9 Steps to Healthy Aging

— Stay healthy, active and independent through the years —

Be physically active.

- Some physical activity is always better than none. Try to work up to at least 30 minutes per day, 10 minutes at a time, 5 days per week of moderate activity.
- Walk — alone or with a friend or family member!
- Do something you enjoy that raises your heart rate — such as dancing, biking, or swimming, or join an exercise class. Remember to stretch!
- Do something to strengthen your muscles twice a week, such as gardening/yard work (without power tools!) or lifting weights.
- Some exercises, such as yoga and tai chi, can be especially good for maintaining balance and flexibility.

If you have any medical conditions or you are 65 or older, talk to your health care provider before starting something new.

Avoid tobacco.

- It's never too late to quit smoking! No matter how old you are or how long you've been smoking, by quitting you can significantly lessen your risk of smoking-related illness and death.
- Avoid second hand smoke.
- Washington's Toll Free Quit Line:
  1-877-STOP (7867)
  Spanish: 1-877-2NO-FUME
  Hearing Impaired: 1-877-777-6537

Eat a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and low in saturated fats.

- Eat a variety of healthy foods. Get at least 5 servings a day of brightly colored fruits and vegetables; choose whole grains and low-fat dairy products. If you eat meat, have fish, poultry, and lean meats.
- Eat amounts that are right for you and your level of physical activity, and drink plenty of water.
- Eat with other people — make your meals enjoyable!

Get enough calcium.

- For strong bones, we all need calcium every day.
- *Some foods rich in calcium*: low-fat dairy foods (milk, yogurt, natural cheeses), canned fish with soft bones (sardines, salmon), foods with calcium added (such as breakfast cereals and fruit juice), dried beans, corn tortillas made with lime, and dark-green leafy vegetables.
- Talk to your doctor about how much calcium is right for you, and whether you should take a calcium supplement in addition to eating calcium-rich foods.
- Read food labels for amounts of calcium and other nutrients in foods!

(more)

If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation.

- Have no more than 2 drinks in one day if you're a man, 1 drink per day if you're a woman:

  One drink = 1 bottle (12 oz.) of beer, 1 glass (5 oz.) of wine, or 1 shot (1.5 oz) of hard liquor

See a health care provider regularly.

- Get regular check-ups, and ask when you need your next appointment. Find out about immunizations and screening tests you might need — such as flu or pneumonia shots, and tests for blood pressure, bone density, cholesterol, cancer, or diabetes.

Take care of your teeth.

- Visit your dentist regularly — stick to the schedule he or she recommends for you.
- Tooth loss is not a natural part of aging, but is caused by untreated mouth and gum disease.

If you take any medicines, supplements, or traditional home remedies, make sure you are taking them properly.

- Be bold! Tell your doctor, pharmacist and dentist what medications, supplements or remedies you take. Ask questions about side effects and interactions with other medicines, alcohol or food.
- Make sure all your care providers know about health conditions you may have.

Be socially active with friends and family. Be involved with your community.

- Your mental health and well-being are as important as your physical health!
- Being socially isolated is a major cause of depression in older adults. Stay involved — your community needs you!
- If you feel stressed or depressed, seek help.
- Make sure to have fun and do things that make you feel useful.

These actions can lower your risk for or reduce symptoms of…

Arthritis
Bone loss, osteoporosis
Cancer
Dementia (including Alzheimer's)
Depression
Diabetes
Falls
Fractures
Flu and pneumonia
High blood pressure
Heart Disease
Lung disease
Mouth, tooth and gum disease
Obesity, overweight
Stress
Stroke

For more information visit:
http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/OHP/stepstohealthyaging.htm

Or contact:
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