

An old prayer for the aging

Dear Jo:
I would like to share some thoughts on aging (with you and the readers of your column) that were expressed in a 17th century prayer (circa 1675). It says:

"Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will some day be old."

"Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion."

"Release me from craving to straighten out everyone's affairs."

"Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy."

"With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not use it all, but Thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end."

"Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point."

"Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of other's pains, but help me to endure them with patience."

"I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken."

"Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a saint — some of them are so hard to live with — but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil."

"Give me the ability to see good in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And, give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so."

Jo, I hope you'll print this as it presents a wise and interesting picture of aging in the distant past.

Dear Mrs. P.:

Thank you for this excellent look at aging — things haven't changed much in the last couple of hundred years.

Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell at 11 Cynthia Crescent, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4E 2P8.

Q. Many foods have the term "natural flavors" on the label. What exactly does that mean?

A. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the term "natural flavors" means that the source of the flavor used in that food is a spice, fruit, vegetable, yeast, herb, bark, bud, root or leaf. Other sources of natural flavor are dairy foods, meat, poultry and fish.

"Artificial flavors," on the other hand, are manufactured by chemists in laboratories.

Because relatively small amounts of flavorings are used in most foods, natural and artificial flavors are regulated more leniently than most other food additives.

However, flavorings are one of the most important classes of additives because they can be used to replace or hide the absence of expensive natural products. They also improve the taste of manufactured foods.



Terry Gibb

Q. I use a product called "Fruit-Fresh" frequently because my children prefer their fruit peeled and cut — but not brown. Is this safe to use frequently?

A. Yes. Fruit-Fresh is made primarily of ascorbic acid (vitamin C) and a small amount of dextrose (sugar). It's the vitamin C that prevents cut fruit from turning brown when exposed to air.

If you want to eliminate the small amount of sugar from Fruit-Fresh and possibly save some money at the same time, try squeezing a wedge of fresh lemon or lime over the cut fruit. It's just as effective.

Q. I buy large quantities of eggs when they're on sale and store them in the refrigerator until I need them. Is this practice a good idea?

A. Due to normal jostling during shipping and handling, eggs stored in the refrigerator more than five weeks sometimes develop microscopic cracks in the shell. These cracks can increase the risk of microbial contamination.

Older eggs should not be used for quickly cooked foods, such as omelets, scrambled or fried eggs. Frequently, these dishes are not cooked long enough to destroy any

bacteria that may be present.

Older eggs are also inferior to fresh ones when baking because they have flatter yolks and less cohesive whites. The egg whites are less stable in structure and volume in meringues and angel food cakes.

Older eggs are fine in foods that are fully cooked. They make good hard-boiled eggs. They're also easier to peel than fresh eggs.

Remember, however, hard-boiled eggs are much more perishable than fresh eggs. Do NOT store hard-boiled eggs longer than one week after cooking.

The Consumer Mailbag answers your questions. Address mail to The Consumer Mailbag, Consumer Detroit, One Kennedy Square, 4th Floor, Detroit 48226.

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