



Boosting energy and mood as you age: practical tips for healthy living

As we age, it is common to notice changes in energy levels and mood, but there are several lifestyle adjustments you can make to maintain vitality and well-being.

1. Diet: Reevaluate your eating habits to include foods that boost energy and mood. Focus on low-glycemic foods like beans, vegetables, nuts, and whole grains to stabilise blood sugar levels. Limit high-glycemic foods such as white rice and sugary drinks, which can lead to energy crashes.

2. Portion control: Balance calorie intake to avoid feeling sluggish from either overeating or undereating. Consult with a healthcare provider or dietitian to determine your calorie needs based on your activity level.

3. Exercise: Stay active to increase energy and improve mood. Adjust your workout routine to accommodate any physical limitations you may have. Consider low-impact activities like swimming or cycling if high-impact exercises are challenging.

4. Rest: Prioritise quality sleep by establishing a consistent bedtime routine. Aim for around 7 hours of sleep per night and create a conducive sleep environment by minimising distractions and avoiding stimulants like caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

5. Hydration: Drink plenty of water to combat dehydration, which can drain energy and affect mood.

6. Stress management: Find ways to reduce stress through activities like meditation, walking, or simplifying your schedule. Seek professional help if you are struggling with persistent fatigue or depression, as these may indicate underlying health issues that need attention.

By making these adjustments to your lifestyle, you can enhance your energy levels and maintain a positive outlook as you age.

Halt glaucoma progression by regular eye exams

DR MANZIA NOOR

Glaucoma is an eye or ocular disease that slowly damages the optic nerve that connects the eye and the brain, where the pressure inside the eye is an important modifiable factor. Intraocular pressure increases when there is any obstruction in the normal pathway of ocular fluid drainage.

Primary glaucoma is of two types:
1. open angle glaucoma (obstructed drainage canal)
2. angle closure glaucoma (narrowing of the drainage angle)
Secondary glaucoma develops as a complication of other visual disorders.

Primary open-angle glaucoma is more common and usually goes undiagnosed in the early stages, as most patients fail to notice any change in their vision. This is because, initially, there is a loss of peripheral sight without any involvement of the central vision, which allows detailed visualisation.

However, with the advanced stages of the disease affecting the central vision, the patient becomes aware of the visual impairment, and without proper treatment, it could lead to irreversible blindness. But there is nothing to worry about, as you can preserve your vision with regular visits to an ophthalmologist for a detailed eye examination, which will facilitate early detection and treatment. This is the single best way to prevent open-angle glaucoma, which has very few warning signs or symptoms before the damage has ensued.

On the contrary, patients with angle-closure glaucoma may experience intermittent headaches, eye pain, and halos around light. It is possible for an acute attack to happen, which can cause excruciating eye pain, headaches, blurry vision, and even nausea and vomiting.



Although everyone is at increased risk for glaucoma, there are certain groups at higher risk than others. These include the following:

- People aged over 40 years
- Raised intraocular pressure
- Family history of glaucoma
- Steroid users
- Medical history of diabetes or hypertension
- Other eye problems like refractive errors, corneal thickening, etc.
- Eye injury or previous eye surgeries

The American Academy of Ophthalmology suggests that people who are at risk for glaucoma have eye exams according to the schedule given below:

- Ages 40 to 54: every 1 to 3 years
- Ages 55 to 64: every 1 to 2 years
- Ages 65 and older: every 6 to 12 months

Your eye doctor will place a machine called a "slit lamp" in front of you on which you must rest your chin for a detailed eye exam. He will use different hand-held devices

to measure the inner eye pressure, angle in the eye, corneal thickness, and examine the shape and colour of the optic nerve. These are painless procedures, and based on their results, your doctor will advise you regarding the next best step.

In conclusion, regular eye exams are crucial for halting the progression of glaucoma, a potentially sight-threatening condition. Whether it is primary open-angle or angle-closure glaucoma, early detection through comprehensive eye exams allows for timely intervention and management, preserving vision and preventing irreversible blindness.

By adhering to the recommended screening schedule, especially for those at higher risk, individuals can take proactive steps towards maintaining their eye health and overall well-being. Do not wait for symptoms to appear; prioritise your vision with regular visits to an ophthalmologist and safeguard your sight for the future.

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HAVE A NICE DAY A lonely killer - Part I

DR RUBAUL MURSHED

Loneliness is increasingly becoming a significant daily issue, with profound implications for both physical and mental health. Recognised as a major threat to global well-being by scientists, its detrimental effects rival those of prevalent modern health concerns such as obesity, smoking, physical inactivity, and air pollution.

Loneliness is linked to an elevated risk of depression, anxiety, and dementia, mirroring the hazards posed by social disconnection. The mortality impact of social isolation surpasses that of obesity and physical inactivity, akin to smoking up to fifteen cigarettes daily.

Furthermore, a society lacking social connections suffers adverse repercussions on involvement, productivity, and performance in civic organisations, family circles, and workplaces. Social isolation and loneliness have been associated not only with heightened stroke risk but also with an increased susceptibility to type 2 diabetes. Addressing loneliness is imperative for fostering holistic well-being and ensuring healthier, more connected communities.

It is not surprising that loneliness is painful. A brain imaging study showed that feeling ostracised activates our neural pain matrix. Several studies show that ostracising others hurts us as much as being ostracised ourselves.

Among the factors that increase the risk of loneliness are living alone, being unmarried (single, divorced, widowed), not participating in social groups, retirement, and physical impairments. A recent survey showed that 50 percent of the population of Brazil indicated being lonely. It has also been observed that Americans are becoming lonelier.

Curiously, even after being in a long-term relationship, married people may still feel lonely.

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How can a microorganism affect your heart?

MD BILLAL HOSSEN

The heart is the most indispensable and valuable organ in the human body. The prime function of the heart is to supply blood throughout the whole body. There is a layer in the four chambers of the heart, which is known as the myocardium. It is an involuntary and striated muscle.

The major function of the myocardium is to facilitate contraction and relaxation activities of the heart muscle, as it is necessary for blood pumping. The myocardium is composed of cells called cardiomyocytes, which are responsible for electrical stimuli in the heart muscle. That is why a healthy myocardium is very important for staying healthy and active.

Occasionally, viruses (like enteroviruses) or bacteria can infect the myocardium and cause inflammation in the heart muscle (myocardium). The condition is known as myocarditis. It is a rare and unusual disease that is commonly found in neonates. In severe cases, myocarditis can be dangerous as the heart muscle weakens and cannot pump blood effectively.

There are several causes of myocarditis, such as viral infection, bacterial infection, autoimmune disorder, Chagas disease, rheumatic fever, and side effects of medications such as antibiotics, diuretics, etc. But the most common cause of myocarditis is a viral infection.

The common symptoms of myocarditis are shortness of breath, no appetite, feeling weak, swollen legs or feet, being unable to exercise, chest pain, heart palpitations, pain in your abdomen, lightheadedness, tiredness, fever, abnormal heart rhythm, fainting, etc.

In the case of adults, treatment with medication or lifestyle changes can prevent myocarditis. Some changes in our daily habits can diminish the risk of myocarditis. Lifestyle changes include consuming healthy meals, avoiding smoking and alcohol, reducing table salt intake, and exercising regularly.

All these small changes can have an expected result. But in the case of neonates, there are some protocols that need to be followed. Maintaining proper hygiene during the birth of the baby can be a key tool to prevent myocarditis in neonates.

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E-cigarettes aid smoking cessation: understanding the benefits and consideration

A recent study from Switzerland involving over 1,200 adult smokers found that using e-cigarettes alongside counselling significantly increased the likelihood of quitting smoking compared to counselling alone. The study published in the New England Journal of Medicine lasted for 6 months, and at the end of this period, 29% of those using e-cigarettes had successfully quit smoking, compared to 16% of those who received only counselling.

It is important to note that participants in both groups were allowed to use nicotine replacement therapy as well. The results suggest that



e-cigarettes can be an effective tool for quitting smoking, with approximately 8 smokers needing to use e-cigarettes alongside counselling for one additional person to successfully quit smoking. It is worth mentioning that some people in the e-cigarette group were still using nicotine-containing e-cigarettes at the end of the study, indicating that while they had stopped smoking traditional cigarettes, they were still using e-cigarettes.

The study did not find any significant increase in serious adverse events among either group, meaning that the use of e-cigarettes for smoking cessation appears to be relatively safe.

The findings have prompted discussions among experts, with some suggesting that e-cigarettes should be considered as part of the toolkit for quitting smoking. However, there are still concerns about the long-term safety of e-cigarettes, and more research is needed in this area.





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