

# Healthy Aging

a guide to looking beautiful and living a long healthy life

By Dr. Ted Suzelis, N.D.

Have you ever considered plastic surgery or botox injections for your wrinkles, but worried about the cost and/or side effects? Do you feel older than you really are? Do you worry about getting old and not being able to do what makes you happy in life? The more medical science learns about the aging process, the more we are finding out that health and beauty are related. We can improve our outer beauty by improving our inner health. Healthy Aging Medicine is a way of living a healthy lifestyle in order to slow the process of aging. This is desirable for many reasons, including looking and feeling younger, living longer and happier, and preventing or reversing chronic conditions and diseases that will negatively impact our lives. We can achieve these goals by eating a nutritious diet, reducing our exposure to stress and environmental toxins, maintaining a regular exercise program and taking the proper nutritional supplements for maximal health.

It is no big secret that a healthy diet is one of the keys to healthy aging, but what is a healthy diet? There are a few guidelines for a healthy diet that are universal and a couple that vary with different individuals. One key guideline is to eliminate all refined sugars and simple carbohydrates from your diet. Simple carbohydrates and sugars will raise your blood sugar when eaten and cause a burst of insulin to be produced. Excess insulin is very damaging to the body. It causes a rapid acceleration of the aging process, increasing the risk of heart disease, every form of cancer, memory loss, mental deterioration, increase fat storage, and causes inflammation to occur.

Another guideline is to eat plenty of non-starchy vegetables and high antioxidant and high fiber fruits. Starchy vegetables like potatoes and cooked carrots have lots of simple carbohydrates and little fiber, which will also cause a spike in insulin levels. Non-starchy vegetables include broccoli, brussel sprouts, and romaine lettuce. High antioxidant fruits include blueberries, cherries, and cantaloupe. High fiber fruits include apples and pears. Fiber is important to slow the absorption of carbohydrates from the food we eat, which lowers the amount of insulin that needs to be released. It also aids in the elimination of toxins through our bowels. I will discuss the importance of antioxidants below, when I talk about supplements.

A third guideline to a healthy diet is eating enough high quality fats and keeping the amount of bad fats limited. Fat has become a dirty word in the American language, but it is another key to healthy eating. Good fats like olive oil, flaxseed oil, fish oil and borage oil are essential for healthy cells and help to decrease inflammation. Bad fats come from fried foods, fatty meats, and salad dressings, to name a few. These fats cause inflammation, high cholesterol, and reduce the efficiency of function in all of our cells.

The third guideline has to do with eating the proper amount of high quality proteins. This guideline varies with people of different blood types. Type O's do well with lean beef, chicken, turkey, and lamb. Type B's follow the same guidelines with exception to chicken. Type A's do well with a much more vegetarian diet and should derive their protein from soy, beans and nuts & seeds, along with some chicken and turkey. Type AB's are similar to type A's with the exception of chicken. All blood types, however, will benefit from eating a serving of fish every day, especially salmon.

The final guideline to a healthy diet is eliminating food sensitivities from your diet. By eating foods that you are sensitive to, your body will suffer in innumerable ways. All of our chronic diseases can be caused, in part, by food sensitivities. The easiest way to eliminate foods from your diet that you may be sensitive to is by eating the right foods for your blood type. Food sensitivities are also a source of stress for our bodies.

Reducing your stress levels is another piece of the healthy aging puzzle. Stress is damaging to the health of your body, because chronic stress causes the release of cortisol into our bodies. Excessive amounts of cortisol can destroy the immune system, damage the brain and other vital organs, decrease muscle mass, and cause thinning of the skin. When cortisol levels increase, blood sugar goes up with a resultant increase in insulin. We already discussed the reason that excessive insulin is damaging to our bodies.

There are certain adaptogenic herbs that can be beneficial in balancing your stress levels, but the best way to reduce stress is through exercise. Along with reducing stress and cortisol levels, exercise can also reduce your insulin levels and give you more energy. A healthy exercise routine consists of 30 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week, 30 minutes of weight training three times a week and 30 minutes of yoga or tai chi three times a week. The minimum amount of exercise you should be doing is 30 minutes of walking three times a week.

Avoiding environmental toxins is important in healthy aging. We are constantly bombarded with chemicals in the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. Since you can't possibly avoid contact with all chemicals, you have to do the best you can. The largest source of chemicals that we are exposed to through the air we breathe is in our own homes, so it is important to have a high quality air filtration system installed. It is a must to have a water purification system installed in your home or buy bottled water. Make sure to drink 8 to 10 glasses of water daily. The only way to avoid chemicals in the food you eat is to buy organic. This includes meats, dairy, produce, and anything else you put in your mouth. The reason you need to avoid these chemicals in your air, water, and food is that free-radicals are produced in the process of trying to rid your body of the chemicals.

Excess free-radical production and damage is very harmful to your body in many ways including acceleration of the aging process, including causing inflammation. In order to protect yourself from free-radical damage, your body needs lots of antioxidants. You can receive some of the antioxidants you need from fruits, vegetables, and salmon, but you also need to supplement extra antioxidants into your diet. The last piece of the healthy aging puzzle is taking the right supplements. This can vary from person to person, depending on their particular needs and any medical conditions they might have. In general, it is always important to be taking a high quality multiple vitamin and mineral supplement and supplement with extra antioxidants like vitamins A, C, and E. Seek out a naturopathic physician to help you with the right combination of supplements, herbs, and even acupuncture to slow the aging process.

In conclusion, eating a nutritious diet, reducing our exposure to stress and environmental toxins, maintaining a regular exercise program and taking the proper nutritional supplements are all important for healthy aging. The goal of these 6 keys to healthy aging is to combat the "Three Pillars of Unhealthy Aging," which are excess insulin, excess cortisol, and excess free-radical production and damage. If you can limit these three factors, you will be able to reduce inflammation and other factors of aging in your body. This will enable you to take years off of your skin and keep them off. You will also feel younger and more energetic, live longer, have a better outlook on life, and prevent or reverse suffering from chronic conditions and diseases. This guide serves as a brief framework for healthy aging. For maximal results, consult a naturopathic physician to assist you in this process.

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