

Healthy Living

Take charge of your health this September in honor of National Healthy Aging Month

Every day we age. But we don't have to sit back and let it happen.

According to research conducted by the MacArthur Foundation Consortium on Successful Aging, genetics account for 30 percent of aging characteristics while lifestyle and environmental factors account for 70 percent.

In addition, a recent report in Archives of Internal Medicine, one of the JAMA/Archives Journals, attributes four simple lifestyle factors – exercising regularly, following a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight and never smoking – to dramatically reducing the risk of chronic disease and early death.

“What we do on a daily basis is directly linked to how we are going to age 10, 20, 30 years from now,” said Desmond Ebanks, M.D., founder and medical director of Altermity Healthcare, LLC, a new medical practice specializing in age management. “But we don't have to accept our fate. Regardless of age, with simple everyday changes to our eating and exercise habits, we can change our landscape permanently and restore lost vitality, maintain optimal health, offset disease and add years to our lives. Our fate is in our hands.”

In honor of September's National Healthy Aging Month, Ebanks is offering healthy aging tips for regaining and maintaining optimal health and vigor today and tomorrow.

1. Get your daily dose of sun. Recent studies indicate that 15 minutes in the sun's ultraviolet rays a few times a week (without suntan lotion) offers a healthy dose of Vitamin D. Vitamin D is proven to help offset osteoporosis, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, depression and more. In addition, you can supplement with 2,000-4,000 IU a day of Vitamin D3.

2. Eat a nutritious, balanced diet: In multiple studies, a Mediterranean-style diet has consistently

been shown to reduce the risk of chronic diseases and premature death. A Mediterranean diet emphasizes more fruits and vegetables and a ratio of 40 percent carbohydrates, 30 percent high quality proteins and 30 percent healthy fats.

3. Eat fewer processed foods. Processed foods are foods that have been altered from their natural state. Most contain chemical additives and have been stripped of essential nutrients. Read labels and avoid foods with hydrogenated oils or trans fats, high fructose corn syrup and other artificial sweeteners, highly refined carbohydrates and added salt. Processed foods have been implicated in many diseases and health conditions.

4. Use your brain. Whether your preference is crossword puzzles or a good game of Scrabble, keep your brain active. Studies show that cognitively active individuals are significantly less likely to develop dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

5. Exercise. Physically active people have cells that look younger than those of inactive people. In addition, studies show that physical activity reduces the risk of heart disease, cancer and other diseases, and may extend longevity.

6. Lift those weights. When we reach middle age, we start to lose muscle mass. Strength training can offset that loss and help prevent osteoporosis.

7. Chill out. Research has shown that a positive attitude can add years to your life. Optimism can increase a person's will to

live, make them more resilient to illness and make them proactive about health.

8. Press your snooze button. Sleep helps to revive the body and the mind. Studies have shown that sleep deprivation increases the risk for developing memory loss, cardiovascular disease and hypertension. Sleep also encourages a positive mood, healthy weight and better skin elasticity.

Altermity Healthcare, LLC is located at 639 Park Road, West Hartford. For information call 561-2294 or visit www.altermityhealthcare.com

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