

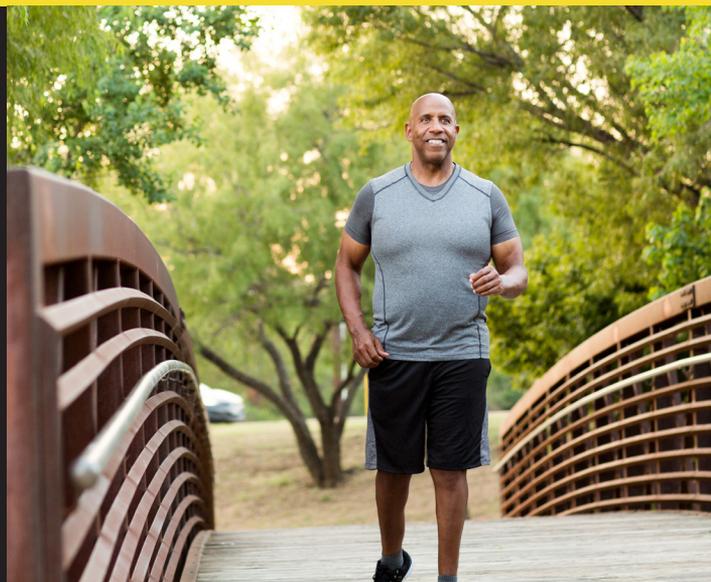


# The **SECRET** to **AGING** *Gracefully*

by Chaundra Evans RD, LDN, CEDRD-S

2020 statistics show the global population of individuals 60 years and older is over 1 billion. By 2050, the population of older adults is predicted to nearly double to 2.1 billion (that's nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$  of our population)! Whether we like it or not, aging is one thing we all have in common. Becoming more knowledgeable about how our bodies change over the years and the role nutrition plays in aging gracefully can be beneficial to everyone.

“ We **ARE** in charge of our physical and social environment, response to stress, sleep habits, natural movement and nutrition which all have compelling roles in *healthy aging*. ”





The recommendations below are nutrition strategies to reduce the risks associated with cardiovascular disease:



- Consume whole-grain complex carbohydrates that are high in fiber.
  - Examples: air-popped popcorn, oatmeal, quinoa, bran flakes, rye bread, barley, wheat berries, millet, whole farro



- Consume fish (especially oily fish) at least twice per week.
  - Examples: salmon, tuna, trout, mackerel, herring, sardines



- Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt.
- Choose nonfat/low-fat dairy products.
- Incorporate fresh and frozen produce into meal planning daily.
- Consume omega-3-rich foods.



- Examples: flax seeds, chia seeds, tofu, hemp hearts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts, olive oil



- Add nuts and seeds (1-2 handfuls/day).
- Add beans and legumes to meals (at least ½ – 1 cup/day).
- Aim for a Mediterranean style of eating, consuming more plant-based meals and less meat.



## CANCER PREVENTION

Carotenoids, flavonoids, antioxidants, and phytochemicals are buzzwords in the nutrition world related to cancer prevention. The relationship between those powerful compounds and the human body is extremely complex and we're still learning. Here's what you need to know to keep things simple – every day, consume a variety of brightly-colored fruits and vegetables. Below are some examples of brightly-colored fruits and vegetables:



### Red:

Beets, cherries, watermelon, red peppers, radishes and red grapes

### Yellow and Orange:

Apricots, lemon, nectarine, carrot, papaya and sweet potatoes

### Blue and Purple:

Blackberries, blueberries, figs, purple onion, eggplant and prunes

### Green:

Asparagus, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, spinach, cabbage and limes

### White and Brown:

Mushrooms, garlic, cauliflower, parsnips, bananas and potatoes

# WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Weight management can be challenging with age as the body experiences changes in metabolic rate, hormones, nutritional status, co-morbidities, inflammation, lifestyle, etc. Muscle strength gradually decreases starting in our 30s and additional decline accelerates significantly in our 60s. A sedentary lifestyle combined with a slow metabolic rate expedites this process making it easier to gain weight and harder to lose weight. Maintaining higher levels of fitness and strength in conjunction with a quality diet can prevent and/or reverse the loss of muscle.

Move your body more. Do what you can. Find activities that are fun and joyful and you're more likely to want to stay engaged. It may be helpful to meet with a dietitian to learn your individual protein goals and how to plan a proper diet. A dietitian can help you determine your daily protein needs and how to distribute protein intake throughout the day to help prevent muscle loss and maintain what you have. You may benefit from finding a senior center or personal trainer that can teach you how to strength train safely.

Other behavioral factors that can keep one's metabolism running efficiently include:

- Staying hydrated
- Getting a good night's sleep
- Consuming a primarily whole-food-based diet
- Minimizing processed foods
- Eating approximately every 3-4 hours

## CONCLUSION

In summary, consuming a variety of primarily whole food, plant-based meals is associated with increased life expectancy, slowing the aging process, lower incidences of cardiovascular disease and cancer, and lower rates of obesity. A plant-heavy diet emphasizes the consumption of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, seeds, legumes including beans and lentils, and healthy oils. The secret to living a long and healthy life may not be a secret at all. Contrary to popular belief, you CAN teach an old dog new tricks – it just takes patience, consistency and intention.

### **About the Author:**

*Chaundra Evans, RD, LDN, CEDRD-S, is a registered dietitian who specializes in bariatrics and eating disorders for the past 18 ½ years. She helps her clients build a healthy relationship with food using a non-diet approach. Her compassionate and empathetic style helps empower individuals to make healthier choices using holistic approaches towards their nutrition goals. She is certified in Adult Weight Management by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, is an Integrated Health Associate Member of the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, is recognized as a Certified Eating Disorder Registered Dietitian and Approved Supervisor by the International Association of Eating Disorders Professionals, acknowledging high level of competence and experience in eating disorders treatment.*



“ Move your body more. Do what you can. Find activities that are *fun* and *joyful* and you're more likely to want to stay engaged. ”



# ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

## LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

### Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
  - Community Discussion Forum
  - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



**JOIN TODAY: GO TO [OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN](http://OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN)**

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