



TAO OF WELLNESS

ACUPUNCTURE
CHINESE MEDICINE
NUTRITION

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HEALTHY AGING naturally

BY DR. MAOSHING NI, PH.D., D.O.M., ABAAHP



THE STATISTICS ARE IN — the oldest of 76 million baby-boomers will turn 60 next year. In fact, over 50% of the population in the United States will be over 65 by the year 2025! However, the aging trend does not have to mean lower productivity and quality of life. Not only are the baby-boomers a more active generation than the previous one, they also refuse to accept the aging status quo. Additionally, many are seeking out the time-tested wisdom of Chinese Longevity Medicine in combating the effects of aging. **AGING MAYBE INEVITABLE BUT POOR HEALTH IS NOT.**

Generally, by the age 40 most people begin to experience a myriad of aging maladies ranging from heart disease, diabetes, autoimmune disorders, obesity, arthritis, stroke, osteoporosis, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease. Many simply feel tired, anxious, depressed and unfulfilled; they may also feel out of shape and complain of aches and pains — all of which may be sub-clinical signs and symptoms of aging.

The causes of aging are multifold and they range from decreased hormonal production and toxic overload to blockages and congestion of the transportation and communication highways within our bodies. While modern medicine has neglected to address the effects of aging in any meaningful and fundamental way, Chinese Longevity Medicine has been making qualitative differences in improving the undesirable effects of aging in patients for centuries. The treatments range from acupuncture, tonic herbs and bodywork to dietary supplements, detoxification and psycho-spiritual guidance. Many of the treatments promote regeneration by restoring vitality, balancing function, activating circulation, nourishing hormones, removing toxins and calming the nervous system.

You can also begin many self-renewing activities right away. Remember, the sooner you begin your anti-aging quest, the sooner you will experience a healthier and younger you.

In my forthcoming book, *Secrets of Longevity*, I categorize self-renewal activities into 5 critical areas: *What You Eat*, *What You Do*, *How You Heal*, *Who You Are* and *Where You Are*.

WHAT YOU EAT

It is no surprise that diet is crucial to health and longevity. I recently returned from Rugao County, four hours north of Shanghai. The rural community of Rugao enjoys the reputation as the "longevity" county of China because there are over 200 centenarians in the small region — the highest number per 1,000 residents anywhere in China. Over meals, I noticed that Rugao residents ate mostly fish, vegetables, mushrooms, seaweed, corn and buckwheat. There was virtually no meat or poultry

present in the majority of their diet.

Generally, people of Rugao suffer from very little heart and liver disease. They also have negligible rates of cancer and degenerative diseases. Rugao's diet is identical to the diet in Okinawa, Japan's own "longevity" island, where scientists have confirmed the health benefits of a diet high in fish and vegetables and low in animal products.

WHAT YOU DO

Tai chi practitioners, on average, live longer and are in better health. Tai chi is practiced by over 100 million people worldwide and owes its popularity to a simple fact — it's enjoyable and it makes you stronger. Recent studies confirm that it has numerous health benefits. It has been found to increase energy, boost immunity against viruses, lower blood pressure, improve cognitive functions, increase joint function, enhance microcirculation, relieve fibromyalgia symptoms, increase leg muscle strength and increase a sense of balance and posture.

HOW YOU HEAL

"First do no harm." Hippocrates, the father of Western Medicine uttered these very words over 2,000 years ago. The simple and yet profound wisdom in these words holds true today as it did when he first said them. How can healing be effective if harm is created alongside the cure? Yet, in today's conventional medicine, every drug and procedure creates some sort of side effect that interferes with the very well being that a patient seeks. Some side effects are so dire that, according to AMA's own estimates, close to 200,000 people die each year needlessly from drug and procedural complications as well as medical errors.

Prevention is obviously the key to maintaining good health. However, if healing is required, seek natural remedies that "first do no harm." Holistic medical systems such as Chinese medicine do not attempt to replace your body's own capabilities but rather seeks to support, augment and restore the balance within your body's functions. Furthermore, Chinese medicine helps clear and cleanse blockages and toxins from the body, strengthens functions and productions as well

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SAY NO TO BREAST CANCER

BY DR. MAOSHING NI, PH.D., D.O.M., ABAAHP

A colleague and friend, Dr. Pat Riley, and I decided over a year ago to write a book together on breast cancer prevention. Over the years, we have seen many breast cancer patients and have felt frustrated that most of the emphasis has been on treatment of the disease and very little has been done on educating the public on prevention and risk reduction of breast cancer. Research has convinced us that breast cancer occurrence could indeed be substantially reduced if women knew what to do and what to avoid.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women and the risks are highest in the female population between the ages of 25 and 65 in the United States. My patients with breast cancer often ask what they can do to reduce the risk in their preadolescent and teenage daughters. Some studies show that the predisposition for breast cancer starts in the womb. Men are also affected, not only through the women in their lives, but because they too can become breast cancer victims.

There are a number of tools that are used to assess your relative breast cancer risk. They include genetic testing, regular breast screenings, tests to detect environmental toxic exposure, and histories of hormonal use, alcohol consumption use and bio-rhythm factors including age, time of period onset, pregnancy history, breast feeding, age at first delivery and last delivery and obesity. Genetic testing and early detection screenings are useful tools, although genetic testing can create stress of its own and excessive mammography exposes you to unnecessary radiation. A better way is to use regularly breast thermography, which detects temperature variations in tissues, supplemented with ultrasound exam and occasional mammography to bolster early detection.

Environmental factors, such as xenoestrogens from pesticides and PCBs from plastics, also predispose you to breast cancer and other cancers. Below is a checklist that assesses your risk level in developing breast cancer. The more factors you have checked off, the higher the likelihood.



- Oral contraceptives, early and prolonged use of estrogen replacement therapy with high doses, fertility drugs
- Pre-menopausal mammography, with early and repeated exposure
- Non-hormonal prescription drugs such as some anti-hypertensives
- Silicone gel breast implants, especially those wrapped in polyurethane foam
- Diets high in animal fat contaminated with undisclosed carcinogenic and estrogenic chemicals, and dairy products contaminated with growth hormone
- Diets high in pesticide / herbicide-ridden produce
- Regularly heating food with plastic containers, and drinking only plastic bottled water
- Domestic exposure to household chemicals or pollutants from chemical plants and hazardous waste sites
- Workplace exposure to a wide range of carcinogens and lifestyle risks
- Alcohol, with early and excessive use
- Tobacco, with early and excessive use
- Inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle
- Chronic insomnia or long term sleep deprivation
- Prolonged periods of intense stress and emotional trauma
- Hair dyes, with early and prolonged use

If you have checked off a number of the above risk factors, do not panic. Visit a holistically-minded gynecologist or women's health specialist for regular screenings. Commit to eliminating most, if not all, of the risk factors from your life. Make an appointment with a natural medicine practitioner, such as a doctor of Oriental medicine, to implement a preventive program. Start a supervised detoxification program and implement ways to boost your immune system with acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. Learn and practice tai chi and meditation, both of which have been shown to reduce stress and improve the immune system's natural killer-cell activities. Also, begin a cancer-prevention diet and restore the healthy rhythms in your lifestyle where work and play are balanced with adequate rest and relaxation.

One in seven women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. You do not have to be a sitting duck waiting for breast cancer to happen to you. Start being proactive with prevention. With knowledge and determination, you can positively lower your risks of developing the disease and SAY NO TO BREAST CANCER! ■

(The book proposal for "Say No to Breast Cancer" is currently being reviewed by a publisher.)



PROSTATE HEALTH

and Traditional Chinese Medicine



BY BAN B. WONG L.A.C.

The American Cancer Society classifies prostate cancer as the most common form of cancer among U.S. men. According to recent projections, of the 232,090 new cases to be diagnosed, about 30,350 men will die from prostate cancer.

If you are a man over the age of 40 and prostate cancer runs in your family, it is extremely advisable to monitor your Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) levels. A PSA blood test measures the level of a protein released by prostate cells. Recent experts state that if a PSA level is 2.5 or higher, it reveals the possibility of prostate growth (hyperplasia), but it does not always mean that cancer is present. Since PSA levels may fluctuate with infection and lab errors, usually more than one test over a period of time is done to confirm your PSA level. Digital Rectal Exam (DRE) and ultrasound are other ways to evaluate the prostate. However, only biopsies can truly determine whether the growth in the prostate is benign or malignant.

The prostate gland lies at the base of the bladder surrounding the urethra (urinary tract from bladder to penis). During ejaculation, the prostate secretes a fluid that combines with the seminal fluid in order to prevent infection in the urethra while protecting and invigorating sperm. Due to the aging process, the prostate naturally enlarges as hormones change and weaken after the age of 40. The swelling of the prostate puts pressure against the bladder and urethra, thereby affecting the smooth flow of urine. Abnormal patterns of urination such as higher frequency at night, burning sensation, difficulty, blockage and dribbling are common symptoms and signs of prostate enlargement.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE (TCM) approach to Prostate Care

TCM associates hyperplasia of the prostate with damp heat and kidney deficiency. After the age of 40, one's vital energy in

the kidney system decreases, resulting in the disturbance of sex hormones. This process also decreases one's sexual energy, which affects the function of the prostate and the circulation in this region. Throughout the ages, in order to compensate for the decline of prostate function, men in China have used regular acupuncture treatments to improve the circulation and energy in the prostate. To enhance the effect of acupuncture, they have also used Chinese herbs such as Poly Goni He Shou Wu, in traditional, custom herbal formulas to replenish the kidney essence. In fact, at Tao of Wellness, we have had many successful cases of normalizing elevated PSA levels in patients with prostate conditions. Kidney essence nurtures the prostate. As the prostate is revitalized, it is now capable of self-regulating toward normal functioning and maintaining a balance of growth and non-growth. This is the balancing property of Chinese medicine.

DIET and LIFESTYLE RECOMMENDATIONS

TCM nutrition encourages men to eat more nuts, seeds, pumpkin, mushroom and berries to help nourish their prostate. Managing stress, regular exercise and massaging the prostate are also vital to help maintain prostate health. Besides Chinese and western herbs such as saw palmetto, there are many delicious foods that you can eat to help maintain a healthy prostate. Regular consumption of foods that contain lycopene (a prostate protective antioxidant) is highly recommended. The following are foods that contain lycopene: watermelon, pink grapefruit, guava, papaya, apricot and cooked tomatoes (tomato paste, tomato soup, tomato juice and marinara sauce). Nutrition experts have expressed concern that pesticides and herbicides in animal products may trigger cancer growth. This may be another good reason for you to eat more fruits and vegetables that are organic and avoid saturated, high-fat animal products and snacks that contain hydrogenated or partially-hydrogenated oils. These diet and lifestyle recommendations may help prevent this pervasive cancer and help invigorate your body. ■

HEALTHY AGING naturally

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as nourishes the organs with nutrients and energy in order for self-regeneration and balance to take place. It may take longer, but it is much safer than toying with chemicals that may do more harm than good.

WHO YOU ARE

I have always wondered why the Chinese culture revered and worshipped their ancestors. The answer became clear to me when I studied the science of genetics. Most Chinese can tell you a lot about their ancestors, including their health history. This wealth of family medical information is pertinent since many degenerative illnesses are heavily influenced by heredity.

Understanding your genetic vulnerabilities and the need for prevention gives you a head start on anti-aging. Chinese Longevity Medicine promotes self-responsibility and self-awareness – about yourself, your relationships and your health. Through diet, lifestyle and activities, you help rectify your own problems while they are small before they become catastrophic. Self-knowledge is essential in the quest for living a long, happy and healthy life.

WHERE YOU ARE

With environmental factors causing ever more damage to our well being, it is important to know what to look out for and avoid. Examples include xenoestrogens, which are present just about everywhere, in pesticides used on vegetables and hormones injected into meats and poultry, in PCBs leaching from plastic water bottles and dioxins from bleached paper products. Xenoestrogens are chemical compounds that mimic the properties of estrogen and can potentially elevate the level of the hormone in the body and affect a cascade of functions. The most alarming result of excess estrogen is the rising rates of estrogen-receptor positive breast cancer in women. You can avoid these chemical compounds if you buy organic foods and use glass and recycled paper products. In addition, it is important to undergo periodic detoxification treatments with special dietary and herbal regimens to lower your body's toxic load.

These are just some suggestions of what you can do right away to begin furthering your health and longevity goals. For a complete evaluation and further guidance on a customized program tailored to your individual needs, we invite you to inquire about the Longevity Program at the Tao of Wellness. ■