

Focus on Health

3 ways to
increase
longevity

5 ways to
help manage
osteoarthritis

The link
between
AFib &
Stroke

Keep cholesterol
numbers in check

Breast cancer FAQs

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO TIMES BEACON RECORD NEWS MEDIA • OCTOBER 19, 2023

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Five foods that can keep cholesterol numbers in check

Diet plays an important role in maintaining healthy cholesterol numbers. Although the level of cholesterol in a person's blood is partly due to factors related to heredity, the foods one eats also affect cholesterol levels.

When doctors discuss cholesterol with their patients, they may refer to total cholesterol, bad cholesterol and good cholesterol. What does that mean? Total cholesterol is the combined number of cholesterol in the blood, and should be below 200.

Good cholesterol is known as HDL (high-density lipoprotein) and ideally it should be above 60. Bad, or LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol, should be below 100, says the Cleveland Clinic. A person who has a poor lipoprotein profile may be instructed to alter their diet.

Learning which foods might help is an important tool in managing cholesterol and triglyceride numbers.

Oats and more

Individuals likely have heard that oatmeal is good for helping reduce cholesterol numbers. Oatmeal has soluble fiber, which lowers LDL cholesterol by reducing the absorption of cholesterol



into the bloodstream. Oat bran and other high-fiber grains also are good to enjoy.

Legumes and produce

Eggplant, okra, kidney beans, Brussels sprouts, pears, apples, and more also can be effective at lowering cholesterol levels.

These foods tend to be lower in calories and saturated fats but high in soluble fiber.

Nuts

Almond, walnuts and other foods high in omega-3 fatty acids can lower cholesterol levels by raising the levels

of HDL cholesterol. Nuts like almonds also are high in vitamin E, which is an antioxidant that can keep the body healthy in a number of ways. Since nuts are high in calories, it is important to eat them in moderation.

Fatty fish

Eating fish over other meat-based protein sources helps reduce caloric intake. It also means the body gains the benefits of omega-3 fatty acids that lower LDL and triglycerides in the bloodstream.

Sterols and stanols

Sterols and stanols are components of plants that gum up the body's ability to absorb cholesterol from food, says Harvard Health. Companies add them to foods like margarine and granola bars as supplements. Roughly two grams of plant sterols a day can reduce LDL by 10 percent.

Avocados and olives

Both of these foods are good sources of fiber and also monounsaturated fats that can help improve HDL and lower LDL levels. Substitute olive and avocado oils for lard and butter when cooking to improve cholesterol levels. (METRO)

Mather Hospital's Paint Port Pink to raise awareness about breast cancer in October

Paint Port Pink, Mather Hospital's annual month-long breast cancer community awareness outreach, kicked off Oct. 1 with the lighting of pink lights by community partners in Port Jefferson, Port Jefferson Station, and surrounding communities. Paint Port Pink's goal is to raise awareness about breast cancer, encourage annual mammograms, and bring the community together to fight this disease.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the U.S., except for skin cancers, representing about

30 percent (or one in three) of all new female cancers each year. It is the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women in the U.S. after lung cancer, according to the American Cancer Society. Every two minutes someone is newly diagnosed with invasive breast cancer (Breast Cancer Research Foundation). Only one in three women over 40 have an annual mammogram.

Friday, Oct. 20 is Wear Pink Day/National Mammography Day and everyone – and their pets – are encouraged to get their pink.

Post photos on social media with #paintportpink and send them to matherhospital@northwell.edu to be posted on our Facebook page.

Decorate your business window for a chance to win tickets to a 2023 concert at Jones Beach. Send photos of your window by Oct. 15 to svincent@northwell.edu

Our popular "Pink Your Pumpkin" contest encourages everyone to get creative with their pumpkins for a cause. Photos should be emailed to matherhospital@northwell.edu by

Oct. 24 and posted on social media with #paintportpink. The winner will receive a \$100 gift certificate.

A calendar of events and a list of Paint Port Pink community partners is at paintportpink.org or call (631) 476-2723 for more information.

Paint Port Pink is sponsored by Riverhead Toyota, Lippencott Financial Group, New York Cancer & blood Specialists, Precision Lawn Irrigation, Po' Boy Brewery and Tuscany Gourmet Market.



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BREAST CANCER FAQ

The World
Health Organization
reports that roughly
2,300,000
women are diagnosed with
breast cancer every year.

Roughly 2.3 million women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year, according to the World Health Organization, making it the most common cancer among adults.

A breast cancer diagnosis inevitably leads to questions about the disease. The bulk of those questions undoubtedly are asked by the millions of women who are diagnosed with breast cancer. But millions more individuals, including friends and family members of recently diagnosed women, may have their own questions.

Women can discuss the specifics of their diagnosis with their physicians. In the meantime, the following are some frequently asked questions and answers that can help anyone better understand this potentially deadly disease.

What is breast cancer?

Cancer is a disease marked by the abnormal growth of cells that invade healthy cells in the body. Breast cancer is a form of the disease that begins in the cells of the breast. The National Breast Cancer Foundation notes that the cancer can then invade surrounding tissues or spread to other areas of the body.

Is there a link between diet and breast cancer?

The organization Susan G. Komen®, a nonprofit source of funding for the fight against breast cancer, reports that studies have shown eating fruits and vegetables may be linked to a lower risk for breast cancer, while consuming alcohol is linked to an increased risk for the disease. In addition, the NBCF reports that a high-fat diet increases breast cancer risk because fat triggers estrogen production that can fuel tumor growth.

Is there a link between oral contraceptives and breast cancer?

The NBCF reports that women who have been using birth control pills for more than five years are at an increased risk of developing breast cancer. However, the organization notes that risk is very small because modern birth control pills contain low amounts of hormones.

Can breastfeeding reduce breast cancer risk?

Breastfeeding and breast cancer are linked, though the NBCF notes that the role breastfeeding plays in lowering cancer risk depends on how long a woman breastfeeds. The World Cancer Research Fund International notes that evidence indicates that the greater number of months women continue breastfeeding, the greater the protection they have against breast cancer.

Is there a connection between stress and breast cancer?

The NBCF notes that researchers have found that traumatic events and losses can alter how the immune system functions, which can provide an opportunity for cancer cells to establish themselves within a person's body. The NBCF urges women to identify ways to keep their stress levels in check.

Can exercise help to reduce breast cancer risk?

The NBCF notes that exercise strengthens the immune system and women who commit to as little as three hours of physical activity per week can begin to reduce their risk for breast cancer. However, even routine exercise does not completely eliminate a woman's risk of developing breast cancer. (METRO)



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ASSET PROTECTION PLANNING

By Jennifer B. Cona, Esq., Cona Elder Law

A health care crisis can happen at any time, to any of us. As we take time to focus on our health care and reflect on the unthinkable, such as a breast cancer or Alzheimer’s diagnosis for ourselves or someone we love, it’s time to address asset protection planning.

Asset protection planning focuses on protecting your money from the high costs of long-term care, such as nursing home care, home care, and assisted living (the ALP program only). This can be accomplished by transferring money, investments, real estate or other assets into an irrevocable trust. However, asset protection planning is only effective if you make the transfers 5 years in advance. Accordingly, early planning is critical.

The benefits of asset protection planning include: qualifying for Medicaid benefits to pay for the costs of home care, nursing home care, and certain assisted living programs; preserving assets to pass on to loved ones; protecting assets for your spouse, including avoiding spousal refusal litigation; avoiding probate; and transfer and management of assets by the next generation.

Protecting assets is important to everyone; no one wants to spend down all of their assets to pay for nursing home or other long-term care. The goal is to become eligible for Medicaid if and when the need arises. By planning ahead with an Asset Protection Trust, you can ensure that you will qualify when you submit a Medicaid application without spending down your family’s assets.

In order to protect assets, the Asset Protection Trust must be irrevocable. This means that the living trust cannot be revoked, amended or terminated by you alone, but can be with the consent of the trust beneficiaries.

An irrevocable trust set up for asset protection purposes can hold almost any type of asset, including your home, bank accounts, and investments. You cannot have access to the principal of the trust, but you can retain the right to receive the income (dividends and interest). After five years have passed, the assets held in the trust are protected with respect to Medicaid. You would not have to spend down those assets on the cost of care, and instead the assets are protected and will be inherited by your beneficiaries.

In this highly specialized area of law, it is imperative that you work with the experienced and knowledgeable Asset Protection attorneys at Cona Elder Law to be sure your assets are preserved and your loved ones protected.



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Are you a Medicare rookie?

Approximately 4.4 million Americans will reach the age of 65 in 2024, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. While age is just a number in some respects, this particular birthday marks the time when Americans become eligible for the federal Medicare health insurance program. And if you'll be hitting this milestone soon, you're in good company, as athlete, entrepreneur and philanthropist, Earvin "Magic" Johnson will be doing the same.

"I've been a rookie a few times in my life, but this time, I'm new to Medicare," says Johnson.

Medicare is the government health insurance program for Americans 65 and older, and those under 65 with certain disabilities, providing hospital coverage (Part A) and physician visits (Part B) to those who qualify. During this year's Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP), which takes place between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7, 2023, rookies and pros alike can hone their health insurance selection game plan with a little coaching. That's why Magic Johnson got these tips from Cigna Healthcare, which serves millions of Medicare customers nationwide:

Don't delay. Medicare has a seven-month window around your 65th birthday called the Initial Enrollment Period. Enrolling outside this window could result in higher premiums on Medicare Part B for the rest of your life. However, if you're still working, you may be able to keep your current plan, depending on the size of your company, and switch to Medicare without penalty when you retire. If you're not working and you've already filed for Social Security, you'll be automatically enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B when you turn 65.

Know what's covered. Medicare Parts A and B are sometimes called Original Medicare and cover hospital and physician expenses. To cover things like dental, vision, hearing and pharmacy, you may opt for a Medicare Advantage plan (also known as Part C), which covers everything that Medicare does and provides additional benefits, including, in many cases, prescription drugs (also known as Part D). Assessing your budget, health needs, doctor preferences and lifestyle will be important in making the best choice for you.

Read the fine print. Before signing up for a particular plan, make sure that your favorite health care providers are in its network. While you may be able to go out of network for care, be prepared to pay more if you do. You'll also want to factor in all the associated costs of a given plan, including monthly premiums, co-pays and deductibles, as well as the prices and rules around the prescription drugs you take.

Get help. Turn to resources and platforms that can help ensure you understand the plan you're enrolling in. Call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24/7. TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048. Or, visit the Medicare Plan Finder website at [Medicare.gov/plan-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare). For local assistance, refer to the State Health Insurance Assistance Program at www.shiptacenter.org.

Use your benefits. For optimal health, make full use of your plan's benefits. In particular, be sure to get the wellness checks and preventive screenings needed for your age and health status. If your plan offers extra perks, such as fitness or nutrition programs, take advantage of them.

"If you find out that the plan you signed up for last year is not the right fit, lean into the experts about what works best for you and make changes during the Annual Enrollment Period to set yourself up for a winning year," says Johnson. (SPT)

HEART FUNCTION WORD SEARCH

O	H	B	D	B	S	T	R	G	R	P	O	N	B	M	R	E	L	X	E
V	R	A	F	S	T	R	G	X	C	S	A	U	O	N	U	O	U	R	S
S	I	R	P	X	S	I	U	Y	P	F	S	T	B	R	H	M	U	R	L
A	G	T	B	X	R	C	S	G	S	N	N	R	A	A	O	D	N	H	U
O	H	E	I	G	E	U	S	S	M	B	G	I	L	M	S	M	H	B	P
Y	T	R	D	V	B	S	T	E	U	F	I	E	L	B	Y	H	H	G	V
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N	N	H	T	V	H	D	B	R	P	O	H	S	M	X	A	T	O	D	Y
A	E	T	R	A	C	M	A	R	S	L	F	U	O	E	R	C	M	D	V
C	G	X	O	G	N	N	I	I	Y	A	T	A	V	I	D	V	D	I	B
A	Y	G	A	P	O	I	B	T	I	O	T	P	C	P	I	N	X	R	B
V	X	I	N	M	I	Y	D	V	R	R	I	L	F	L	A	V	R	T	E
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M	X	L	G	L	D	B	Y	R	F	I	N	P	A	V	V	Y	O	I	C
T	H	P	I	S	M	I	H	E	A	R	T	Y	P	P	U	B	P	R	L

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally & diagonally throughout the puzzle.

AORTIC	CHAMBERS	NUTRIENTS	TISSUES
ARTERY	COORDINATED	OXYGEN	TRICUSPID
ATRIUM	HEART	PATTERN	VALVE
BEAT	LEFT	PULMONARY	VEIN
BLOOD	LUNGS	PULSE	VENA CAVA
CARDIAC	MITRAL	RIGHT	VENTRICLE

*Answers are on page 8

Making the connection between AFib and stroke

For many people, the heart naturally contracts and relaxes to a regular beat. However, those living with atrial fibrillation (AFib) experience a quivering or irregular heartbeat that can lead to further health issues including stroke, heart attack, heart failure or sudden cardiac arrest.

In fact, people with AFib are up to five times more likely to have a stroke, yet many people are unaware that AFib is a serious condition. Managing your AFib is important to reducing your stroke risk.

Consider this important information from the American Heart Association's Getting to the Heart of Stroke, an initiative sponsored nationally by the HCA Healthcare Foundation, to understand if you may be at higher risk of a stroke.

Symptoms

While some people with AFib don't have symptoms, those who do may experience a racing heartbeat or irregular heart rate. Other common symptoms include heart palpitations (rapid "flopping" or "fluttering" feeling in the chest); lightheadedness or faintness; chest pain or pressure; shortness of breath, especially when lying down; or fatigue.

During AFib, some blood may not be pumped efficiently from the atria (the heart's two small upper chambers) into the ventricles. Blood that's left behind can pool in the atria and form blood clots. The clot may block blood flow to the brain, causing a stroke.

Risk Factors

Anyone can develop AFib. The risk factors for AFib are broken into two categories: heart-health factors and behavioral factors. Heart-health factors may include advancing age (especially over age 65), family history of AFib, high blood pressure, prior heart attack or disease, diabetes, sleep apnea and prior heart surgery. Behaviors that may be associated with higher risk factors include excessive alcohol use, smoking and prolonged athletic conditioning. (Appropriate physical activity is important for a healthy lifestyle, but you should discuss your exercise plan with a health care professional.)

"Early identification and treatment of AFib is critical to stroke prevention, especially in high-risk populations experiencing health care disparities or barriers to accessing vital health care resources," said Steven Manoukian, MD,

FAHA, senior vice president at HCA Healthcare. "Common risk factors, like high blood pressure, are more prevalent within Black communities, yet Black patients may be diagnosed less often with AFib. Creating awareness of AFib, stroke risk and treatment options can be a lifesaving first step in stroke prevention."

Treatment Options

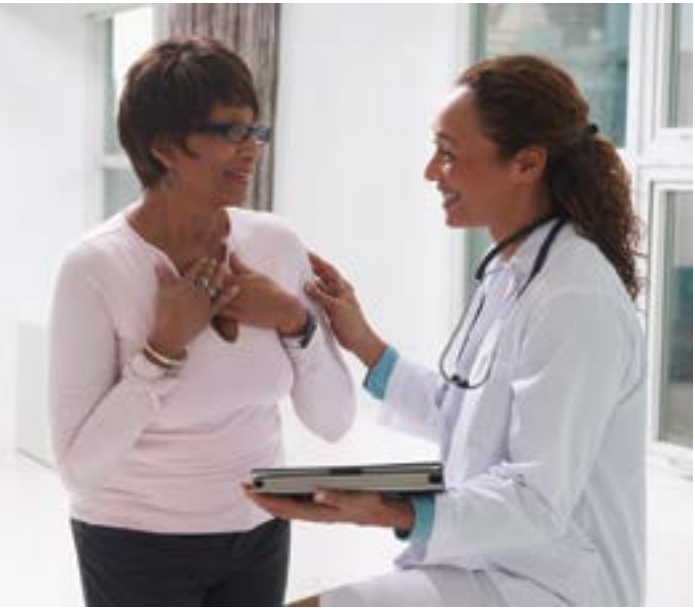
It's important to talk to your doctor if you think you may have symptoms of AFib or be at risk for AFib.

Diagnosis of AFib starts with an in-depth examination from a doctor. Work with your doctor to identify a treatment plan and goals to help manage your AFib and reduce your risk of stroke.

Treatment options for AFib may include medications to prevent and treat blood clots or control heart rate and rhythm,

procedures or surgery. Your doctor may also prescribe medications to prevent and treat blood clots that can lead to a stroke. Discuss the best options for you with your doctor to create a shared decision-making plan.

To learn how to manage your AFib and connect with others, visit MyAFibExperience.org. (FF)



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Diabetes in cats and dogs

What pet parents need to know

Diabetes mellitus affects scores of families, including the four-legged members of the household. According to the Merck Veterinary Manual, diabetes is a common endocrine disease in dogs and cats, occurring in roughly one out of every 300 animals. Most cases of spontaneous diabetes happen in middle-aged to older dogs and cats.

Diabetes occurs when the body cannot use glucose normally. Glucose is the main source of energy (sugar) for the body's cells, and the body requires insulin to transfer glucose from the bloodstream to the cells that need it. If there isn't enough insulin or the body is unable to use insulin properly, glucose accumulates in high levels in the blood, reports the American Veterinary Medical Association.

PetMD says that there is not one single cause for diabetes in dogs and cats. For some, it is a genetic condition. Others may develop the disease due to an underlying medical condition or from being obese. Medications such as steroids also can induce diabetes in dogs and cats.

Testing for diabetes is not routine during veterinary exams. Pet owners often stumble on a diabetes diagnosis after noticing some key indicators that something is amiss with their pets (see chart above).

Standard bloodwork and urinalysis will confirm a diabetes diagnosis. If pet owners learn their companion animals have diabetes, they must learn to accept this is a lifelong condition that must be managed properly; otherwise, untreated diabetes can lead to liver dysfunction, kidney failure and a life-threatening condition called ketoacidosis. Treatment with insulin is the standard course for pets with diabetes. Carefully timed and measured feedings to help control the balance of insulin and glucose also will be necessary.

Signs your pet may have diabetes:

- Excessive consumption of water and increased urination that may result in accidents in a normally house-trained pet
- Increased hunger
- Cloudy eyes, which occurs particularly in dogs
- Recurring or chronic infections that can include the skin or urinary tract
- Weight loss
- Apparent weakness

Veterinarians can help design a diet to help with the management of diabetes. Insulin is generally injected twice per day, shortly after meals. It is very important to maintain proper insulin and feeding schedules and a proper appetite for the pet while on insulin therapy, says AVMA; otherwise, hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) can occur if the pet is not eating and absorbing enough sugar to balance the insulin injections. Vet-based and at-home monitoring of blood and urine glucose levels also is necessary.

Pet owners who suspect their animals are diabetic should schedule a visit with a veterinarian immediately, as time is of the essence in managing the disease. (METRO)

Answers to Word Search on page 6

Answers to Word Search on page 6

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CHOOSE TO MOVE: 5 ways to help manage osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis and affects over 32.5 million U.S. adults. OA is a degenerative joint disease that causes pain and stiffness and can lead to limited function.

OA of the knee is the most common type, affecting more than 12 million Americans ages 65 and older. The signs and symptoms of OA can vary, but commonly include joint stiffness, pain during activity, and cracking or creaking noises around the joint.

“Although there is no treatment that can reverse OA, physical therapy can help individuals manage the symptoms conservatively through appropriate and individualized exercise programs and other treatments provided by physical therapists,” said Rachel Prusynski, PT, DPT, PhD, a spokesperson for the American Physical Therapy Association. “Physical therapy may also help to prevent a worsening of OA and the need for invasive procedures and prescribed pain medications.”

Backed by research. Many studies have shown that physical therapy is effective in helping manage OA. Now, a new report released by the American Physical Therapy Association provides another reason to choose physical therapy for OA of the knee over commonly used steroid injections — the overall value that physical therapy



delivers to patients and the health care system. In addition to saving health care dollars, physical therapy helps patients increase mobility, balance, strength and flexibility, ultimately contributing to better health and lowering the risk of conditions that could require additional health care services down the road.

People with OA should increase their physical activity routines more gradually

than those without OA and should avoid high-impact exercises (think jumping or pounding movements on the joints).

Prusynski suggests five ways to manage OA symptoms through movement:

- **Regular physical activity** can help maintain and improve movement and function, and reduce joint pain for people with OA. Physical therapists can prescribe a tailored, individual physical activity plan,

which in addition to helping with OA symptoms, can also boost heart health and facilitate weight loss.

- **Muscle strength training** with exercises primarily aimed at the large muscle groups around the knee and hip joints. Muscle strengthening exercises include lifting weights or working with resistance bands.

- **Low-impact aerobics** activities put less stress on the joints and include brisk walking, cycling, swimming, water aerobics, light gardening, certain group exercise classes and dancing.

- **Balance exercises** like walking backward, standing on one foot and tai chi are important for those who are at risk of falling or who have trouble walking. Having OA can increase your risk of falling, so it's important to build your balance and strength.

- **Flexibility exercises** like stretching and yoga are important for people with arthritis to reduce muscle tension and strain. Yoga can be modified for those with arthritis. Some people with OA have joint stiffness that makes daily tasks difficult. Doing daily flexibility exercises helps maintain your range of motion so you can keep doing everyday things like household tasks, hobbies and visiting with friends and family. (SPT)

Simple ways to limit indoor air pollution in your home

On average, Americans spend 90% of their time indoors, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, making indoor air quality critical to the health of families. The level of some pollutants in indoor environments can be two to five times higher than outdoor concentrations.

Through the new Healthy and Efficient Homes campaign, the American Lung Association is raising awareness of common sources of indoor air pollutants — including gas-, propane-, oil- and wood-burning appliances — and promoting practical short- and long-term solutions to address the associated health risks.

The Problem

In addition to cleaning products, mold, moisture and pests, the household appliances you use on a daily basis can impact indoor air quality. According to a comprehensive review of existing research, the American Lung Association has found that using appliances that burn methane (also known as “natural”) gas, wood, propane and heating oil can release

harmful pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, benzene and carbon monoxide in homes, while also contributing to outdoor air pollution and climate change.

The review also found that the pollutants from these appliances increase the risk of breathing problems, asthma attacks, respiratory infections and other health harms, especially in children and older adults.

“Using these appliances can sometimes worsen asthma symptoms, cause wheezing and result in reduced lung function in children,” says Katherine Pruitt, national senior director of policy for the American Lung Association.

Solutions

If you rely on combustion appliances for heating, hot water or cooking, there are some immediate steps you can take to reduce your risk from exposure to harmful pollutants: Make sure your gas appliances are in proper working order; install carbon monoxide monitors; avoid unnecessary wood burning in your home; use ventilation, either a range hood that



vents to the outside or an open window or both, when cooking on a gas stove; and for homes that rely on wood burning for heat or cooking, an air cleaning device that uses HEPA filtration can provide some protection from the soot and smoke.

As Pruitt notes, gas was once considered the cleaner, more appealing choice of fuel for heating and cooking,

but now, healthier and more efficient appliances are available in the United States, such as heat pumps and induction stoves. Efficiency standards are helping make appliances cleaner, while local, state and federal incentive programs exist to provide rebates and other financial incentives to those who choose to install modern electric appliances. (SPT)

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3 habits you can work into your daily routine to improve longevity

Americans are optimistic about their longevity. A recent survey by MDVIP — a national network of primary care doctors focused on preventive medicine — and Ipsos found that 67% of Americans want to live longer than their parents and 87% want to take steps to live healthier for longer. However, 74% of Americans failed a basic 20-question quiz on the lifestyle factors that influence aging and longevity.

Living longer doesn't happen by accident or by the grace of genetics alone. "Study after study has shown that our lifetime of decisions about what we eat, whether we exercise or whether we're managing stress have a considerable impact on how well we age," said Dr. Andrea Klemes, chief medical officer at MDVIP.

Another thing to consider is that extending your lifespan shouldn't be the only goal. You want to focus on maximizing the number of healthy years of your life. By increasing your "healthspan" — how many years you live without serious disease — you can enjoy your life well into your 80s and beyond.

Here are three simple but essential habits you can incorporate into your life to help improve your healthspan.

Invest in your health like you do your finances

According to the survey, 54% of Americans admit they plan more for their financial future than their health. To invest in your health, you need to learn more about your family's medical history and how lifestyle changes can improve your healthspan.

"Just like you start saving for retirement in your 20s, you need to start investing as early as possible in your health," said Dr. Klemes. "Try taking a 'portfolio' approach to longevity and make sure you have a primary care doctor who will help you build the right mix of healthy habits based on your history, risk factors and goals."

Investing in your health doesn't require overhauling your life in one night. You can talk with your doctor about your current health status and work with them on setting realistic goals and benchmarks you can work toward over time. By creating a plan and making small incremental changes to your lifestyle, you can reap dividends in healthier years now and in the future.



Prioritize social fitness

When you think about your health, you likely think about what you, as an individual, can do to improve your wellness and longevity. However, your health can be greatly impacted by the relationships you form and maintain throughout your life. That's because having healthy, stable and strong relationships positively impacts your happiness.

In 1938, researchers at Harvard University embarked on a decades-long study to find out: What makes us happy in life? The researchers gathered health records from 724 participants from all over the world and asked detailed questions about their lives at two-year intervals.

According to the 85-year-long study, there is a direct correlation between social connections and longevity. People who have strong social ties with their friends, family and community are happier, healthier and live longer than those who are less well-connected.

Other research supports the Harvard finding. A 2022 article published in the Journal of American Geriatrics Society found that optimism is associated with healthy aging and longevity across racial and ethnic groups. Make it a point to

schedule regular calls, meet-ups and activities with people you care about so you can be happier and help contribute to their happiness and health, too.

Find a primary care physician

Establishing a relationship with a primary care physician (PCP) and getting annual check-ups is vital to improving your healthspan. A PCP will get to know you and monitor any changes to your health that could otherwise be missed if you don't have a regular doctor.

Another advantage of having a PCP is that you can talk about your risk factors and ways to prevent disease instead of reacting only to health problems as they appear. MDVIP-affiliated physicians focus on personalized care, early detection and preventive medicine. These PCPs have smaller practices, so they can spend more time and partner with patients to improve their health.

If you want to lead a healthier, more vibrant life, visit MDVIP.com/LongevityIQ and take the Longevity quiz to understand more about the factors that influence aging. There you can also learn what steps you can take to help extend your healthy years. (BPT)

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