

# Healthy Aging

Aging is an inevitable and natural process that everyone endures eventually. Thankfully, advances in medicine and a better understanding of human health allow us to live longer and more vibrant lives.

## Signs of Aging

As the body ages, there are visible changes to your physical, mental, and psychological health. Generally, issues associated

with aging appear more significantly in adults older than 65, although the severity and time of occurrence vary from person to person. In any case, these developments can be very difficult to deal with if you're unprepared or aren't taking care of your health.

A common issue that arises as you grow older is physical impairment. Older Americans are more vulnerable to conditions such as osteoporosis (weakening of bone density), arthritis (inflammation of the joints), and sensory loss (such as for vision and hearing).

Consequently, accidents such as slipping and falling can cause significant injury, and even increase your chance of death. In fact, falls are among the leading cause of injury death for people over the age of 65, and millions of seniors become affected by them.

The elderly are also at increased risk of various mental and psychological ailments. Depression, memory loss, and dementia (decline of mental processes) occur with greater likelihood



as you age. Alzheimer's disease, a degenerative brain condition without a cure, is most often diagnosed in people over the age of 65.

Lastly, aging generally weakens your bodily functions, leading to greater susceptibility to infectious diseases (especially influenza), cardiovascular problems, stroke, some kinds of cancer, and obesity.

## Addressing Aging

While growing old can seem worrying, most of these issues can be dealt with if you take the right precautions.

For starters, get regular health checkups with your doctor, including test screenings for any health conditions. Most health problems can be addressed relatively easily if you catch them early and have time to prepare.

Being healthy is also very important. While many of the effects of aging are inevitable, most of them can be lessened or even prevented by eating a good diet, keeping a healthy weight, avoiding alcohol and tobacco, and get-

ting regular physical activity.

Maintaining healthy social relationships is vital for your mental health, and gives you well-needed support in times of need. Mental stimulation, in the form of reading or crossword puzzles, has also been shown to reduce the onset of

memory loss. Avoid injury by showing caution when engaging in any physical activity, and protect yourself from extreme climates.

Learn more at <http://www.cdc.gov/aging/index.htm>

## HIGHLIGHTS

**The abuse and neglect of seniors by caregivers, professional or otherwise, is an unfortunate public health issue. It's crucial that you investigate caregiving facilities for seniors and make sure they're reputable, certified, well-staffed, and well-maintained. Seniors should always have healthy and regular contact with family and friends. Learn more at <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/elder-maltreatment/index.html>**

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