

Wellness in the Senior Years

By Betty Lee Streckfuss, TSHL Speaker ProTem



Often we hear the Senior Years (60+) referred to as “Golden”, they are not, however Golden or anything other than a drab gray for those in poor health as they enter their senior years. Planning for retirement lessens the difficulty of suddenly realizing “I am There, This is It!”. Statistics prove that a 1/3 of your life is ahead if you retire around 60+. That should alert you that plans need to be made for future events. When retirement is also accompanied by other factors such as loss of a companion, diagnosis of an incurable disease, limited funds or lack of focus, the idea of retirement loses all sparkle and expectations. Such events often cannot be planned for, but plan, you must.

How else does one move forward with a degree of well being over one’s own future? How does an energetic, healthy, social, financially stable person adjust to loss of one or several of the solid anchors of their life? Only through determination to remain as active as possible in spite of the hurdles before them do seniors remain contributing citizens of their community....and contributing we are! We are the ones who volunteer for the jobs younger people don’t have time for and for which we are prepared through life’s experiences. We staff the libraries, hospital gift shops, school crossings, guides in museums and so forth...through such activities the mind and body stay alert a tuned to the daily world. Staying informed is a healthy activity for those who were once busy in full time careers and it gives focus as the week, month and future are planned. Plans and goals play a large part in remaining healthy, both physically and mentally.

Changing from a busy life style to one of “sedentary sameness”, affects the appetite, sleep patterns, and health in general begins to deteriorate as muscle tone slackens and food intake becomes haphazard. Medications already being taken for any of several conditions affecting seniors seem to have less effect and many seniors neglect those prescriptions and even ignore physician appointments. All of these changes in habit begin to cause erosion of a healthy body and mind.

Avoid placing yourself in such a routine by finding new and interesting ways to spend your new gift of “Time”. With that hoped for additional 1/3 of your life expectancy, get busy and learn new things about who you are and what those around you can contribute to a new lifestyle...It isn’t over til’ it’s over. Take on the problems one by one and they won’t seem so enormous. Learn, as others have, how to remain a person of value to yourself and others...spiritually, physically and intellectually if not financially. After all, there are many ways to help others while helping yourself.

References on Line

“The Golden Years”... on line at Ochsner Clinic February 2012

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0101206/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Years_\(TV_series\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Years_(TV_series))

http://gero.usc.edu/AgeWorks/core_courses/gero500_core/successful_lect/

View on-line video, “**Wellness in the Elderly: Optimizing Function and Health in Senior Years**”, and Function in Seniors ” by John P. Kugler, MD, MPH

<http://www.slideserve.com/dingbang/wellness-in-the-elderly-optimizing-function-and-health-in-the-senior-years>

In Bookstores: **Health in the Later Years, by Armeda and Rebecca Ferrini**, geared to help people make better-informed health choices to increase the quality of their later life. Further, knowledge of health and aging assists individuals to better manage the aging process of their family members . The text provides a comprehensive overview of the most important topics in health and aging.

Are you interested in learning more about the needs and services for “third age” generations? The TSHL Academy offers an online education program. Please click on www.tshlacademy.org and review the courses.

Email Betty Streckfuss, TSHL Speaker ProTem from Spring, Texas,
at streckfuss2@msn.com