



Healthy Aging - Living Life to Your Potential

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We are pleased to represent you here at Hemophilia of Georgia. One of our working committees is the Aging Committee and we like to call it the healthy aging committee. If you are like me, then you join the large segment of the population that would like to live life to the fullest as long and as healthy as you can! Join me as we search through some ideas that will help you live up to your potential.

"My health is good; it's my age that's bad."— Roy Acuff (at 83)

Brain: Processing speed slows with age, but mental and physical exercises have been shown to reverse or slow down some of the effects. Stay plugged in to the popular culture. Videos, the Internet, music and reality TV shows do count here.

Spiritual/Social/Psychological: Social isolation and depression can occur as we age. Try to keep family relationships and friendships over time. Exercise can also help prevent depression or lift your mood. Stay active and involved in life. Talk to your physician if you are feeling depressed. An active prayer and meditation time, as well as involvement in your religious group, has helped to keep folks younger.

Teeth and Gums: Drink plenty of water to keep your breath fresh and your body hydrated. Good dental hygiene means brushing and flossing your teeth. Have regular dental check ups.

Lungs: Exercise helps to keep your lungs moving air. Smoking or inhaling second-hand smoke will decrease your lung capacity and may lead to cancer.

Digestive: Fiber is king. This comes from whole grains, vegetables, and fruits. It also helps with digestion and reduces chances of heartburn, gastritis, constipation, and colon cancer. Check with your doctor about a colonoscopy after age 50. Water will also help prevent constipation. Take small steps to improve some aspect of your diet. Even small changes will help your health.

Hormonal: Hormones change and become imbalanced with age. These include hormones from the pancreas (insulin), thyroid (thyroxin), ovary (estrogen), and testes (testosterone). You might want to check with your doctor about having your hormones checked and/or replacement therapy if needed.

Bones and Joints: Some suffer with some form of rheumatoid or osteoarthritis that makes joints swell and painful to use. Osteoporosis in women can make bones brittle and cause loss of inches. Stretching, heat, ice, exercise, and surgery can help. Talk with your doctor about calcium, Vitamin D, and other supplements or medication that might help.

Trauma: Stay active to help prevent sprains, tendonitis, and muscle pain. Stretching, heat, ice, and some surgeries can help. Stay active and also schedule rest periods.

Eyes and Ears: Reach for those reading glasses. Our ability to see close up declines as we age. Cataracts and glaucoma are more common in those over 60. Get regular eye exams. Hearing aids can help age-related hearing loss.

Heart: Exercise and keep your weight down to avoid high blood pressure, narrowing of the arteries, and heart disease risk. Don't smoke.

Urinary: As bladder support weakens, urinary incontinence can occur. There are times when specific exercises can help.

Reproductive: Fibroids, ovarian cysts, and cancer of the uterus occur in women; sexual dysfunction can increase for men and women. Talk to your doctor for options.

Skin: Protect your skin from the sun. You may be able to avoid shingles with a vaccine. See your doctor for changes that you notice on your skin and schedule a once-a-year skin check with your dermatologist.

As we strive for healthy aging, we might soon join the ranks of the centenarians who are forward thinking, open to new experiences, eat healthy foods, don't smoke, have strong religious faith, and cherish their independence.