Tips for Healthy Aging  
  
Overview  
 “To be old is to be weak and frail” is the best example of a myth associated with aging. Getting older means changes in different aspects of life from physical to mental, emotional, social and many more. Some changes might be positive and some might be negative. The challenge is to reap the benefits of getting older while taking proactive steps to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Healthy aging is a continuous process which comes through an active lifestyle. Small changes in daily routine can go a long way to support it. Having a healthy lifestyle will prevent major health problems and help you to live longer and stronger.

Let us learn some tips to stay active and healthy while aging:

TIPS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY AGING

1.        Exercise Regularly  
As you age, it is important to remain physically active to improve balance, stamina and brain health. Exercise should be part of daily routine to maintain a healthy weight, improve mood by lowering stress levels and reduce chronic health problems, such as obesity, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis. It is recommended to do 150 minutes (22-30 minutes a day) of any moderate-intensity activity a week. Any physical activity such as walking, climbing stairs, swimming, dancing or even cycling is good for improving health.

2.        Eat Healthily  
Having a balanced diet is crucial for good health, energy and preventing illness. It is never too late to start a healthy diet as it can improve your well-being as an older adult. If you are concerned about what you eat, talk to your doctor about ways you can make better food choices.

As you get older, you need fewer calories but more nutrients. Nutritious foods include:

* fruits and vegetables
* lean protein, such as fish and beans
* whole-grain cereals, bread, rice, or pasta
* low-fat or fat-free dairy, such as milk, yogurt or cheese
* healthy fats (vegetable oil, nuts, seeds)

It is better to avoid solid fats for cooking and stay away from processed food, refined sugar, and unhealthy fats.  
  
**Supplements**  
At a certain age, our body needs some extra vitamins and minerals from foods or supplements than before. They include calcium, Vitamin D, Vitamin B12, and Vitamin B6. Your doctor will be able to recommend any supplements you require according to your diet and lifestyle.

**3.        Drink Plenty of Water**  
It is recommended to drink a minimum of eight glasses of water per day to improve energy levels and brain function. Older adults might not drink enough water which can cause dehydration leading to dizziness, fainting and low blood pressure. It is better to avoid tea, coffee, fruit juices and sugary fizzy drinks.

**4.        A Good Night’s Sleep**  
A good night’s sleep is important for physical and mental health. It is advised for adults and old people to sleep seven to eight hours every night to stay healthy and active. A person can get irritable, depressed, forgetful, and more likely to have falls or other accidents without enough sleep. Proper sleep can result in a lower rate of insulin resistance, heart disease, stress, depression and obesity. Sleep can also improve blood sugar levels and decision-making skills.

**5.        Quit Smoking and Alcohol**  
Smoking causes premature aging and increases the risk of several diseases such as heart disease, lung cancer, and bronchitis. Alcohol consumption also affects every organ in the body, including the brain so it is never late to quit bad habits. Studies suggest that stopping or limiting the use of alcohol could improve heart health and prevent the accelerated aging seen with heavy alcohol use.

If you have been smoking or drinking alcohol for a long period of time, quitting will improve your health.

Quitting at any age will:

* Lower your risk of cancer, heart attack, stroke, and lung disease
* Improve blood circulation
* Increase lung capacity
* Increase energy level

**6.        Maintain your Mental Health**  
Being happy and keeping your stress level down is essential for your overall health and quality of life. When people get old, they become lonely or socially isolated. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain positive mental health by managing social isolation, loneliness, stress, depression, and mood through self-care. This can be done by spending time with family and friends and by doing things which make you feel happy. Not only your mood will be elevated but it will improve your overall well-being.

**7.        Visit Doctor for Check-Ups**  
Visit your doctor regularly for preventive measures as well as if you are experiencing certain symptoms which should be taken care of early when treatment is more effective. Ask your doctor how often you should go in for check-ups and screening tests as you age.

Outlook  
As we say, “Age is Just a Number”. A positive attitude and a healthy lifestyle can keep you young. Aging should be embraced and viewed as a positive experience by adopting a healthy and active lifestyle. To maximize the good parts of getting older, it is important to take care of your health by staying active, eating and sleeping well. Try to stay positive and participate in activities you enjoy!  
If you or someone is worrying about some challenges that aging can bring, or worry that you’re not aging well, you should see a doctor in Karachi at your earliest.

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