Diet
- Mental Wellness
- Social Wellness
- Financial Fitness
- Retirement Charts

In addition the site references information on State Resources on Aging as well as links to other excellent, healthy aging websites such as the National Council On Aging and the National Institute on Aging.

Source: Copyright © November 2012 HealthyAging®
<http://www.healthyaging.net/index.htm>

Eating Well as You Get Older

How should you eat as you get older? Which foods are likely to keep you most healthy and which ones should you limit? Is it possible to eat well and stay within a healthy weight?

Your need for healthy foods doesn't diminish with age. As we age, our bodies still require essential nutrients, most of which are found in foods. Eating well is vital at any age, but as you get older, your daily food choices can make an important difference in your health. Eating a well-planned, balanced mix of healthy foods every day may help prevent heart disease, type 2 diabetes, bone loss, some kinds of cancer and anemia.

However, eating healthy may not always be easy for older adults. Changing appetites, slower metabolism, eating alone, buying ready-to-eat meals and living on a fixed income can all affect the quality of your food choices.

These and other questions are addressed in *Eating Well as You Get Older*, on NIHSeniorHealth.org, the health and wellness website developed by NIA and National Institutes of Health (NIH)'s National Library of Medicine.

In addition to learning how to make wise food choices, older adults who visit the web pages will find information about food labels, food safety, meal planning, food shopping and ways to enhance the enjoyment of eating.

Source: *NIH News in Health*
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<http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2008/July/docs/02capsules.htm>

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Five Ways to Age Gracefully

In recent years, an increasing amount of scientific evidence has supported the idea that people can do quite a lot on their own to lengthen their life span and to enhance the quality of life as they age.

Here are five steps to take every day that can promote healthy aging and boost longevity:

1. **Eat healthy foods** to help prevent diseases such as heart disease, cancer and stroke. In addition, maintain a healthy weight. To maintain a healthy weight, maintain strength and help prevent disease, eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and foods low in fat and cholesterol.
2. **Exercise regularly** to achieve better physical and mental health. Regular, vigorous exercise—at least 30 minutes, three to five times a week—improves mood and reduces depression; aids weight loss; increases strength, flexibility and balance; strengthens bones; and improves aerobic capacity (the ability of the heart, lungs, and blood vessels to deliver adequate oxygen to muscles). Some studies suggest that exercise helps circulation to the brain, improving mental acuity.
3. **Perform mentally stimulating activities to help preserve memory.** These activities include reading, playing cards, doing crossword puzzles, and going to museums. Other mentally challenging activities include learning to play an instrument, changing careers or starting one, trying a new hobby, and volunteering.
4. **Get preventive health care tests and screenings to catch disease early.** Have screenings and other preventive health care tests that are recommended for your age group or disease risk category. Be proactive with doctors and pharmacists by bringing a list of questions or concerns to every visit and not hesitating to speak up or ask questions.
5. **Maintain a positive attitude and cultivate relationships to be happier and live longer.** Write down all the good things in life. Focus on being satisfied with life as it is. A positive attitude, adaptability, strong social contacts, and religious and cultural convictions all contribute to happiness as people age.

Source: Krames StayWell
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Health Tip: Focus on Healthy Aging

Americans' life expectancy continues to increase. But how long you'll live depends on many factors, including how you take care of yourself in the years leading to older age.

The Cleveland Clinic offers this advice to help seniors promote healthy aging:

- Don't smoke, and limit alcohol to no more than one drink per day.
- Get regular physical activity, including a variety of exercises.
- Maintain a healthy body weight and get regular medical checkups.
- Help maintain intellectual health by participating in hobbies, furthering your education and learning new activities.
- Spend time improving your relationships.
- Work with a physician who specializes in the health of older adults. Discuss your health goals and any advance directives with your doctor.

Source: Copyright © 2012 HealthDay
<http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=667089>

Healthy Recipe: Buttons and Bows Pasta

Ingredients:

- 2 C dry whole-wheat bowtie pasta (farfalle) (8 oz)
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp garlic, minced (about 1 clove)
- 1 bag (16 oz) frozen peas and carrots
- 2 C low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 Tbsp cornstarch
- 1 Tbsp fresh parsley, rinsed, dried, and chopped (or 1 tsp dried)
- 1 medium lemon, rinsed, for 1 tsp zest
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper

Instructions:

In a 4-quart saucepan, bring 3 quarts of water to a boil over high heat. Add pasta, and cook according to package directions. Drain. Meanwhile, heat olive oil and garlic over medium heat in a large sauté pan. Cook until soft, but not browned. Add peas and carrots. Cook gently until the vegetables are heated through. In a bowl, combine chicken broth and cornstarch. Mix well. Add to pan with vegetables, and bring to a boil. Simmer gently for 1 minute. Add parsley, pasta, lemon zest, and pepper. Toss gently, and cook until the pasta is hot. Serve 2 cups of pasta and vegetables per portion.

Nutrition Facts: Yield is 4 servings. **Cook time:** 20 minutes
Each serving provides:

Calories: 329	Fat: 6 g
Protein: 13 g	Carbohydrate: 59 g
Sodium: 127 mg	Cholesterol: 0 mg

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
<http://hp2010.nhlbi.nih.net/healthyating/recipe/detail.aspx?linkId=12&cId=5&rId=137>