

Successful Aging



According to the MacArthur Study of Successful Aging, successful aging can be defined as the ability to maintain three key behaviors or characteristics:

1. Low risk of disease and disease-related disability
2. High mental and physical function
3. Active engagement with life

All three characteristics are of equal importance. It is important that we not only achieve these characteristics, but that we have them in balance, because they are equally important for successful aging.

Avoiding disease and disease-related disability

Medicine and science has changed the face of aging. Geriatric Medicine has gone from **CURE** to **CARE**. Prior to 1950, seniors generally died of infection or cardiovascular related illnesses. The development of antibiotics has allowed us to treat infection, so seniors no longer die from pneumonia or the flu. Advances in treatment of cardiovascular medicine has led to early intervention of high blood pressure and high cholesterol, the leading causes of death by heart attack and stroke. The elderly now suffer from chronic illnesses. They include

- Arthritis – 50%
- Hypertension & heart disease – 33%
- Diabetes – 11%
- Hearing Impairment – 23%
- Cataracts – 17%
- Other forms of visual impairment, including macular degeneration – 9%

Most of these chronic diseases are being successfully managed today.

Many of these illnesses and disabilities associated with old age are preceded by signs of future problems and can be prevented or at least managed by shifting to a prevention or wellness-oriented mindset.

Weight Loss reduces blood pressure, delays the onset of diabetes and reduces the pressure on arthritic joints. **A new study shows that for each pound of body weight lost, there is a 4-pound reduction in knee joint stress among overweight and obese people with osteoarthritis of the knee.**

Exercise increases weight loss, improves the cardiovascular system (lowers blood pressure and increases oxygenation of the brain), increases bone density and improves balance.

Private Duty Home Care
Companionship • Light Housekeeping
Meal Preparation • Personal Care

Geriatric Care Management
Comprehensive Care Planning • Medical Advocacy
Liaison for Families at a Distance

Partners in Senior Care, Inc.
*Our mission is the quality delivery
of care services to the senior population.*

847-548-1330
www.partnersinseniorcare.com

IDPH Home Service Agency License #3000139 • IDPH Home Nursing Agency License #4000114

Successful Aging

There are three simple behaviors that can help you prevent or manage the diseases associated with aging:

1. Cessation of smoking
2. Good nutrition
3. Regular exercise

Maintaining mental and physical function

Older people, like younger people want to be independent. There is no greater fear among seniors than the loss of their independence. The biggest fight that seniors and their adult children have is “giving up the car”, because in our society that signals more than anything else the loss of independence.

Some of the fears that we have of aging are exaggerated. Perhaps the two biggest fears among seniors as they age is the fear of Alzheimer’s disease and of being “put in a Nursing Home”. Let’s look at the statistics.

- Only 10% of the people over 65 are Alzheimer’s patients. After the age of 85, 50% have some cognitive impairment, but it is often mild to moderate and they can continue to perform their own activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, toileting, ambulation, eating). The over 85 year old with mild cognitive impairment may need help with instrumental activities of daily living, bill paying, meal preparation, housekeeping and laundry. These activities can often be provided by adult children paying bills, meal delivery, housekeeping and/or care giving services or moving into an Independent or Assisted Living Community* (not a Nursing Home).
- Only 5% of people over the age of 65 live in nursing homes and that percentage has been falling for at least the last 10 years.

Some functional loss is indeed a normal part of aging, but people often blame aging for losses that are caused by lifestyle—overeating, poor nutrition, smoking, excessive alcohol, lack of exercise and insufficient mental (cognitive) exertion. *An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure*, it is easier to maintain a healthy weight than to lose weight.

Both mental and physical function is recoverable. In fact, they can even be improved even as one ages. The “couch potato” may not become a marathon runner, but indeed can train to do a 5K walk. Seniors are daily learning to use a computer and completing college degrees that were sidetracked by demands of work and family. *An old dog CAN learn new tricks*.

Continuing engagement with life

Certain losses become more probable with increasing age—the death of friends and loved ones, the often ambivalent experience of retirement, and the necessity of moving away from a familiar house or neighborhood. The task of successful aging is to discover and rediscover relationships and activities that provide closeness and meaningfulness! Successful aging is not trying to stay young, but rather aging well. The goal is not just more years, but longer, healthier and more productive lives.

Private Duty Home Care
Companionship • Light Housekeeping
Meal Preparation • Personal Care

Geriatric Care Management
Comprehensive Care Planning • Medical Advocacy
Liaison for Families at a Distance

Partners in Senior Care, Inc.
*Our mission is the quality delivery
of care services to the senior population.*

847-548-1330
www.partnersinSeniorcare.com

IDPH Home Service Agency License #3000139 • IDPH Home Nursing Agency License #4000114