

## Cultivating Healthy Aging

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- ❖ ***Be active your entire life:*** Commit sometime each day to exercise and movement. This daily practice will add high quality years to your life. (Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on at least 5 days of the week.)
- ❖ ***Hara Hachi Bu:*** Eat fewer calories by eating until 80% full. We gain weight by eating a little bit too much each day. Be mindful of how much you are eating by starting small, chewing thoroughly and being mindful of when your body feels satisfied, not stuffed.
- ❖ ***Eat a plant-based diet:*** People who eat meat sparingly live longer. Beans, whole grains and vegetables are the building blocks of longevity. Include nuts, seeds and healthy proteins but do not overindulge in meats (small portions, 3-4-oz, maybe twice a week). Include foods high in Omega-3 fats such as salmon, tuna, walnuts, and flax seed. These foods may help protect the brain from age-related memory loss.
- ❖ ***Have a strong sense of purpose:*** What gets you out of bed every day to do your thing. Have clear goals in life.
- ❖ ***Slow down the pace of life- enjoy the moment:*** This helps you tie all elements of health together, (preparing a healthy meal, exercise, meditation, spending time with important people in your life, savoring the moment you are in), while decreasing stress. Chronic stress can lead to inflammation, which can lead to disease.
- ❖ ***Participate in a spiritual community:*** Studies show that the simple act of attending community services can extend a person's life. Faithful people are generally happier and healthier.
- ❖ ***Surround yourself with others who live a healthy life:*** Social connectedness is important to longevity. If you hang out with people who reinforce your lifestyle, you will be more likely to stick to it.

- ❖ ***Exercise your brain:*** Doing activities that challenge your brain helps to keep you sharp (learn a new language, learn something new on the computer, puzzles, Sudoku, card games, learn to play an instrument). These things can boost memory and problem solving skills.
- ❖ ***What's good for our heart is good for your brain:*** Control cholesterol, blood pressure and weight. These all can profoundly affect your longevity.
- ❖ ***If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation:*** According to the American Institute for Cancer Research, “Even small amounts of alcohol pose some cancer risk, so for the lowest risk, the AICR recommends not drinking alcohol at all. However, if you do drink alcohol, the AICR recommends that you limit your intake to 1 drink a day maximum for women and 2 drinks maximum for men”. Besides cancer risk, excess alcohol can lead to weight gain, which is a major risk factor for chronic disease.
- ❖ ***Develop your sense of altruism.*** Mentor, volunteer, and support others. This leads to a satisfying and successful second half of life.

**Sources:** The Blue Zones, Dan Buettner; University of California Berkeley Wellness Letter, October 2011; Anna Marie Colbin, PhD, “What’s wrong with Aging”.

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