

Health Concerns for the Golden Years

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As our bodies age, different challenges arise in regards to staying healthy and feeling good. This article outlines some common complaints experienced by the older population.

Adequate intake of foods rich in vitamins and minerals are important in keeping our bodies healthy. However, just eating nutrient rich foods like vegetables does not guarantee we are getting those valuable nutrients. As we age it is well known that our body's ability to produce digestive enzymes decreases. Adequate levels of hydrochloric acid in the stomach, pancreatic enzymes and bile production are all necessary to properly breakdown the food we eat. Without proper digestion vital nutrients will not be absorbed by our intestinal system and nutritional deficiency can result. Proper nutritional status is imperative in order to maintain optimal health. Nutrients like anti-oxidants have been closely correlated with preventing certain diseases like cancer and act as major protectors of the retina and the eye. Calcium is important to ensure proper bone health and B-vitamins help to support detoxification and nourish our nervous system. A high quality digestive enzyme formulated to an individual's specific needs can greatly increase the ability to extract the most from our foods.

Undiagnosed depression is often common in the geriatric population. Life issues such as dealing with the loss of friends and family members, facing your own mortality and having activity restricted are some of the hardest issues humans can ever be faced with. However, depression is rarely thought of as a major issue for seniors. Being evaluated for depression and finding appropriate strategies for dealing with it may be a valuable tool for improving the quality of life for many older folks.

Another important issue being revealed in the literature when it comes to the senior population involves wound healing. Surgical procedures, both elective and required, as well as accidental injury mandate that our bodies have a capable wound healing mechanism. Compromised wound healing can result in unwanted complications such as infections, scarring and slow healing time.

Vitamin C is an important part of the wound healing process and has been shown to increase wound healing time in deficient individuals. While most of the population has sufficient stores of Vitamin C, many geriatric patients do not due to incomplete digestion and/or a poor diet.

The other major issue for post-operative wound healing in the geriatric population is related to protein. Adequate protein intake is essential for proper wound healing. Clinical trials have shown improved healing of wounds in elderly patients supplemented with liquid protein formulas. The geriatric population tends to be deficient in protein stores due to diet and absorption issues. Improper digestion and lack of appetite due to depression can also be contributing factors.

Our golden years should be a time to reflect on a life well lived and an opportunity to pass along knowledge and wisdom to younger generations. Unfortunately, numerous health concerns and barrages of prescription medications often hinder the attainment of an optimal quality of life. Looking at different aspects of wellness can help many seniors improve their quality of life.

