



Wellness Review September

The Secrets to Healthy Ageing Revealed

Although many of us are leading longer lives for many the quality of life is less than optimal. In the past it was thought that good health was due to your "good genes". However, recent research shows us there is more to a healthy body than what we inherited from our forefathers. Our environment and attitude play a very important part in how we age. Fortunately, there are many beneficial dietary and lifestyle changes, as well as supplements to add, which may assist us to achieve and maintain health, wellness and longevity.

You are What you Eat

Although there is an abundance of food in Western society, modern farming and processing techniques have unfortunately left us with overly-processed, nutrient-depleted packages on our supermarket shelves. In order to nourish our bodies, we need fresh 'real foods.' Most of us have acidic systems. An overly-acidic body can lead to inflammation, digestive problems (including bloating, flatulence, constipation and diarrhea), pain, and immune imbalance. Therefore, it is important to include lots of alkalizing foods in our diet. These foods might help reduce pain and inflammation. Try to aim for a diet that consists of 80% alkaline-forming foods and only 20% acid-forming foods within your daily intake. The most alkaline-forming food is enzyme-rich and in its natural state. It is fresh, organic, raw, wild and ripe.

Recent research has shown that intermittent fasting is very beneficial in reducing blood sugar levels, weight and inflammation in our body as well as reducing damage to our DNA (one of the main forms of ageing). To get the most benefit choose 2 days per week and only consume 1200 calories per day. Of course those who are diabetic or have blood sugar or serious health concerns should consult their health practitioner.

Herbs and Nutrients to Help You Age Well

As previously mentioned, nutrient deficiencies are a contributing factor to the aging process. As a result, it is a good idea to take supplements to correct these deficiencies. Many people over the age of 40 are on some type of medication to improve mood or reduce anxiety and stress, lower cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar or reduce reflux and digestive symptoms. Unfortunately many of these medications also deplete key nutrients required for good health so it is a good idea to consult a qualified health practitioner like myself to evaluate your individual deficiencies and nutrient requirements. Inflammation and genetic mutations are two key causes of ageing so supplementing with anti-inflammatory and immune enhancing vitamins, minerals, herbs and superfoods can be very beneficial. Some key considerations may include:

- **Anti-oxidants** and anti-inflammatory nutrients: As our cells age our DNA is more susceptible to damage which in turn increases our risk of developing chronic diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, dementia, diabetes and arthritis. Research has shown many vitamins, minerals and herbs may assist to stabilize our genes. These include vitamin C, zinc, selenium, lipoic acid, grape seed, ginkgo, Korean ginseng, resveratrol from berries and grapes, organic green tea and curcumin from turmeric.
- **B vitamins** are vital for many functions in the body and as we age our ability to absorb these from our food diminishes. Many elderly people and especially those on reflux medications are deficient in folate and B12. Research has shown that the activated forms of B vitamins are particularly useful in stabilizing our DNA and reducing the risk of diseases such as heart disease, osteoporosis, cancer and diabetes. As a result purchasing a good quality multivitamin with activated B vitamins and added antioxidants as mentioned above is an essential part of any wellness prescription.

- **Coenzyme Q10** or Ubiquinol is a vitamin found predominantly in our muscles and especially the heart muscle. Unfortunately this important vitamin starts to decline from age 30. Furthermore drugs such as the statins used to lower cholesterol further deplete coenzyme Q10 levels causing muscle pain and sometimes irreversible damage. As a result if you are taking cholesterol lowering drugs you should take a minimum 150mg of coenzyme Q10 or its reduced form ubiquinol.
- **Vitamin D and K** are essential for healthy immune function, as well as for healthy bones, eyes and blood sugar levels. Vitamin D supplementation is especially important in the winter months when we are less likely to get adequate sun exposure. We should be aiming for a reading of 80 to 100 in a blood test.
- **Iron:** additional iron supplements may also be required for some people because anemia is common especially in many elderly or ageing patients. Iron is also vital for immune regulation and collagen formation in the body, so it is a good idea to monitor iron levels regularly and, if levels are low, to supplement with a good quality natural form of iron.
- **Magnesium** is an essential vitamin for hundreds of reactions in the body and, due to our deficient soil, is also deficient in the majority of people. It is particularly important for muscle maintenance and relaxation, bone health, hormonal balance, and energy production. Any person on such pharmaceutical medications such as cholesterol lowering drugs or anti-reflux medications should supplement with magnesium as it depletes this vital nutrient from our bodies. For those with osteoporosis or osteopenia, extra calcium may also be required to preserve and promote bone growth. However, it is important to take the right form of calcium together with vitamin D and K.
- **Super-food supplements**, such as chlorella, spirulina, wheat and barley grasses, are great additions to any supplement regime because they contain high levels of vital nutrients. They also assist with removing toxins and heavy metals from the body.
- **Purified fish or krill oil**, which are highly anti-inflammatory and also stabilize our DNA are often deficient in the diet. These are particularly important for good long term health. It is important to take high quality supplements that are cold-pressed and tested for heavy metals and other toxins.
- **Probiotics** are friendly bacteria that live in our digestive system. They are important for maintaining healthy digestive function, and restoring and maintaining immune balance. Over 80% of our immune function is in the gut. There are many strains of probiotics, each of which perform different functions in the body.

Anti-Ageing Prescription

I have many patients in their seventies, eighties and nineties who are pharmaceutical drug free or on minimal medications, who use a combination of diet, supplementation, exercise and mind stimulating activities to lead healthy active lives. My minimum recommendation for maintaining good health is a good quality multivitamin/mineral supplement, good quality fish oil, an appropriate probiotic, Coenzyme Q10, Magnesium and Vitamin D. Please remember all supplements are not equal and essentially you get what you pay for. My best advice is to consult a qualified naturopath like myself and have a full assessment including blood test analysis and other techniques such as iridology, kinesiology and fingernail and tongue diagnosis to formulate your own tailor-made "Wellness Prescription".

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