

Healthy Aging

It really doesn't matter what age we presently are to consider how we can be healthier as we get older. Over the last few years, the aging benchmarks have changed somewhat. We might like to know which of the aging categories that we fit into and hopefully consider ways to improve our health within those benchmarks. You may be surprised about the new terminology and age classifications as described by Win and Charles Arn in *Catch the Wave*, 1999.

Emerging Adult	18-30
Young Adult	30-50
Middle Adult	50-70
Senior Adult	70-85
Elderly	85+

As you can see, adults spend more years in each classification than before. We need to remember that the choices about health and wellness that we make daily will affect our ability to live through the age spectrum as healthy as possible.

Some other interesting statistics are:

- Every 8 seconds, another Baby Boomer turns 50.
- 6,000 Americans turn 65 every day in America.
- Centenarians are the fastest growing segment of our population. The second fastest is the age group of 85+.

Here are a few simple suggestions to improve our health no matter what our age is and also the foundation to teach our children about making healthy choices. These suggestions to help improve our daily health are taken from "13 Habits to Improve Your Life" by Dulce Zamora.

1. Eat breakfast every morning. Research shows people who have a nutritious morning meal tend to take in more vitamins and minerals, and less fat and cholesterol than those who skip breakfast. For children, breakfast seems to enhance alertness, attention and performance in school. Breakfast is our start to healthy eating.
2. Get enough sleep. Sleep is vital to good health and to mental and emotional well being. Most adults need 7-8 hours of sleep a night. Kids need more sleep depending on their age.
3. Make social connections. Social ties have many benefits including emotional support and give us a sense of well being.
4. Exercise regularly. The short term effects of exercise include thinking and moving better, helps manage stress, improves our mood, and gives us an energy boost. In the long term, people who exercise regularly have a better outlook when it comes to certain chronic illness. Remember, exercise could be just walking 30-60 minutes daily up to 4 times a week.
5. Plan ahead. Being healthy just doesn't happen. We need a plan to incorporate healthy habits into our lives. Healthy eating, fitness and social ties don't happen by accident. And if we fall off of the plan (which we all do), dust yourself off and start again, don't just give up.