

Ask In Health, Sickness and Aging



By Moira Fordyce M.D.

1 *Will I get sick as I grow older?*

Disease or illness are not caused by normal aging. Although we might not be as flexible as we were when younger, and we do take longer to recover if we get sick, illness is caused by the same things that caused it when we were younger, for example, infections, injuries, immune system disorders, metabolic disorders and cancers. A good health care practitioner will look for a reason if you become sick and early diagnosis and effective treatment can mean a return to good health.

2 *My mother became disabled later in her life – will this happen to me?*

Although you have a lot in common with your parents, you are not the same as them. You are unique and won't necessarily grow old the way your parents did. We are now savvy about the benefits of eating a good,

varied diet, exercising every day, not smoking and keeping our brain active. This makes it likely that we will age well.

3 *I sometimes feel really low and sad with no energy. I guess I have to accept this as part of getting older.*

To feel sad from time to time is part of living, especially if something sad happens to us and aging is just living. Grieving after a loss can help with the healing process. If, however, sadness persists to the point that you feel worthless as a person or things you enjoy no longer matter, then you could be suffering from depression. In some older adults, signs of depression can be physical – indigestion, bloating, aches, pains, tiredness, palpitations, dizziness, disturbed sleep. All depression can be helped at any age, so if you suspect this, see your doctor and seek help.

4 *I noticed some blood in my bowel movement the other day. What should I do about this?*

See your doctor. There can be a number of reasons for this, many of them treatable and not serious. However, cancer of the bowel must not be ruled out. The good news is that most bowel cancers grow slowly and spread late so early diagnosis can result in removal and cure.

5 *My mother fell twice in the past few weeks but didn't hurt herself. What should we do about the falls?*

Have her doctor check her out. A series of falls can be caused by hidden, treatable disease, for example a chest or urinary infection. All her medications, prescription, bought at the pharmacy, herbal and alternative therapies, should be



PATHWAYS

Home Health, Hospice & Private Duty

Helping neighbors on life's journey for 35 years

As the only locally-grown nonprofit home health and hospice serving Santa Clara, San Mateo, San Francisco, Alameda and western Contra Costa counties, Pathways is an essential part of life in the Bay Area for thousands of families each year.

We understand that when it comes to choosing a healthcare provider, you want only the best care for your loved ones.

To learn more or to schedule a visit, call Pathways today.

www.pathwayshealth.org - 1.888.755.7855 - Community based, not for profit

WIN PRIZES!

Announcing Get Active Photo Contest

ActiveOver50 Media is pleased to announce its first annual Get Active Photo Contest to encourage boomers and seniors to stay active as long as possible. Prizes will be awarded for the most creative photographs showing "people over 50" engaged in a favorite exercise or sport.



reviewed since some medications can cause dizziness and falls. Making her home as safe as possible is a good idea – clear clutter, remove loose rugs, use good lighting, edge of stairs clearly marked.

6 *Sometimes I can't get to the bathroom in time and I wet myself. I'm so ashamed. I guess this is just part of growing older.*

This is not part of normal aging. See a doctor who listens to you. You need a good general health evaluation plus an evaluation of your urinary tract – some forms of leakage can be cured. ALL can be helped.

7 *My father is getting angry with us more often now than he used to. He says we are always whispering. What can we do about this?*

Have his ears checked for wax buildup. This can dull hearing and is easily remedied. Also, he might benefit from using hearing aids but it is wise to have a test run before buying. Some hearing aids make sounds louder but not clearer and are expensive. Dullness of hearing is not uncommon as we age and can be helped.

8 *I have had an ulcer on my face for several weeks. It hasn't changed much. What should I do about this?*

An ulcer or sore anywhere on the body that is slow to heal should be checked by a health care professional. It could be a skin cancer, most of which, fortunately, respond well to treatment. Don't delay. The earlier the diagnosis is made, the better the result of treatment.

If you have a question for Dr. Moira Fordyce, send her an email: moiraf9@gmail.com.

Eligibility

The contest is open to amateurs only, regardless of age, sex or nationality. However, the subject in the photo must be at least 50. No entry fee is necessary to participate or win. The contest is void where prohibited by law, regulation, statute or other appropriate legal authority.

Entry Period

March 1, 2013 to June 1, 2013

Categories

Five categories, based on the age of the person photographed
Two entries maximum. Age groups:
50-60–60-70–70-80–80-90–90+

How to Enter

Take an original photo that reflects the theme of the contest: "Get Active." Entries must be submitted via the Internet to **ActiveOver50.com/photocontest**. Complete the entry form and submit it together with your photo(s). Submissions to the photo contest must be received by June 1, 2013 in order to be eligible.



Prizes Include:

- Round trip coach tickets for two on Amtrak's Coast Starlight from the Bay Area to Santa Barbara, CA. \$392.00 value.
- Yoga basket, \$150.00 gift certificate to Breathe LG and a two hour design consultation from Harrell Remodeling to design a room for relaxation, meditation and/or exercise. Total value: \$750.00.
- Durable Power of Attorney (\$450.00 value) and Advanced Healthcare Directive (\$450.00 value) from The Law Office of Derryl H. Molina.