



ICSSS

Indian Community Senior Support Services

IRS Section 501 (c) [3] Tax Exempt organization

Nashville Tennessee

From The President's Desk

By Pramod Wasudev MD Contact: pramodwasudev@gmail.com

As mentioned in our Mission statement Indian Community Seniors Support Services (ICSSS) "we will strive hard to help Seniors age gracefully".

We can't help getting older, but we can age successfully. A wide spectrum of changes occurs in the human body and will affect almost all organs and structures in our body as we age. These changes are not necessarily signs of diseases and conditions. Being aware of these potential bodily changes as an expected part of aging can reduce some of this distress and anxiety. Some of the common bodily changes of aging are listed below.

As we age, the ends of our chromosomes -- called telomeres -- become shorter. This makes people more vulnerable to disease. Lifestyle changes will boost an enzyme that increases telomere length. Other studies also find diet and exercise can protect telomeres in the process may slow aging at the cellular level. Physical changes of aging can potentially occur in every organ and tissues in our body and can affect an older person's health and lifestyle. Many diseases and conditions become more common in the senior population. Psychological and social issues often play an

important role in both physical and mental health of older adults.



Some of these diseases /conditions like heart problems, arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis can affect middle age people but the incidence gets worse as we get old. Whereas some like dementia, hearing problems, incontinence of bladder and stools, losing balance are unique to senior population.

Example of the conditions/ diseases affecting seniors:

Changes in memory: We all experience Memory problems which are so common among seniors. We initially forget names of friends and even family members. This is not dementia but in some people this may lead to dementia

Changes in immune system: The body's immune system may become weaker with age increasing the risk of infections.

Changes in bone, joints, and muscles: Bones typically lose density and strength and may also shrink in size, thus, making them more prone to fractures. Muscle mass generally shrinks, and people become weaker. As a result of normal wear and tear, joints become inflamed, painful, and less flexible.

Changes in mobility: Mobility and balance can be affected by aging and thus seniors are more prone to falls, one out of three older people falls each year. One out of five falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury. Each year, 2.5 million older people are treated in emergency departments for fall injuries.

Changes in sleep: Sleep can significantly change with age. Duration of sleep, quality of sleep, and frequent night time awakening are commonly seen in seniors.

Changes in hormones and metabolism: Hormonal changes are commonly encountered in the elderly. Metabolism of sugar and carbohydrate can be altered leading to diabetes. Metabolisms of fat, cholesterol, calcium and vitamin - D are common altered. Low levels of sexual hormones can lead to erectile dysfunction and vaginal dryness.

Changes in bowel and bladder. Bowel and bladder incontinence (involuntary loss of feces or urine) are common. Constipation, urinary frequency, and difficulty initiating urine can be particularly distressing for seniors.

Changes in hearing: Changes in nerves of hearing and ear structures can impair hearing and lead to age-related hearing loss. Typically, higher frequencies become more difficult to hear.

Changes in vision: The eye may get

drier and the lens can lose its focus. Vision can become blurry and out of focus. Some of these problems can be modified by wearing glasses and contact lenses.

Besides all the above changes as we get old it will affect changes in smell and taste, changes in teeth and gums, changes in hair and nails, changes in face and body shape.

Good news is that maintaining muscle strength and mass helps burn calories to maintain a healthy weight, strengthens bones, and restore bal-

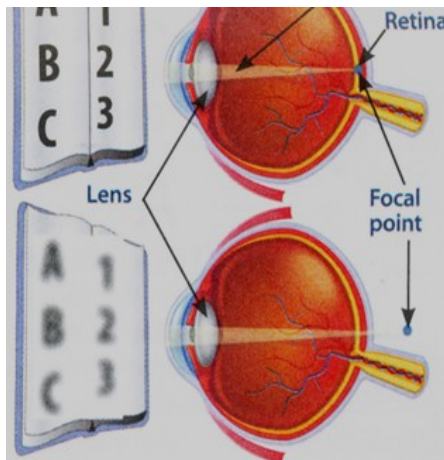
ance. Our body also responds to endurance fitness training such as walking. Any activity that increases heart rate and breathing for an extended period is considered endurance exercise. In addition to walking, swimming, cycling, dancing, and tennis are all endurance activities. But like strength and endurance, flexibility too can be improved. Increased flexibility allows for more freedom of movement and greater range of motion. Areas to pay attention to are the neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees, and ankles.

Annual Eye Exam

Presbyopia, which literally means "aging eye" eventually affects everyone over the age of 40, according to the National Eye Institute. It occurs when the lens—the focusing mechanism in the eye—starts to lose its elasticity, making it difficult to focus at close distances, explains Bruce Rosenthal, OD, FAAO.

Annual eye exams are vital.

"Yet an eye doctor can help you select the best vision solution for you, based on your eye health and lifestyle preferences and they also can detect more serious eye problems that may not be diagnosed if you buy off-the-shelf reading glasses." Underlying eye problems like glaucoma and macular degeneration can progress so gradually that you don't notice their effects and people lose vision completely.



With normal vision (top), the lens bends light to focus it on the focal point on the retina. With presbyopia (above), the lens loses its flexibility. Because it can no longer change shape sufficiently to focus light on the focal point, vision is blurred.

Your eyeglass options

Simple single-vision glasses may suffice if you only need corrective lenses for up-close tasks. If your dis-

tance vision also needs correction it is wise to buy a pair of bifocals, which have separate areas in the lens for near and distance vision; or progressives, with areas for near, intermediate, and distance vision."

Multifocal lens could raise your risk for falls, since you may not clearly see obstacles in your path

There are several special features that can be part of your lenses, and may improve your vision. An anti-reflective, ultraviolet coating protects against UV light, and improves contrast, making it easier to read and distinguish certain objects. (Keep in mind that it adds a slight green or purple tint to the lenses.) Protecting your eyes from sunlight as you age is important, since exposure to strong sunlight has been associated with an increased risk for cataracts and macular degeneration. You can purchase simple clip-on sunglasses for most sizes and shapes of glasses, or opt

for transition lenses, which react to ultraviolet light and darken if you're outdoors in sunny weather. "But keep in mind that transitional lenses don't lighten instantly once you go back indoors," says Dr. Rosenthal. "This means you'll need to stay alert for tripping hazards."

Contact lenses

If you've been wearing contact lenses

for years, you may need a change as you get older. "With age, our eyes produce less tears, and that makes contact lenses less tolerable," Dr. Rosenthal explains.

Taking care of your vision For optimal eye health, get an eye exam every year. "Eye diseases don't always have symptoms, and early detection could

prevent vision loss," says Dr. Rosenthal. Contact an eye doctor immediately if you notice a sudden change in your vision (for example, wavy or double vision), if everything looks dim, if you start seeing flashes of light, and/or if you experience eye pain and inflammation.

Lens type	Best for	Details
Single vision	Correcting near vision	These enable you to focus on reading material and close work such as embroidery; half-eye frame designs sit lower on the nose and allow you to more easily look into the distance over the top of the frame
Bifocals	Correcting near vision with some distance correction as needed	A small portion of the lens is reserved for near-vision correction; the rest of the lens incorporates a distance correction if required
Progressives	For near, intermediate and distant points of focus	Helpful for seeing a computer, laptop, or electronic devices such as an iPad, Kindle, or cell phone. They may aid in seeing the dashboard of your car, as well as seeing playing cards or Scrabble tiles

Add Variety to your Exercises / Do Cross-Training

"American College of Sports Medicine" and "American Heart Association" recommend exercise program that includes endurance exercises, strength training, flexibility, and balance exercises says Dr. David Thomas.

Mix it up to help prevent injury. Cross-training is used more broadly now to encourage moderate exercisers to incorporate all the components into a weekly workout program." It adds variety and structure to your workout",

says Dr. Thomas.

Think variety The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons suggest the following sample program:

Three times a week 30 minutes of aerobic exercises, alternating with walking, swimming, and stair-climbing.

Twice a week (not consecutive days) 30 minute of strength training, working each major muscle group.

Every day 5-10 minutes of stretching,

Additional aerobic options include dancing, tennis, cycling or towing. Strength exercises can be done with machines in gym. "Yoga, Pilates, and tai chi emphasize flexibility as well as strength".

Easy does it Start slowly and build up gradually. Dr. Thomas recommends that you follow the "10 per cent rule"- that is , increase the frequency, duration , or intensity of an activity by no more that 10 percent each week.

Endurance



Walk up, then down, several steps. Keep your head up and chest lifted. Gradually build up to one flight of stairs, and then several flights (or go up and down a single flight several times). Increase your speed once you're confident in your ability to go up and down while maintaining good balance. As a precaution, make sure there's a banister to hold onto.

Strength



Place your right knee on the floor, with a pillow under it. Left leg bent, and left hand on left hip, hold a 1-5 pound dumbbell with your right hand, elbow bent so the dumbbell is at shoulder height. Extend your arm upward (without locking your elbow) and press the weight toward the ceiling. Hold for 1-2 seconds, then lower. Work up to 8-10 reps for each side.

Flexibility



Stand shoulder-width apart, extend your arms upward, and clasp your hands. Bend from the hip to the right as far as possible without pain or discomfort, then return to an upright position before bending to the left. Hold each bend for 5-10 seconds, and repeat 8-10 times on each side, 2-3 sets. For variety, place one hand on your hip, the other up in the air.

Balance



Raise your arms out to your sides, near shoulder height. Select a spot or an object across the room (it should be at least 10 steps away), and focus on it as you walk toward it, stepping with one foot directly in front of the other. Repeat the exercise 8-12 times. For variety, try lifting your back leg and pausing for one second before stepping forward.

When a man marries a woman, they become one; The trouble starts when they try to decide *which* one.

