

General Practitioner's Section Approach to Anti-aging

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Abstract

Proper diet and calorie intake as well as regular exercise and good environmental conditions are known to contribute to anti aging. In addition to certain super foods, some herbal preparations have been shown to have anti-oxidant property contributing to delaying the aging process. In recent years, meditation particularly transcendental meditation (TM) has been reported to reverse aging process so also saral meditation a prototype of TM but without mantra. Very recently, saral meditation has been claimed to be effective at quantum level, reaching the area untouched by illness or aging process the level of human consciousness from where intelligence come from. Critical evaluation is under progress.

Introduction

Aging is normal and inevitable but one has to die, some may die early some enjoy longer life, some may suffer from disease others may lead active life. But old age is not synonymous with disease, one can lead a normal life till end although diseases are more common as age advances.

Change in life style, hygienic condition, nutritious diet with less calorie intake¹ and regular exercise is known to increase longevity as well as good health. Active sex life² has also been reported to increase life span.

Number of drugs have been identified through animal studies but till today there is no proved anti-aging safe drug. However, melatonin hormone of the anterior pituitary has been reported to increase life span through improved sleep and adding to anti-oxidant activity.³ Similarly, substitution of dihydro-epiandrosterone whose secretion decline with aging has also been reported in

increased life span.⁴ Currently, it has been reported that although everyone falls prey to aging process, no one has ever proved that it is necessary⁵ and that quantum mechanical body does not age. Any disease can be treated at quantum level including aging process.

Purpose of the present article is to have a practical approach towards increasing the active life span with proved benefits including routine exercise, environment and diet.

Anti-aging Super foods

Incorporating key foods into your diet could ward off the effects of aging: food stuff including anti-oxidants, trace elements (zinc, chromium etc) have been known for their anti-aging property.^{6,7} Foods that provide the strongest anti-aging effect are those that contain anti-oxidants which protect against free radicals. Anti-oxidants are found in all fruits and vegetables. However, following are the items having specific anti-aging property (other than carrots, pawpaw, strawberries, grapes etc. The list of healthy anti-aging foods is endless).

Tomato

Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, which helps

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prevent cell aging. Lycopene is a powerful anti-oxidant and anti cancer agent that helps to prevent cell aging. Unlike, many vegetables which lose vitamins on boiling, cooking tomatoes, release 5 times more lycopene than is available from raw tomatoes. Increasing research suggest that out of the many types of carotinoids found in food, lycopene is the most beneficial for protection against coronary heart disease and cancer especially the cancer of the lung, rectum and prostate. It is also important for eye health.

Dark Green Vegetables

Dark Green vegetables (e.g.. Spinach, lettuce etc) are rich sources of vitamin C, carotenoids and anti-cancer substances such as sulporaphane and genistein. They contain a variety of carotenoid pigments including lutein and zeaxanthin, which help to prevent age related eye problems such as cataracts and macular degeneration.

Garlic

Garlic has anti-oxidant, antiseptic, antibacterial and antiviral properties. While it is used to help treat intestinal, respiratory and skin infections, its most important use is to help reduce high blood pressure, lower levels of harmful blood fats, (LDL cholesterol, triglycerides), reduce blood stickiness, dilate blood vessels and improve peripheral blood flow.

Soyabeans

Soyabeans contain isoflavones- weak hormone like substances that help to prevent aging due to hormone imbalances. They are also believed to help protect against hormone sensitive cancers such as those of the breast and prostate gland. (soya beans are not that tasty on their own, but its products such as tofu, miso and tempeh are more palatable). Aim to eat a soya product at least twice a week if not everyday. Bread containing soya

and linseed extracts (rich in plant oestrogens) is also available.

Nuts and Seeds

Nuts and seeds are rich in vitamin E, selenium, zinc and essential fatty acids. Aim to eat at least 30 gms daily e.g. sprinkled on salads, vegetables and cereals. Selenium is needed to produce antibodies for healthy skin and thyroid functions as well as being vital for the action of many important anti-oxidant enzymes in the body. The richest dietary source of selenium is Brazil nuts. Walnuts are an excellent source of mega 3 fatty acids and have been shown to help reduce raised cholesterol level.

Bio Yogurt

Live bio yogurt, which contains friendly pro-biotic bacteria, helps to boost intestinal health and aids digestion and absorption of nutrients from the gut. Pro-biotic bacteria have been shown to boost immunity and help to guard against some allergic conditions such as eczema.

Hints

Your best anti-aging diet

- Choose organic fruits and vegetables.
- Eat fresh produce within a day of purchase.
- Eat three servings of fresh fruit per day.
- Eat three servings of raw or lightly steamed vegetables per day.
- Eat large raw food – salad per day including wide variety of plants as possible e.g.. Fennel, lettuce leaves, spinach, watercress, carrot, peas, tomato, cucumber, beetroot, nuts, seeds etc.
- Consider making liquid soups from raw vegetables and just warming through before serving.
- Avoid foods that are smoked, pickled or

salted.

- Eat low-fat diet that provides fewer calories than you slowly lose any excess weight.
- Eat fewer food of animal origin especially red meat and replace with fish and soyabeans. Eggs (one or two in a week) preferably white portion those having high cholesterol.
- Eat more wholegrain products.
- Cut out all poly saturated and hydrogenated fats – use sunflower or rap seed oils.

Anti-aging herbs

More and more people are turning to anti-aging creams and cosmetic surgery in their quest to look younger. This is all well and good but the fact remains that the best sort of anti aging therapy should focus on providing and supporting a healthy longevity. In other words, the issue is not so much about how old you look but rather that you live a long and healthy life. Recent research has shown that number of herbs help prevent diseases associated with aging and enable you to live to a ripe old age and reduce your risk of developing an age related ailments,⁸ the important ones are as under:

Ginkgo bioba : The herb ginkgo bioba is well known for its ability to improve memory and concentration especially in older people. It has been found that Ginkgo can protect brain cells and enhance their survival too (Cell Mol Biol 2002; 48 (6) : 693-97). In addition to its benefits in existing cases of Alzheimer's disease, it acts as an anti-oxidant and protect your eyes from serious conditions, can in fact improve pre-existing visual field damage (Ophthalmology 2003; 110 : 359-64) including diabetic retinopathy. Usual recommended dose is 120 mg of standardized ginkgo bioba extract a day.

Bilberry : A common problem associated with aging is vision loss. In particular, a condition known as macular degeneration is a major cause of blindness in older people. It has been found that bilberry has beneficial effects on the micro-circulation of blood in the retina when combined with Ginkgo, is a powerful preparation reducing macular degeneration (Wien Med Wochenschr 2002; 152 (15-16) : 423-26). The recommended dose is one to two capsules a day.

Turmeric : Turmeric is commonly used as an ingredient in curries as a spice. Studies have shown that the phytochemicals in turmeric are powerful anti-oxidants that can help prevent cancer, reduce incidence of Alzheimer's disease and degenerative brain conditions (Neurosci 2001; 21 : 8370-77). The recommended dosage is 500 mg of standardized turmeric extract once a day.

Korean or Chinese Ginseng : Ginseng is well known in traditional Chinese medicine as a longevity-promoting herb. Research has shown that it helps the body cope better with stress and also optimizes the functioning of many bodily systems.¹ But recent studies out of Korea have added another significant development to our understanding of this highly prized herb. Studies have shown that people who consume Ginseng on a regular basis have a lower incidence of cancer. Dose 500 mg a day.

Echinacea : The most important part of the plant and most extensively studied root has been found to possess antibacterial and immune boosting properties helping to fight cough, colds, viral infections as well as upper respiratory tract and vaginal infections.⁹

Given most of the degenerative diseases now have some link with immune function, the importance of maintaining a healthy immune system is more important for healthy longevity than ever before. Echinacea is

taken 3-4 times a day depending on the preparation.

Feeling better, living better : While none of these herbs can promise to smooth out our wrinkles or erase the gray from your hair, they can help your body keep functioning at peak performance. This means you will feel better overall and feeling better means living better, well into old age and that is what is called anti-aging.

Anti-aging skin cares

To keep your skin looking gorgeous, wrinkle free, young and smooth on the outside you must work on the inside of your body as well. Anti-aging begins at cellular level, not on the surface of the skin. Beautiful skin starts from within. None of us can escape from the aging process no matter how good your genes are. However, meditation particularly transcendental meditation¹⁰ and saral meditation¹¹ have been shown to reduce stress and delay aging process, increase confidence and impart better outlook and younger facial expression. Uses of cosmetics including cosmetic surgery are known. Recently, acupuncture¹² and still recently acupressure are being practiced. Currently various face creams and other beautifying agents are available.

Meditation as anti-aging

Meditation is the best anti-aging medicine^{10,13,14} with wide ranging benefits including reduced anxiety, reversal of aging process, reduced illness and increased cognitive function.

Anti-aging at quantum level

In recent years a new concept of anti-aging process starting at quantum level has been described.¹⁵ One great advantage of quantum mechanical body is that it does not age, a quality one sees throughout the quantum

level of nature. Protons and neutrons do not grow older nor does electricity. Life, which consists of these fundamental particles and forces, is astonishingly durable. Our DNA has remained much the same for at least 600 million years.

A quantum is million times smaller than the smallest unit called atom. Like photon it is a wave of energy, invisible vibration waiting to take physical form. Ancient doctors of India were also great sages who believed that human body is created out of consciousness. Ayurveda says that the same is true of the human body – it first takes form as invisible vibrations called quantum fluctuations before it proceeds to coalesce into impulses of energy and particles of matter. This is where the knowledge comes from. This is the invisible field very much like the underlying intelligence in DNA, the seat of consciousness.

In recent years, quantum healing has been postulated where anything including cancer can be treated at the level through practice of Bliss, which comes through meditation, and primordial sound.¹⁵

Still recently, saral meditation has been explained on quantum healing,^{5,16} the level of transcendence, once reached will not only effect intelligence it will restrict the aging process with all its aspects. The difference in the quantum approach is that it will not only reduce the aging process in term of performance and longevity, it will also reduce other marks of aging like wrinkle and graying of hair¹⁶ which is under investigation. Meditation starts functioning at cellular level but recently saral meditation has been claimed to start at quantum level, level where intelligence comes from far beyond the level of molecule or atom which is invisible and from where consciousness begins. However, this approach is not easy although it comes

through meditation one has to reach the level of "bliss" to approach the quantum level. Bliss is a vibration that intelligence sends to the world. It is an experience beyond our knowledge, the experience when the world expands beyond its accustomed limit, veda calls it Ananda (Bliss). Saral meditation (phase 2) starts at quantum level affecting all-round aging process including physical signs of aging.¹⁶

Conclusion

Meditation is the best anti-aging medicine, it reduces illness, tension and delays aging process and increases life span working at cellular level. Saral meditation has been claimed to work at quantum level reducing overall aging process physically, mentally and intellectually.

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