

Slow Down The Aging Process

By the American Institute for Cancer Research

Although risk of chronic diseases, like heart disease and cancer, increases with age, poor health is not inevitable. Research studies show that healthy lifestyles are more important than genes in helping older people avoid the physical deterioration and chronic illness associated with aging. People who practice healthy lifestyles, which include physical activity, good diet and avoiding tobacco, have half the rate of disability of those who don't.

To guide older Americans in making healthy decisions, the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) has published a brochure, *Nutrition After Fifty: Tips and Recipes*. It explains how your choices can increase your vitality and reduce your risk for cancer and other diseases, like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and obesity. If you already suffer from these conditions, the brochure can help you prevent a recurrence of disease or regain more good health back.

Filling Up with Fruits and Vegetables

When it comes to vegetables and fruits, think variety and abundance. These two food groups are among the best dietary defenses against cancer and other diseases. In fact, experts estimate that simply eating at least five servings of vegetables and fruits each day could decrease overall cancer rates by at least 20 percent.

Vegetables and fruits contain antioxidants and other phytochemicals that are potent cancer fighters. Phytochemicals, literally "plant chemicals," are found in all plants. Most have been discovered only during the last 10 years. Some phytochemicals deactivate cell-damaging molecules in the body, and thereby slow tissue weakening, aging and cancer development.

Jump Start Your Days

Physical activity at any age burns calories, increases your energy level, helps relieve stress and depression, helps you sleep better, improves your strength, flexibility and balance and makes you feel better overall. Research shows that regular physical activity helps prevent colon cancer and possible breast and lung cancers. Exercise also helps protect against overweight and obesity, which is linked to increased cancer risk, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis.

It's important to find activities that are practical and enjoyable for you. For example, if hiking is too difficult or inconvenient for you, perhaps, walking, swimming or stationary bicycling would be a better fit. Try yoga or gentle stretching exercises to help you maintain flexibility, prevent injury and relieve stress.

Adding some lightweight training to the exercise you do can help increase strength, speed up metabolism and may even ease arthritis pain. Exercising with a friend or in a group can make your workout a social event that you look forward to each day.

For more information on prolonging good health, along with some delicious, simple recipes, order a free copy of Nutrition After Fifty: Tips and Recipes from the American Institute for Cancer Research at 1-800-843-8114, ext. 10.