

Looking and Feeling Good at Any Age

Aging is a natural process but not all of us age gracefully. When we age and grow older, we seem to take less care of ourselves assuming our bodies will do it for us. In contrast, the opposite holds true and more attention is needed for maximizing our longevity. Here, proper nutrition and supplementation comes into play which will have a major impact on us meeting our daily needs. The biggest concern is how we can offset chances of contracting some diseases associated with aging while still maintaining our daily vitamin and mineral needs. Since the environment exposes our populations to many cancer causing agents such as tobacco smoke, clay, tar, asbestos, x-rays, excessive sunlight in the form of ultraviolet light and pesticides, the a major emphasis should be placed on us getting our daily antioxidants. In addition, **antioxidants** are vitamin compounds that help capture or eliminate free radicals that have the potential to cause life threatening diseases on the skin or in the blood. Some antioxidants may include but are not limited to vitamin A, C, E, and are mostly found in a variety of fruits and vegetables. Your best choices to choose from should include fruits and vegetables that are dark green and leafy, red or yellow in color, citrus fruits and their juices, and vegetables coming from the cruciferous family (broccoli, cabbage, kale, sprouts, carrots, or any variety of greens).

Extensive research is under way and is still continuing to evaluate the specific role of how antioxidants help minimize the effects the natural aging process in conjunction with our daily dietary practices. So far, no direct cause-effect relationship has been proven, though we do know that some things we eat can increase or decrease the rate of our aging process as well as changing some of our daily lifestyle activities. Based on the research we do know, our chances may be lessened by following some simple recommendations:

- **Avoid obesity-** maintaining a comfortable weight will yield never ending benefits while promoting a healthy lifestyle.
- **Cut down on total fat intake-** remember, fat contains many harmful toxins that must be removed from the body to prevent the development of diseases.
- **Eat more high fiber foods-** daily consumption of breads, cereals, fruits, and vegetables are suggested.
- **Include foods rich in vitamins A and C in your daily diet-** carrots are not just for good eyesight anymore.
- **Include cruciferous vegetables in your diet-** eat your broccoli regularly even if you have to add cheese.
- **Eat less of salt-cured, smoked, or nitrate-cured foods**
- **Keep alcohol consumption moderate, if you do drink-** excess alcohol intakes rapidly deteriorates or lowers the body's immune system.