

Stay young while growing older

AS I ANTICIPATE marking another birthday, I note the flight of time with a measure of increased concern. When do we begin to get old? Or, more hopefully, is it possible to retain the spirit of youth despite the addition of years?

How do you know when you are getting old or staying young? Here is a handy checklist.

1. Do you find yourself unwilling to give up your smallest possessions, your petty rights, or your "last-word authority," fearing that without them you've lost your hold on the world?

2. Do you find yourself urged on, as if by some demonic force, to defend yourself against any possible loss of power or face, never admitting openly that the "other party" may be right?

3. Do you persistently refuse to make any plans whatever — even for tomorrow — resigning yourself to bland indifference to the world, withdrawing from its trials as well as its joys?

4. Do you feel sorry for yourself — unwilling or unable to be yourself, in the hopeless wish to turn

moral perspectives

Rabbi Irwin Groner

your back on the face of reality?

5. Do you reject everything that is new and untold, in the cozy but false belief that "you've heard it before?"

6. Do you think more about the past than the future discovering comfort in nostalgia, finding fault with modern times, and comparing today's unfavorable circumstances with "the good old days?"

EVERYBODY GROWS older. Some, however, are just old — they've stopped growing. Growing

Exercise, diet prevent bone loss

What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is the gradual loss of bone mass and strength. During childhood and adolescence, we increase the amount of bone tissue in the body. Even after we reach our full height, the bones continue to get heavier, thicker and stronger. This process continues up until age 35 to 45, depending on the bone.

After age 45, the system begins to reverse itself naturally and bone tissue and strength begin to decline. This is true of everyone. In millions of people, however, the bone mass reaches a low enough level and begins to fracture easily. This is osteoporosis.

What causes the bone to weaken?

When your body does not get enough calcium, certain hormones and glands detect the low calcium level in the blood. These glands inject their hormones into the bloodstream and they travel from the bloodstream into the bones. There they stimulate the bone cells to release calcium from the

consumer mailbag

bone. As a result, the lacy meshwork of spongy bone becomes thin.

What parts of the body are most vulnerable to osteoporosis?

The typical osteoporosis patient fractures the hip, spine, or wrist. Bone loss initially begins in the spine.

Who is most susceptible to osteoporosis?

Any adult can become afflicted. However, women are afflicted more often than men, whites more often than blacks, and post-menopausal women are the highest risk group.

volunteers

Anyone interested in doing volunteer work, but not sure where his/her skills could best be used, should contact the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau (OCVB) which has a list of volunteer opportunities from more than 200 agencies. The bureau's phone number is 642-7272.

VOLUNTEER VISITOR — Georgian Bloomfield needs volunteers of all ages to visit with residents. Times and days flexible. Other volunteer positions are also open. 642-7272.

ART SPECIALIST — Several volunteers with interest in art are needed by the Pontiac Art Center to visit Pontiac schools presenting art information to classes. Art training/teaching helpful. School times, two hours a session, two sessions a month. Center also needs: Typist for electronic typewriters, two-four hours a week, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, receptionist for 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, and organizers for filing system and mailing list. 642-7272.

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PARADE WORKERS — Many volunteers are needed to work in various areas for the Michigan Thanksgiving Parade. Hospitality, costumes, mechanical work, floats and signs, and office. Days, evenings, weekends. Phone 642-7272.

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older can provide us with great and new joys. Being old, however, is a less pleasant matter.

The difficulty can be located in our earlier years when we imagined that we could forever continue to get something out of life without putting anything into it.

Ultimately, the degrading poverty of later years — poverty of mind and spirit — is the obvious result of past neglect, the failure to make regular deposits in one's spiritual account.

ON THE other hand, I have met older people who continue to meet life's challenges with zest and enthusiasm, who find constructive outlets for their energy, whose personal growth and creative development do not cease.

When we master a new skill, learn a new idea, a new person, and entertain a new outlook we remain youthful regardless of our chronological age.

We want to add years to our life. We should also ensure we add life to our years.

Why is this group of women more susceptible?

After the onset of menopause, estrogen levels in the female are reduced. Estrogen has been proven to help reduce bone loss. Low dosage estrogen replacement therapy during the five to ten years following menopause can reduce the fracture frequency in the spine and hip.

How can osteoporosis be prevented?

There is a two-step recommended approach to preventing osteoporosis. First, calcium intake must be adequate in order to protect the skeleton during the lifetime. Medical indications are that the recommended daily allowances (RDA) for calcium is too low.

Second, there is evidence that weight-bearing exercise promotes bone and health and reduces skeletal losses when done in connection with calcium intake. Exercises that are beneficial are walking or jogging. Swimming, however, is not a weight-bearing exercise and bicycling is still in question.

Can osteoporosis be reversed?

There is no safe, proven ways to rebuild bone. But all during your lifetime, the bone losses and gains continue. During the next 10 years the skeleton you have today will be totally replaced.

Can certain foods affect calcium absorption by the body?

Yes. Alcohol, caffeine, protein, sodium and smoking all hinder calcium absorption by increasing excretion through the kidneys. Lactose, fluoride, and phosphorus (still being studied) show indications of helping absorption and preventing bone loss.

The Consumer Mailbag answers questions. Address mail to: Consumer Mailbag, Concern Detroit, 1025 Shelby, Detroit 48226.

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Bizarre behavior not normal in aging

Dear Jolayne:

Could you please recommend a good source of information regarding behavior problems in older people?

My 85-year-old grandmother, in good physical health, has undergone a complete personality change. She formerly was a very nice sweet tempered, gentle, happy and contented person.

Now she is angry, violent, and miserable. She swears, curses, and mimics people. She is in a personal care home, and has been there about 10 years. She eats and sleeps well, walks with some assistance, and is on no medication except for her blood pressure.

We, her family, are at a complete loss as to how to handle her when she has these tantrums. Any advice, or recommended readings on this problem would be much appreciated.

Mrs. A. Concerned granddaughter

gerontology

A. Jolayne Farrell

Although she sees her doctor occasionally for advice and treatment, she always seems to be looking for a product or remedy that will act as a cure.

Her latest purchase was a jar of foot smelling ointment that gave her hope but, of course, no help. By the way, it cost her \$40. She bought it from a door-to-door salesman who she says looked honest because he had short hair.

Please warn your readers about this type of fraud. Frankly, I find it appalling that there are hustlers out there that will take advantage of sick, old people.

Ms. C. V.

Dear Mrs. A.:

Your grandmother is in need of a complete physical and mental evaluation by a medical doctor and a psychiatrist. Her behavior is abnormal for a person of any age.

For me to recommend readings from the geriatric or medical literature would be inappropriate for me and confusing for you since as yet she is undiagnosed.

What I can say, as a gerontologist, is that the behavior that your grandmother is exhibiting is by no means part of the normal aging process. This is a very difficult time for you, your family and, of course, your grandmother. I hope her condition will improve with some medical care.

Dear Jo:

My mother, age 71, suffers, like so many other people do, from arthritis.

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