

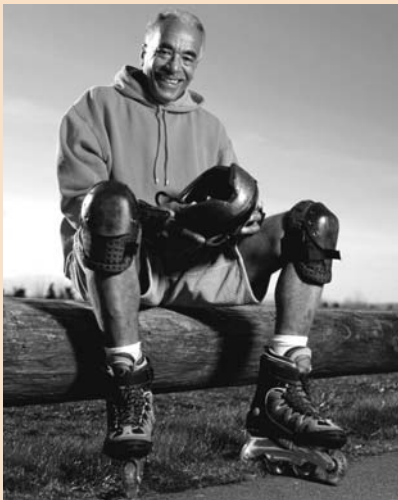


The Myths on Aging Are MYTHS

Today, a baby boomer turns 50 every 7.6 seconds in America. And by the middle of the century, older people will outnumber young people for the first time in history.

While getting older can bring new physical, emotional and mental challenges, it can also be a time of self-discovery and enjoyment, a time to reconnect with your family and friends or to do something new such as travel or pick up a new hobby.

What's important to aging successfully is your attitude and



your willingness to stay active and involved in life. Many people, young and old alike, have a negative outlook on aging. They think that with aging comes forgetfulness, illness, lack of productivity and disability. Some perceptions about aging really are myths. See for yourself:

- **Myth: To be old is to be sick.** Today's older generation is in remarkably good health and the percentage of Americans who are disabled is going down, not up.
- **Myth: You can't teach an old dog new tricks.** If you think aging means you can't learn new things, think again. Attitude plays a key role in learning. Those who believe in their abilities do not find it hard to learn new things and easily adapt to the changes of life. The greatest challenge is finding the willingness to learn new things.
- **Myth: The horse is out of the barn.** Many people believe that damage resulting from a lifetime of bad habits is irreversible – that it's too late to do anything about it. While it is best to start healthy living habits early, it is never too late to benefit from a healthier lifestyle. In many cases, you can decrease the risk of disease and even recover lost abilities.
- **Myth: The secret to successful aging is to choose your parents wisely.** Contrary to popular belief,

heredity isn't everything when it comes to aging. In fact, some studies have shown that healthy habits are even more important than genetics to successful and healthy aging.

In short, getting older is not about sitting on the sidelines. By paying attention to your health, changing bad habits and maintaining a good attitude, you'll greatly improve your chances of enjoying your later years!

Medicare Covers Quit-Smoking Counseling for SENIORS

Even if you have smoked for most of your life, it's never too late to quit. And now, seniors who want to kick the habit have another resource to help them: Medicare.

The federal health program recently began paying the cost of counseling for eligible beneficiaries who want to stop smoking. The benefit will pay for as many as four counseling sessions twice a year, for a total of eight sessions in a 12-month period.

— continued on page 2

The Benefits of Breakfast

As we age, eating well becomes even more important to maintaining good health. Eating well includes eating a healthy breakfast. You might not need as many calories as you used to, but your vitamin and mineral needs stay the same or sometimes increase.



Breakfast is your body's first chance to refuel for the day. Studies have shown that breakfast eaters have increased ability to focus and a faster reaction time all morning than those who start the day with just coffee. Breakfast is important for weight loss and weight management, too. Eating breakfast cuts the urge to overeat or snack later.

So what is a healthy breakfast? Try to include foods from each of the food groups and don't get stuck in a rut. Eat a variety of healthy foods.

- **Breads and cereals:** Choose breads and unsweetened cereals where the first ingredient is whole wheat or another whole grain such as oats. Whole grain foods contain more vitamins and fiber.
- **Fruits and vegetables:** Add a fruit or 100% fruit or vegetable juice to your breakfast meal. Add diced peppers and tomatoes to an omelet. Enjoy tomato juice for a change of pace. Get at least one of your five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day at breakfast.
- **Protein foods:** Choose lean protein foods like eggs (no more than 3-4 a week), egg substitute or soy protein breakfast meats. A little bit of protein can help keep you satisfied until lunch.
- **Dairy foods:** Add more calcium to your day. Be sure to include nonfat or low-fat milk, yogurt, low-fat cheese or cottage cheese to your healthy breakfast.

Make breakfast a part of your daily routine. It's more than important to your continued good health... it's essential!

Medicare Covers Quit-Smoking Counseling for Seniors

— *continued from page 1*

Participants may choose either intensive sessions (lasting longer than 10 minutes) or intermediate sessions (lasting three to ten minutes). The counseling must be provided by someone trained to help people quit smoking. The benefit does not pay for nicotine gum, patches or other quit-smoking products.

The benefit is not for everyone,

Seniors are actually 50% more likely to successfully quit than people in other age categories.

— *American Medical Association*

however. It is limited to Medicare members (people enrolled in the program) who have smoking-related illnesses such as lung or heart disease, weak bones, blood clots or cataracts. Members who take medication that is affected by smoking – such as insulin or drugs to control high blood pressure, depression, seizures or blood clots – are also eligible.

People who have smoked for many years may think they will not be able to quit, but the American Medical Association says seniors are actually 50% more likely to successfully quit than people in other age categories. Also, seniors who quit reduce their risk of death from heart disease to that of nonsmokers within two to three years after stopping.





Try MALL WALKING

for Fun and Fitness

Do you struggle with getting enough exercise because it isn't fun? Do you enjoy socializing with friends? Do you like window shopping? If so, then mall walking may be for you.

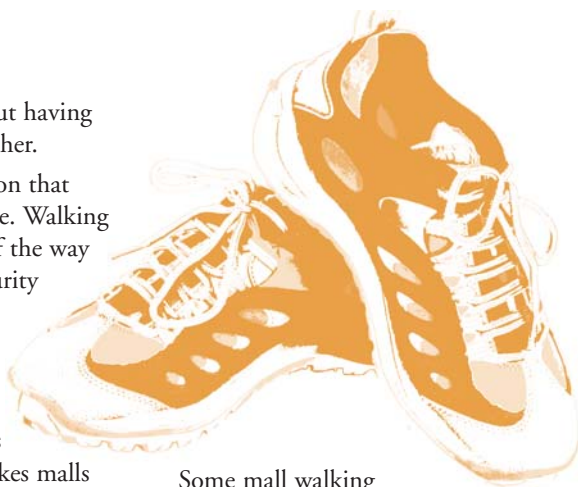
There are many reasons mall walking is a smart way to get your exercise. The most obvious is that walking is something that almost anyone can do, it's a good aerobic exercise, it helps maintain your bones and it's something you can do with others. If you do your walking in a mall, there are several additional benefits.

Because malls are climate controlled there is never an issue of rain, snow, ice or heat. You can

dress comfortably without having to worry about bad weather.

Safety is another reason that mall walking makes sense. Walking indoors keeps you out of the way of traffic. Also, mall security is there for your safety and is always on duty. All of these reasons, combined with the accessibility of restrooms and water fountains, makes malls a great place to get your exercise.

Many malls have created mall walking programs and clubs that offer store discounts, giveaways and other incentives for participating. Some include informational seminars on heart health, exercise and nutrition.



Some mall walking clubs offer free blood pressure checks.

In addition to all of these benefits, mall walking is fun. If you're like most people, you're more likely to stick with an exercise program that you look forward to and enjoy.

Here are some tips for making your mall walking routine more enjoyable:

- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes – Proper-fitting shoes ensure happy feet.
- Walk with a friend – Just make sure you are at about the same fitness level so that you can walk at the same pace.
- Window shop – Walk by your favorite stores regularly to see what's on sale.
- Bring your grandchildren – Push them in a stroller or have them walk with you.
- Challenge yourself – Make goals to increase the intensity and duration of your walks.
- Keep track of your mileage – Daily, weekly, monthly.
- Walk different malls – Keep it fresh.
- Daydream – Use this time to clear your head.
- Reward yourself – After a good walk, stop by the bookstore for a new magazine.
- Make plans for after your walk – Meet up with friends for a healthy meal or some shopping after your walk.

When It Comes to Screenings, Look Before You Leap

If the offer of quick, painless screening for many terrifying diseases seems almost too good to be true, it is. While the testimonials might sound impressive, they do not tell the whole story.

The growing trend in the use of one-stop, one-size-fits-all health scans and screenings to look for all types of illnesses, from heart disease and stroke to diabetes, can yield confusing and sometimes inaccurate results. It is not true that every available screening test should be used on every individual.

Screening tests, when used improperly, can do more harm than good. Medical studies clearly show that

inappropriate screening tests subject individuals to costly, unnecessary and sometimes harmful procedures and can cause unnecessary anxiety about personal health.

Appropriate screenings can help to prevent disease when they are used according to recommended medical practice. Those who are 50 and older should see their physician at least once a year. Talk with your doctor about your concerns and ask which screening tests are right for you. A doctor you trust and who knows your medical history can determine which screenings are right for you and can help interpret your results to ensure you get the best possible follow-up and treatment.

More Help

If you have questions or concerns about health, disabilities or other topics dealing with health and everyday living, here are some sources that may be able to help.

Anne Arundel County Department of Health
Learn To Live Line,
410-222-7979
Web site: www.aahealth.org
For Fifty-Plus Health information, click on Learn To Live, then on Fifty-Plus Health.

Anne Arundel County Department of Aging
410-222-4464
Web site:
www.aacounty.org/Aging/index.cfm

Anne Arundel County Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)
410-222-4464
This program offers one-on-one insurance information, help and group educational seminars on Medicare, Medigap, private health insurance issues and long-term care insurance for seniors and their families.

American Cancer Society (local chapter)
410-721-4304
Web site: www.cancer.org

Medicare
1-800-633-4227
Web site: www.medicare.gov



The services and facilities of the Anne Arundel County Department of Health are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, political affiliation or opinion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability.

Here's a Prescription for Healthy Living

Rx You can request a free Learn To Live Fifty-Plus Health Kit by calling the Learn To Live Line, 410-222-7979, or use this coupon.

Please send me (qty.) _____ free Fifty-Plus Health Kits. Include information on the health topics I have checked.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colorectal Cancer | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Fitness and Injury Prevention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating for Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Quitting Smoking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Cancer Prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> Skin Cancer Prevention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Cancer Prevention |

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____

Mail this coupon to Learn To Live, Anne Arundel County Department of Health, 3 Harry S. Truman Pkwy., Annapolis, MD 21401, or fax to 410-222-7294.

Learn To Live

Healthy Living From The Anne Arundel County Department Of Health

410-222-7979 • www.aahealth.org

Now, you can order kits online! From the Department of Health's Web site, www.aahealth.org, click on Learn To Live, then on the Request Free Materials button at the bottom of the page.

Learn To Live At Fifty-Plus is published by the Anne Arundel County Department of Health, 3 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401.