

### **Living Healthy At Any Age**

Revolutionary advances in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of age-related diseases in the past 100 years mean that Americans are living longer than ever before, according to research by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). The life expectancy of Americans has reached an all-time high of 77.8 years.

“As life expectancy for men and women increases, it is important for older adults to know how to care for their changing bodies,” says Joel Feder, D.O., an osteopathic physician from Overland Park, Kansas and President of the Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine (KAOM). “Living healthy depends on more than just going to the doctor’s office for physical examinations—it also requires individual accountability.”

“Personal attention to nutrition and fitness needs to be a prominent part of every person’s life, especially men and women over 50 years of age,” states Dr. Feder. “No one is going to live forever, but taking steps to improve your health, even later in life, can improve the quality of your life.”

Dr. Feder recommends the following to stay healthy in later adulthood:

- **Avoid tobacco of any kind.** Smoking significantly increases your risk for many cancers and makes it harder for you to fight infections.
- **Be physically active.** Physical activity doesn't need to be strenuous to bring health benefits. What's important is to include moderate physical activity as part of a regular routine. Walking briskly, mowing the lawn, dancing, swimming, and bicycling are just a few examples of moderate physical activity.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** A healthy diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products. It includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts, and is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt, and added sugars.

- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Balance the calories you take in from food and drink with the calories you burn off by your activities. Check with your doctor if you start to gain or lose weight.
- **Limit alcohol.** Have no more than one drink a day. A standard drink is one 12-ounce bottle of beer or wine cooler or one 5-ounce glass of wine.
- **Exercise your brain.** Repeated studies have shown that making use of all the areas of your brain can help prevent neuron degeneration. Engage daily in activities that stimulate all your senses and participate in cards, puzzles, reading, and social conversations to exercise your brain.
- **Visit your doctor's office.** Schedule regular health screenings to check for high blood pressure, high cholesterol and other health problems.

Though many aging adults may believe that altering their lifestyle now would be pointless because they have continued poor habits for many years, Dr. Feder insists that this is untrue. "It is never too late to drop bad habits and adopt healthier ones," notes Dr. Feder. "Your quality of life can be improved at any age."

By combining personal accountability with regular health screenings, Americans can dramatically increase their chances of living a healthy life in their later years. It is just a matter of taking the initiative to find health, and remain healthy.

Preventive medicine is just one aspect of care osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) provide. Osteopathic physicians are fully licensed to prescribe medicine and practice in all specialty areas including surgery. D.O.s are trained to consider the health of the whole person and use their hands to help diagnose and treat their patients.