It seems like everyone is on a quest to delay the effects of aging. New medical research is released with rapid frequency and revised protocols for treating medical conditions are emerging. New correlations between health and aging are constantly being uncovered. Leveraging the scientific evidence provides you with an opportunity to influence how you age.
Chronic Conditions of Aging

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that nearly 80% of those over the age of 65 have at least one chronic medical condition. Aging is the leading risk factor for most chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer, dementia, osteoporosis, arthritis, diabetes, stroke, metabolic syndrome, blindness and frailty.

Fortunately, scientific evidence demonstrates many of these conditions have modifiable risk factors. Research shows physical activity can prevent many age-related issues and poor dietary choices can accelerate the damaging effects of aging. This insight gives you the opportunity to influence, delay or manage these conditions. Understanding what drives your health gives you the power to influence how you age.

Leverage the scientific evidence into your daily life to manage and reduce your risks of aging poorly. Based on what we know today, your lifestyle behavior choices are key to your aging health. This includes focusing on diet, physical activity, as well as limiting alcohol and tobacco use.

Consider the Source

New studies are released nearly every day that claim to slow down the effects of aging or offer an outright cure for a chronic aging condition. These studies are widely quoted in mainstream media or go viral on social media. Unfortunately, these media outlets are not always the most reliable sources of evolving medical insight.

Access to emerging science is vital to being an advocate for your own health. Yet balancing evolving discoveries requires that you be able to believe its legitimacy. There is a wide range in disparity of how studies are constructed and conducted. This ultimately determines whether they are legitimate science or not. Before you implement the new medical discovery into your life, make sure the reported claims are reliable and based on established scientific facts.

Continuous Re-Evaluation

While the research on aging is rapidly evolving, much of it is not yet settled science. New and evolving medications and treatments may offer great promise; however, incorporating emerging research into your personal health plan for aging needs to be balanced with an understanding of what you can rely on and trust.

Put yourself in charge of making your decisions based on your own goals for living your life. Then work with your medical professionals to identify the options, resources and potential consequences of the available options and interventions to help you achieve your goals.

Successful aging incorporates the best medical insight into the daily actions you take in your lifestyle and your treatment(s) to enhance your quality of life. As the science is continually being updated, and research identifies additional keys to healthy aging, in the future, you will have even more options available to age well.

Final Thoughts

Today lifestyle interventions such as diet, exercise and improved sleep habits give us the power to impact how we age. Promising scientific studies are on the horizon to further influence the biology of aging. The future of aging may be significantly different for you than it was for your parents. Leverage the scientific evidence into your life to create new pathways for your healthy aging.
We have learned health is expressed for most people by their ability to maintain their life the way they want to live it. Transitions create vulnerabilities that can threaten your independence. Transitions also create significant stress. Most people feel best when they are not vulnerable to transitions. Yet most people are resistant to evaluating how their living environment or lifestyle supports or hinders their ability to age well, especially as they encounter the transitions of aging.

When you are faced with a new diagnosis or challenges created by a chronic condition, take the time to learn as much as you can. Focus on gaining an understanding of how you can “live with” or “live past” your diagnosis. This approach helps you identify any exposure you may have to vulnerability gaps. Then focus on how you can best fill the gaps you have identified. Take a holistic view of your health and incorporate resources into your life that contribute to your well-being.

**GOAL:** Update your understanding of how you can make an impact on improving your health. Then implement it.

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**Take Action Now**

- **Ask questions.** Ask your medical provider what new evidence-based options are available for you. New technologies and advanced treatments, combined with diet and exercise, can have a major impact on your quality of life.

- **Update your understanding.** Check reputable resources, such as the Mayo Clinic website, to read the latest medical description for your chronic condition(s). Talk with your physician about what you read.

- **Implement behaviors for prevention.** Focus on lifestyle activities which you can control. Being active, eating healthy food, and taking steps to reduce stress can aide in risk reduction or symptom management for existing chronic conditions.

- **Participate in activities to impact longevity.** Combine activities offering multiple positive impacts. Participate in a writing project where you interview someone else and then write their biography. Interviewing another person creates social connection and a stimulating interaction. Writing their story provides a creative outlet to stimulate your brain.

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**Expert Insight**

**Douglas L. Wood, M.D.**, Medical Director of the Center for Innovation at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota.

“We have learned health is expressed for most people by their ability to maintain their life the way they want to live it. Transitions create vulnerabilities that can threaten your independence. Transitions also create significant stress. Most people feel best when they are not vulnerable to transitions. Yet most people are resistant to evaluating how their living environment or lifestyle supports or hinders their ability to age well, especially as they encounter the transitions of aging. When you are faced with a new diagnosis or challenges created by a chronic condition, take the time to learn as much as you can. Focus on gaining an understanding of how you can “live with” or “live past” your diagnosis. This approach helps you identify any exposure you may have to vulnerability gaps. Then focus on how you can best fill the gaps you have identified. Take a holistic view of your health and incorporate resources into your life that contribute to your well-being.”
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