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From The President's Desk

By Pramod Wasudev MD Contact: pramodwasudev@gmail.com

Let's understanding Longevity

Let's aim at becoming a member of 100-plus club!

Average life expectancy (ALE) according to WHO has risen globally to 73 years in 2012 following successes in fighting diseases and child mortality. Big advances in the battles against infectious diseases such as measles, malaria, tuberculosis and polio have continued to extend life expectancy. Japan ranks number one with ALE of 84.6 years, United States ranks 36 with ALE of 79.8 years and India ranks 165 with ALE of 65years.

None of us can stop aging, but we don't have to grow old. Cardinal Spellman once said, "The three ages of man are youth, middle age, and 'You're looking wonderful.'"

It is an enigmatic and complex topic as to what are the different factors that contribute to prolonging life. This topic is constantly evolving and several authors have expressed their views. People 85 years or older constitutes the fastest growing population in US. In 1998 nearly 60,000 members were 100-plus club. In the year 2020 analyst predicts that more than 200,000 Americans will be 100years old or older.

Advances in healthcare, proper understanding of nutrition and diet, more emphasis on "Lifestyle" changes including exercising and stressing the importance of sound and adequate sleep will help us in reaching our goal to live until the age of 100 years. We also want to strive hard to be healthy both physically, mentally and emotionally with a positive proactive and productive life helping others.

Major factors in determining how long you will live are genetics, unforeseen circumstances, advances in

healthcare, proactive approach to your personal health and promoting an enhanced lifestyle. Genetics and family history do play an important role, however some authors believe that your genetic makeup can be manipulated. Examples of unforeseen circumstances where we don't have a total control are wars, accidents, natural disasters like earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes and pandemics like plague, Ebola. Lifestyle changes includes avoiding toxic substances like smoking, excessive alcohol, narcotics; also it includes appropriate exercise routines to promote muscle tone, joints mobility and strengthen heart and lungs. Promoting proper eating habits and avoiding toxic fats, avoiding excessive carbohydrates including sugars and controlling excessive eating is helpful. Practicing above will help in preventing obesity which is responsible for 1 in 5 deaths in US.

Mental health and attitudes:



If you are thinking positively about longevity, you will do the things needed to maintain your health. Also, in a subtle way a positive attitude affects the way the body and mind functions.

Plan to live 100 years.

Twenty first century will be the age of the centenarian.

If you plan to live long it is prudent to keep ourselves educated and constantly remind ourselves that it is not impossible to be a centenarian if practice the following guidelines:

Don't consider yourself a senior citizen. Stay connected to active living. Love the age you are, age positively. Cultivate optimism, self-esteem, future vision and a willingness to adapt.

Maintain a sense of purpose. Purpose creates passion and meaning. This includes doing meaningful work after retirement. Wake up each day with a deliberate and fulfilling agenda. Constantly explore new skills and new developments in your field.

Manage stress. Meditate, pray, use yoga, walk, relax, minimize television. Cultivate healthy relationships, stewardship, fellowship.

Are you losing memory?

It's an all-too-common scenario: You've lost your keys (again!), don't remember where you left your glasses, or, for the life of you, can't recall the name of that darn movie. And your first reaction is "Sheesh — I must be getting old. I'm losing my memory!"

Well, the reassuring news is that these so-called senior moments have nothing to do with your brain getting old, says Pierce J. Howard, Ph.D, director of research at the Center for Applied Cognitive Sciences in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"Your mind will cycle through hundreds of candidates before you come up with the ...
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right ones," explains Howard. "And it might take longer than you expect. That's not a memory lapse. It's simply trying to recall a memory that's in storage." Ever notice your computer slowing down when the hard drive gets too full? It's akin to what happens with the human mind — as it gets fuller, it takes more time to sift through everything. "Aging is a misnomer here," says Howard. "It's not getting old that causes the sluggishness of memory — it's simply a crowded memory bank. By now, you've got so many associations that it's just a competition in your mind for the correct memory to surface."

Practice Makes Perfect — for Your Memory Too!

According to Howard, there are three key ingredients for forming a memory and making it stick:

Intending to remember. This means making a conscious decision and saying it out loud, if necessary: "Okay, I just put my keys in the bowl on the hall table. Can't forget that."

Associating the memory with something visual. Visualize the ignition to your car as a bowl instead of a keyhole. When you're looking for your keys, you'll visualize the key going into the bowl — "Ah, the keys are in the bowl!"

Practicing it. For short-term memories, you need to repeat the associations you form a couple of times before they'll stick. For something you want to remember over the long term (say, the name of your cousin's new husband), you need to practice every day by rehearsing what you'd like to recall or running through those visual associations. (Think "Mary's new husband is Bob, and he likes to swim" as you visualize a man "bobbing" up and down in the water.) Try repeating these associations during idle time, perhaps when you're sitting in traffic or taking a walk.

Know Thy Memory Enemies

We're born with about 23 billion neurons (nerve cells in the brain), and while individual rates of brain cell loss vary widely, it is said

that we lose some 100,000 neurons a day. That number could spike higher depending on your lifestyle and health. For example, heavy drinking and prolonged stress are significant neuron assailants.

One cause of neural deterioration that we have no control over is insufficient acetylcholine. This is a crucial neurotransmitter, low levels of which cause cell membranes to become brittle and disintegrate. The dietary source for acetylcholine is a fat known as lecithin, which is found in beef; safflower, corn, and soybean oils; eggs; wheat germ; and nuts — if you're not getting much of these foods into your diet, you might consider taking a lecithin supplement.

In addition, certain substances can damage neurons, as can lifestyle choices and health problems, including the following:

Too much caffeine. A dehydrating agent, caffeine can, over time, make your neural membranes brittle. It's a double whammy, too: It can affect your ability to recall because it encourages the production of excess cortisol, the stress chemical that prepares you for "fight or flight." Too much cortisol can shrink the size of your hippocampus, which is where memories are stored in the brain. Howard says it's best not to exceed one dose of caffeine every seven hours. (A dose is one milligram per pound of body weight.) In such moderate amounts, however, some studies have shown that caffeine can, in fact, offer health benefits — just be sure not to overdo it!

Heavy alcohol consumption. Because alcohol is also a diuretic, it can cause dehydration, producing symptoms such as confusion and memory problems. So for every ounce of alcohol you consume, drink a glass of water, says Howard. Alcohol may also directly lead to neuronal degeneration.

A sedentary lifestyle and untreated high blood pressure. Both can make you susceptible to memory lapses. A rule of thumb worth

following: Anything that's good for the heart is good for the mind. That's because mental activity is dependent on blood flow (among other factors), which also supplies essential oxygen to the brain.

Prolonged stress and illness. Both of these can wreak havoc on mental as well as physical functioning.

Resting on your laurels. This is no time to be complacent or lazy. It's important to keep stimulating your mind to learn new things and take on new challenges. Follow the slogan Use it or lose it!

If you're worried that you're forgetting too much, here's the bottom line: Don't sweat memory stumbles. Try not to get frustrated — be amused instead, suggests Howard. And it's a good idea to be humble and to enlist a "memory partner" (such as your spouse or a little notebook) to help you remember names, dates, and so on. Finally, try to keep a positive perspective: A full mind equals a full life, but remember — it's not even close to capacity yet.

A positive attitude and overall emotional wellness can help boost mental fitness at any age.

It's a well-known fact that being optimistic and focusing on emotional wellness seems to reduce stress. But did you know that a glass-half-full kind of attitude can offer even more tangible health benefits? Research has found, for instance, that an upbeat attitude, or happiness, can help lessen the burden of chronic pain, say from arthritis, or even reduce your chances of developing cardiovascular disease. In fact, some experts now think that staying positive can help you live longer.

Training Your Brain to Stay Positive

There are also some specific activities you can undertake to boost your brain's vitality. The ancient practice of yoga, research has found, can improve your cognitive function, including your memory.contd Page 3

Activities like yoga and meditation, which require concentration and focus, are good for your brain in indirect ways, too. "We breathe every day, but, consciously and deliberately thinking about breathing while meditating or doing yoga increases lung function," she says. That increased lung function boosts oxygen levels in blood that circulates through your body, including to your brain. Says Somers, "Oxygen-rich blood keeps the brain healthy and increases alertness."

Participating in religious or spiritual activities can also keep your brain humming along more smoothly. "The rituals of religious services and the social elements of being part of a congregation stimulate your brain. "The sense of belonging and being able to connect with others who share your beliefs heightens alertness, which keeps your brain engaged in daily activities.

We don't just lose muscle over time — our brains can atrophy, too. More specifically, your brain's cognitive reserve — its ability to withstand neurological damage due to aging and

other factors without showing visible signs of slowing or memory loss — diminishes through the years. That can make it more difficult to perform mental tasks. But just as weight workouts add lean muscle to your body and help you retain more muscle in your later years, researchers now believe that following a brain-healthy lifestyle and performing regular, targeted brain exercises can also increase your brain's cognitive reserve.

The Healthy Brain: A Multifaceted Approach

In one of the most detailed studies on the connection between lifestyle and dementia risk to date, researchers found that people who participate in multiple healthy behaviors significantly reduce their risk for dementia. The 2013 study, published in PLOS ONE, looked at 2,235 men for 30 years and measured their participation in five healthy lifestyle behaviors: non-smoking, optimal BMI, high fruit and vegetable intake, regular physical activity, and low to moderate alcohol intake. The study participants who followed four or all five of the behav-

iors were about 60 percent less likely to develop cognitive impairment and dementia.

Approaches to brain health include a well-balanced diet low in fat, low in cholesterol, and high in antioxidants.

In addition to good nutrition, regular exercise can promote vascular health to help protect brain tissue. Avoiding ruts and boredom is also critical. "The brain wants to learn new things," says Dr. Bender, noting that some researchers believe that people are more vulnerable to dementia when they pay less attention to the things around them. "When the brain is passive, it has a tendency to atrophy," he adds. For this reason, sedentary and relatively passive activities, such as sitting in front of a TV for hours a day, can be detrimental to brain health over time.

N.B. Since this is such an important and exhaustive topic it is difficult to cover in one article. We will continue to write about this topic in the upcoming newsletters.

Brain exercises that works

By Pramod Wasudev MD Contact: pramodwasudev@gmail.com

Test your recall. Make a list — of grocery items, things to do, or anything else that comes to mind — and memorize it. An hour or so later, see how many items you can recall. Make items on the list as challenging as possible for the greatest mental stimulation.

Let the music play. Learn to play a musical instrument or join a choir. Studies show that learning something new and complex over a longer period of time is ideal for the aging mind.

Do math in your head. Figure out problems without the aid of pencil, paper, or computer; you can make this more difficult — and athletic — by walking at the same time.

Take a cooking class. Learn how to cook a

new cuisine. Cooking uses a number of senses: smell, touch, sight, and taste, which all involve different parts of the brain.

Learn a foreign language. The listening and hearing involved stimulates the brain. What's more, a rich vocabulary has been linked to a reduced risk for cognitive decline.

Create word pictures. Visualize the spelling of a word in your head, then try and think of any other words that begin (or end) with the same two letters.

Draw a map from memory. After returning home from visiting a new place, try to draw a map of the area; repeat this exercise each time you visit a new location.

Challenge your taste buds. When eating, try

to identify individual ingredients in your meal, including subtle herbs and spices.

Refine your hand-eye abilities. Take up a new hobby that involves fine-motor skills, such as knitting, drawing, painting, assembling a puzzle, etc.

Learn a new sport. Start doing an athletic exercise that utilizes both mind and body, such as yoga, golf, or tennis.

Soon people will realize that they can take steps to keep their brains healthy, just as they know they can prevent heart disease by taking certain actions. "In the coming decade, I predict brain wellness to be right up there with heart health — now that there's proof that living a brain-healthy lifestyle works!"

Eggs: A senior citizen's friend.

By Jayesh Patel, MD, DTM&H;

Infectious Disease Consultant at Skyline Medical Center and Hendersonville Medical Center

Eggs are a good choice as part of a healthy, balanced diet. As well as being a source of protein, they also contain vitamins and minerals. As we age, we look for food that are softer to chew and easy to cook, such as eggs.

Eggs are a good source of protein, vitamin D, vitamin A, vitamin B2, vitamin B12, folate, iodine, selenium, zinc, iron and leutein. Leutein may help reduce risk of macular degeneration, a cause of loss of vision as we age. Some brands of egg now contain omega-3 fatty acids, depending on what the chickens have been fed. Some of the nutrients are found in the egg white and some in the yolk.

Eggs also have high content of cholesterol so they got a bad reputation many years ago when researchers discovered that high cholesterol levels in blood increase risk of heart attacks and strokes.

We now know however that most of the cholesterol in the blood is made by our body and not due to cholesterol in our diet. Our diet certainly affects our cholesterol but this has more to do with other fats in the diet such as saturated fats and trans fats.

Eating eggs does not raise cholesterol levels in most people. About a third of people however are hyperresponders and their cholesterol levels do go up significantly as they eat more eggs. The story however is no bad for these hyperresponders as both the levels of low density (LDL-"bad cholesterol") and high density (HDL-"good cholesterol") go up so the ratio remains the same and offsetting risk. Moreover, the LDL particles that are produced by eggs are larger in size—and larger LDL particles are felt by researchers to be less dangerous than small ones.

So, in fact, dietary cholesterol has

relatively little effect on blood cholesterol in most people (saturated and trans fats are the bigger culprits)—and more recent research, has largely exonerated eggs and even suggested that they may provide some heart benefits.



The findings from the studies suggested that a egg based diet may help prevent metabolic syndrome and diabetes if people are careful about limiting their overall calorie and saturated fat intake. There is some debate about number of eggs safe to eat if you are already diabetic, and for them, various guidelines recommend limiting egg intake to no more than 3 or 6 eggs per week, up to which point they are part of a healthy diet. If a diabetic wants to eat more eggs, remove the yolk part from any more than 3 eggs per week.

So, how many eggs is it safe to eat?

There is no definite limit on how many eggs most people should eat. Eggs can be enjoyed as part of a healthy balanced diet, but it's best to cook them without adding salt or fat. For example: hard-boiled or poached, without added salt; scrambled, without butter. If you make an omelette, use a non stick pan and a little healthy type of oil. Avoid frying eggs as that can increase their fat content by around 50%.

To prevent illness from bacteria such as Salmonella, buy eggs only if sold from a refrigerator or refrigerated

case. Open the carton and make sure that the eggs are clean and the shells are not cracked. Refrigerate promptly. Store eggs in their original carton and use them within 3 weeks for best quality. Cook eggs until both the yolk and the white are firm. Scrambled eggs should not be runny. Cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.

Share your favorite recipes with your friends or better still, call them over and share a meal.

Bon appetite !

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"In dog years, you would only be 7 years old.
Chase some squirrels and see if it
makes you feel younger."

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ICSSS, Nashville, TN
Editor: Vinayak Trivedi
Contact : VicTrivedi@gmail.com
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