

Aging Gracefully – A Gynecologist’s perspective

- By Anna M. Cabeca, DO, FACOG

Aging, maintaining and restoring our youthfulness is absolutely one of my favorite topics! Not only is this on the minds of my patients, but also my friends and family. Time speeds by each day and I look around me and see those amazing people that are aging so beautifully and others that are even more haggard than me, ha. Which I must say, considering my blissfully sleep deprived state with my fifth child, my new 11 week old daughter, is haggard! While I am thankful and blessed for every sleep deprived minute I desire to continue to look like her mother (as a 41 year old) and not her grandmother. Thus I am brought to our topic today, Aging Gracefully, which comes down to simply preventative medicine and putting control of our health into our own hands beginning with my top 12 pearls.

1. Water
2. Exercise
3. Proper Diet and Nutrition
4. No Smoking and Limit Alcohol
5. Trust in Divine
6. Pure Air
7. Rest and Meditation
8. Temperance
9. Sunlight
10. Friendship and Life Purpose
11. Hormone Balance
12. Detoxification and healing inflammation

Each of these can be a lecture itself.

Optimal aging is in each of our control. We have within ourselves the power to heal, boost our immune system, improve our strength, and reach our goals. Through making good choices we can enjoy a quality of life we have worked hard for. Proper nutrition, physical activity, hormonal balance, and emotional health all help to prevent disease and reduce cellular damage. Cellular damage causes degenerative changes, oxidative stress, inflammation and hormone imbalances, all of which lead to poor cognition, memory loss, fatigue, anxiety, depression, infertility, decreased libido, impotence, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, cancer, and the list goes on.

When we look at the building blocks of diseases, we see inflammation and hormone imbalance. Therefore when we address these illnesses and symptoms we have to go back to the very building blocks and start with providing our cells with the proper means to correct the

imbalances as naturally as possible. This begins with a detoxifying, alkalizing and cleansing diet to give our bodies a break from the chemicals and hormones in our food sources. Our hormones are metabolized predominantly in our liver so cleansing/detoxifying periodically is essential to good health. Providing the essential building blocks from nutrient support through our diet, vitamins, nutrients, herbs, greens, omega's, and protein. I tell patients if you can pick it, peel it, fish it, hunt it, milk it, grow it, then, for the most part, you can eat it. Even with the healthiest of diets, nutritional supplementation with high quality B vitamins, omega 3's, minerals (including magnesium, zinc, and calcium), nutrients, and vitamins D, C, and E combine to create a healthy regimen. Additional supplements for healthy aging and part of my core recommendations include CoQ 10, carnitine, alpha lipoic acid, and krill oil. A healthy digestive system is important for our bodies ability to absorb the nutrients we eat. Avoid antacids, use digestive enzymes instead.

Additionally, when balancing hormones in our bodies, we realize it is an intricate web like connection and we must consider the thyroid, adrenals, pituitary, hypothalamus and gonads together. For women, balancing hormones such as estrogen, progesterone, testosterone and DHEA, is vital. When hormones need to be replaced, I recommend bio-identical hormones. Bio-identical hormones are hormones that are structurally the same as the ones our body produces naturally and come from natural sources. Our body can then perceive these as friendly hormones and metabolize them as they would our own. Here I must emphasize that hormones in balance are good, hormone imbalance is bad. And whether we get them from our own bodies production or from other sources such as hormone supplements, birth control pills, xenoestrogens in food, pesticides, herbicides, etc. we should now know how our body removes or detoxifies them. I offer patients a test that looks at their bodies' ability to do just that. We look at a 2/16 hydroxy estrone ratio in the urine. If a persons ratio is greater than two pre-menopausally, studies have shown they have a 40% lower risk of breast cancer. If a persons ratio is less than two, they have a higher risk of breast, ovarian, and colon cancer. This ratio can be improved by eating more cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, and ground flax seeds, omega'3s, soy isoflavones such as edemame, miso and tempeh. There is more information on my website www.CabecaHealth.com regarding this and other testing options for hormone balance.

Healthful aging does not come in a pill. It comes from a positive attitude, gratitude and love for ourselves, God, and others. It comes from giving, sharing and caring, each in our own way and knowing we each have a purpose in this life. Go back to the basic 12 and believe you are worth the time and energy it takes. Start making healthful changes slowly and persistently. You are worth it!

Anna Cabeca, DO, FACOG has an office located at 2712 Parkwood Drive, across from the Hospital. The goal of her practice is to apply the most current medical knowledge and integrate a woman's mind, body and soul into her treatment. She offers classes on Nutrition, Detoxification, Natural Hormone Therapy, Stress Management, and Fibromyalgia. She has a 4 day Detoxification and Yoga retreat scheduled for this July and a virtual detoxification retreat beginning June 24th. For more information go to her website www.CabecaHealth.com or call (912) 267-7780.