



Nutrition Nibbles

Live to 100: Tips for Healthy Aging

By Dr. Debby Watkins, D.C., Chiropractor

The number of people living longer is increasing dramatically. An estimated 4.2 million U.S. residents now fall into the age group of the “oldest old”- 85 years and older- with more than 40,000 having reached the age of 100. In fact, centenarians (those 100 and older) are the fastest growing subpopulation of the elderly, and by 2050, according to census projections, 1 million Americans will celebrate their 100th birthdays!

At the same time, a growing body of evidence suggests that good genes are only a small part of the longevity puzzle. In fact, researchers now believe that chronic illness is not an inevitable consequence of aging, but it results more often from lifestyle choices that we are perfectly free to reject.

Embrace a Positive Attitude

Centenarians tend to be very optimistic and always hope for the best. According to research, having a positive attitude is key to the ability to live longer and can lead to a healthier, higher quality of life. Researchers speculate that positive emotions may directly affect overall health, perhaps through direct mechanisms, such as immune function, or indirectly, for example, by strengthening social support networks.

Stimulate Your Mind

Research shows the more educated we are, the longer we live. The benefits of education are even more pronounced when learning continues throughout

our lives. Most centenarians take advantage of opportunities and possibilities that have not been available to them earlier in their lives, such as second careers, volunteer activities, musical instruction, writing, taking various classes in areas of interest or travel. In addition, you may want to consider mentally challenging activities such as crossword puzzles or learning a new language.

Limit Stress and Stay Connected

Protect your mental and physical health by managing your stress at work and at home. Humor, meditation, exercise and optimism are good ways to naturally reduce stress and relieve tension. Stay in touch with family and friends. Those who maintain a close network of social support do best. Social contacts may encourage us to take better care of ourselves—by cutting down on smoking and drinking, for example, or seeking medical treatment earlier for symptoms that may indicate serious problems. Friends may also help us get through difficult times by offering coping mechanisms and having a positive effect on mood and self-esteem.

Take Advantage of Your Genes

Good health practices will help you make up for at least some of the genetic difference between you and centenarians. Essentially, you can compensate for bad genes by healthy living—or ruin perfectly good genes with poor habits. Smoking and

College Corner: Sports Drink Spotlight By Erika Chan

Hitting the gym is a great way to avoid the “Freshman Fifteen.” But, from electrolytes to protein shakes to power candies to ‘goo,’ is the selection of “performance-enhancing” sports drinks enough to make you run the other way? If you’re having trouble navigating the aisles of Gatorade, Power Bars, and Muscle Milk, read on!

Hydration is the number priority when you workout to replace the fluid that you sweat out. It is important to drink fluids two hours ahead of time, intermittently during exercise, and after you work out.

The more you sweat, the more electrolytes (sodium, potassium, and chloride) your body loses that needs to be replaced. If you are working out in high heat or for long periods of time, drinks with added nutrients can replace electrolytes and carbohydrates to fuel your body. But, often sports drinks can be high in sugar and excess calories. Here’s the run-down on some popular sports beverages:

- **Sports drinks** – While they provide electrolytes necessary during strenuous exercise, sports drinks are high in sugar, which can cause dehydration. Most people who practice moderate exercise do not need the carbohydrates, high level of electrolytes, and added sugar in sports drinks.
- **Vitamin Water** – Exercising does not deplete vitamins and minerals, and therefore flavored waters that boast vitamins and minerals will not boost performance. If you prefer flavored water, try a brand that is low in sugar or make your own by adding lemon, lime, or

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excessive alcohol intake, for example, increase the risk of many chronic diseases. As you age, be sure to get regular health screenings.

Support Your Body with Exercise

Find fun ways to stay in shape, such as dancing, gardening, swimming, walking or jogging. Include strength training, as directed by a personal trainer or health care provider, to maintain muscle mass. Increased muscle tissue burns fat more efficiently, reduces your heart disease risk, and lessens your chance of a broken hip from falling. For adults, a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week is recommended.

Make Healthy Diet Choices

What you eat and drink—and what you don't eat and drink—can make a big difference to your health. To prevent weight gain and maintain good health, pay special attention to eating efficiently. Choose foods that maximize nutritional value and minimize calories. Overly processed foods often contain more calories and fewer nutrients. Choose, instead, whole, natural foods like fruits and vegetables, whole grains, good (unsaturated) fats, nuts, legumes and healthy sources of protein (lean meat, fish and eggs).

Choose a Good Health Care Provider

Even if you are healthy and make good preventative choices, it is essential to

have access to a good, trustworthy health care provider. A health care provider should:

- Know and support all forms of healing and various approaches to health care to present patients with the most effective, safest preventative or treatment options available.
- Emphasize prevention and whole-person wellness.
- Teach healthy living practices.
- Involve patients in decisions regarding their care—except for acute, potentially life-threatening emergencies.
- Encourage patients to be responsible for their health.

Chiropractic Care Can Help

Talk to me about other ways to improve your quality of life. Doctors of chiropractic are trained and licensed to examine and treat the entire body with specific emphasis on the nervous and musculoskeletal systems, wellness and prevention.

Dr. Debby Watkins, D.C., has been practicing chiropractic over 15 years and has loved every minute of it. She graduated from Palmer West Chiropractic College Magna Cum Laude. Visit her website at www.drdebbywatkins.com or email her at drdebbs@yahoo.com.

Sports Drink continued...

oranges to your bottle.

- **Energy Drinks** – Energy drinks contain caffeine to sharpen athletic performance. However, most are higher than necessary in caffeine, sugar, and other additives and can cause dehydration and hinder your workout.
- **Protein Drinks** – Protein drinks consumed post-exercise can help rebuild muscle but most Americans get adequate protein from their normal diet. While they have been proven effective for endurance and muscle-building athletes after a hard workout, many protein drinks are also high in sugar and carbohydrates. Instead try yogurt, cottage cheese, or chocolate milk (keep reading!) for a protein boost.
- **Chocolate milk** – It may sound strange, but fat-free or low-fat chocolate milk has the perfect balance of carbohydrates and protein for a post-workout beverage. This is best for endurance athletes, as it helps rebuild glycogen and muscle stores.
- **Coconut water** – Coconut water is naturally high in electrolytes and potassium, without the added sugar of sports drinks. Try coconut water for a tropical twist to hydrate your next workout!

Bottom line: With the loads of sports drinks on the market, the only proven best choice is water! Intense exercise may require a boost from a sports drink; however recreational athletes can get all the hydration they need from good old water. And one thing is for certain – drinking athletic beverages for leisure or a snack can be just as bad as drinking soda or sugar-sweetened juices. So next time you hit the gym, don't let your hard work go to waste by drinking empty calories! And if you're feeling adventurous, try coconut water or chocolate milk to naturally replenish electrolytes, protein, and carbohydrates.

Favorite Food

Lots of people are curious about what dietitians eat when they are “off-duty.” For an easy protein choice, I really enjoy tofu. I like how tofu can take on the flavors of whatever type of cuisine you decide to serve. My favorite way to serve up tofu is cubed and baked. First, I press out any excess water from a brick of extra firm tofu by wrapping

the tofu in a dishcloth, sandwiching it between two plates, and setting it in the fridge for 15 minutes. Then I remove the tofu from the dishcloth, cube it, and stick it in a ziploc with a little marinade while I chop up some veggies. Next, I place the marinated tofu on a foil-lined cookie sheet and bake at 375°F until crispy, all while I saute my veggies. Yummy!