

Adult Health Bulletin



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: STAYING HEALTHY AS YOU AGE

Aging is a natural part of life. Perhaps you are expecting a few grey hairs or laugh lines when you look in the mirror. But are you expecting all of the changes that can occur with aging? Knowing what your body is going through as it ages can be very helpful in staying healthy throughout your lifespan.

Your heart and blood vessels

As you age, your heart may have to work harder to keep pumping the same amount of blood through your body. Blood vessels also get a little stiffer which makes the heart have to work even harder. The combination of these two issues can lead to high blood pressure and heart disease.

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Puzzle games, social activities, physical activity and a healthy diet play a role in keeping your mind young.

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Physical activity is important to help your heart muscle stay strong. The more active you are, the stronger your heart muscles will be, and your risk of heart disease will lessen. A healthy diet with lots of fruits and vegetables is also important for good heart health.

Your bones and muscles

As you age your bones are not as dense and can shrink in size. This makes bones weaker and they may be more likely to break. The muscles in your body are not as strong over time and you can lose flexibility.

Again physical activity can be very important for your bones and muscles. Weight bearing activities such as walking are important, but so are strength building activities as well. If you stress your bones it can increase your bone density and reduce the risk of osteoporosis. Strength building activities can help build muscle which will also help to maintain flexibility and keep the muscles strong.

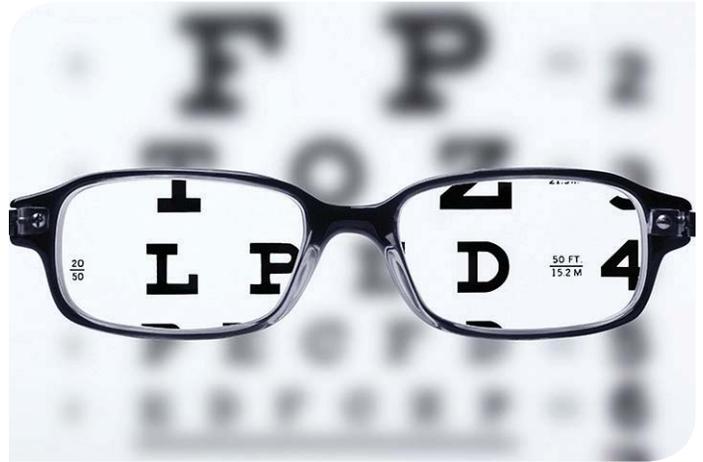
Your memory

Unfortunately, as you age, the number of brain cells decreases. That is the reason that memory can be a challenge with aging. As a person ages it may take longer to learn a new skill or easier to forget new names or faces.

To help prevent memory loss it is important to stay both mentally and socially active. Puzzle games can help keep the mind sharp. Social activities are important for conversation. Physical activity and a healthy diet also play a role in keeping your mind young.

Your eyes and ears

The eyes age too. As a person ages the lenses become less clear and the eye does not produce tears as easily. Focusing can also become more of a challenge for the eye. For some people as they age, they may have difficulty seeing in certain types of light. Hearing also decreases as the body ages. Common hearing issues include trouble hearing a



specific conversation in a crowded room and hearing at higher tones.

It is important that a person get yearly vision and hearing exams. If a doctor recommends glasses and/or hearing aids, it is important to follow the advice. It is also important to talk with your doctor about preventing further damage to your eyes and ears.

Your skin

Aging allows the skin to become thinner and less elastic. Some older adults bruise easily. The skin often becomes drier, which can lead to wrinkles.

To help protect the skin, always wear sunscreen when outdoors and wear clothes that cover the skin whenever possible. You may also want to try to take warm, not hot, baths with mild soap. It is also important to moisturize your skin.

Aging is not always easy on the body. However, there are things that can be done to help ensure healthy aging.

SOURCES

- Mayo Clinic. Aging: What to expect as you get older. Aug 2010. Accessed at: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/aging/HA00040/NSECTIONGROUP=2>
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