

Wellness Model of Aging

(Part 1 of a 12 part series on the Wellness Model of Aging)

Diana Davis, M.Ed, RD

How long do you want to live? Go ahead----ask yourself that question because it's a question anti-aging researchers say you now have increasing control over. But you won't get there by sitting on your duff and eating a cream puff (i.e., refined, age-promoting foods). Aside from genes and accidents, your **attitude** about aging, health, nutrition and exercise plays a gargantuan part of the equation that determines the quantity, but more importantly, the **quality** of your days. Here's the bottom line, your attitude is your compass allowing for new possibilities for aging. So now you must step-up-to-the-mirror and ask yourself the \$64,000 question! Do you plan on using the wellness model or the medical model for aging? The wellness model is pro-active and preventative. The wellness model integrates the latest knowledge to keep your healthy aging cells even healthier. The medical model is reactive and pigeonholes all your health problems to be the result of getting older, so "get ready and get used to it" is the philosophy. The wellness model uses a variety of factors (i.e. basal metabolic rate, antioxidant status, muscle mass, bone density, body fat percentage, the health of ones cardiovascular, immune, central nervous, endocrine, thermo-regulatory, hematological (i.e., blood), lymphatic, and dermatological systems, as well as the health of the gastrointestinal, kidney and liver) to measure one's biological age which is more accurate than our chronological age. Leroy Satchel Paige described age best, "Those things that tell you how old you would be if you didn't know how old you was". Satchel was a famous baseball pitcher whose heyday was between the 1920s to the 1950s, but he never knew his exact chronological age because he was born before good records were kept.

Anti-aging has become a buzz-word since the mid-90s due to the fact that the first 75 million baby boomers turned 50 in 1995. As the research filters down to the grassroots, it conjures up many pictures and attitudes for us from the modern press. It's important to preface three important facts about the next 12 articles on the wellness model of aging. This model of aging is not fueled by the fear of death, but rather by the quality of living I hope you will achieve from reading these articles. Secondly, the model is about the healthy aging of all your organs, not just helping you avoid wrinkles on your face. And thirdly, there are some BIG differences between practicing anti-aging and practicing a prudent lifestyle. Prudent lifestyles may help you avoid cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer, which I am all in favor of avoiding because these diseases can lead to a remarkable decrease in the quality of your life, but it's not anti-aging. Certainly one should take such prudent steps to lay down the foundation of anti-aging, but anti-aging practices go far beyond living a prudent lifestyle.

Okay now fasten your seatbelt because the breakthroughs on anti-aging are exploding due to the technology available to scientists today. For example, analytical equipment available to scientists today can now produce bio-chemical measures in 45 minutes; whereas, "cranking-out" this same biochemical information use to take dozens of scientists more than a week to produce. Furthermore, factor in genomics (i.e., the ability to understand information encoded in DNA) and the internet with this technology and you get an unbelievable acceleration of knowledge available. Yes, we live in exciting times with all these breakthroughs, but the limiting factor seems to be one's ability to cope with these breakthroughs and learn how to integrate this massive amount of information into a realistic plan of action. In the next 12 issues, I will describe 12 systems and/or factors (see table below) that determine one's rate of aging. I encourage you to save each copy of Sage Brush or visit my web site for referencing the past *Wellness Model of Aging* articles as I will reference and connect the dots from one factor to the other at times. Various mental, physical, emotional and spiritual (both eastern and western) interventions will

be described from experts in their prospective field of study in order to help you develop a deeper understanding and an action plan to jump onto the wellness model of aging. Enjoy your new golden age of longevity.

1. Basal Metabolic Rate
2. Antioxidant Status
3. Muscle Mass and Bone Density
4. Body Fat Percentage
5. Cardiovascular System
6. Immune System
7. Central Nervous System
8. Endocrine system
9. Thermo-regulatory system and kidneys
10. Hematological and Lymphatic system
11. Dermatological system
12. Gastrointestinal and liver

Please send your comments and questions to www.healthtransformations.com and click on “contact Diana”. Diana Davis, M.Ed, RD, can be contacted at 541-610-9586.