

## DEALING WITH AGING

The process of aging was present from the moment the earth was created, with survival an integral part of the process. The alternative is sad to contemplate.

Early history records various extreme measures taken by inhabitants to ward off failure of the aging process. King David consorted with teen-age virgins hoping that somehow or other they would be able to transfer some of their vitality to him. Apparently neither the flesh nor the spirit was willing, for history fails to record any exaggerated longevity which could be attributed to this youthful contribution.

Some members of the monarch's family attempted to emulate his action. Unfortunately most of the supply was exhausted due to the voracious appetite of their ruler.

Aging is also involved in inanimate objects such as furniture, bric-a-brac, cars, etc. The value of these articles escalated with longevity and demand. Some objects remain the property of one member of a family and are passed on from generation to generation. These are called heirlooms and achieve importance because of their prominence of the family which cherishes them.

Diet plays a very important role in aging. Certain condiments should be avoided. Salt and sugar are two of the big offenders. This may be construed as a sacrifice too great to tolerate, but a compensatory reward is to be able to really enjoy the true taste of food without camouflaging it. Formerly the same compulsion to douse ketchup on food was commonly practiced, but fortunately this has abated and hopefully salt and sugar will go the same way.

Butter and other fats are also a no-no. Cholesterol levels will decline with their eradication. Chicken and fish are preferable to beef also because of the high fat content in the latter. Tea and coffee should be avoided because of the caffeine content. Fresh fruits and vegetables are a wonderful addition for a balanced diet.

Of tremendous importance is the inclusion of exercise in the life style. A simple calisthenic routine could beneficially start and end each day. Walking in the fresh air provides an invaluable lift to being. It is not only body-building, but succeeds in exhilarating the senses. The sights you observe are very enjoyable – birds in flight, squirrels in search of food, ants carrying loads bigger than they are. Dogs could be included only if their owners would clean up after them.

Of all the safeguards favoring a comfortable, relaxed aging, exercise is the greatest. Here you are dealing directly with the body – toning it, trimming it, invigorating it, energizing it. The benefits are apparent almost instantly as proven by extremely flattering compliments paid by friends and lovers, and those strangers who would love to become friends and lovers!

One very persuasive example of the health-improving process exercise achieves concerns two ladies, members of the same organization – one in her early 70's, the other in her mid 50's. The youngster addresses the oldster with "I know you are older than I. How come you always appear vibrant and eager and I present a worn-out, dying counterpart? Please reveal your secret to me."

The oldster replies, "in one word – walking."

The youngster asks to be taught how to walk. Oldster is shocked to be asked to teach an activity which should have been learned in babyhood, agrees and arranges for the first lesson the next morning at 9. Youngster arrives next morning driving her car. Oldster asks why the car? Youngster replies she is so ingrained into letting the car do the transporting, she just followed her natural instinct.

Oldster grabs her student's arm and goes forth. Once around the block should serve as a starter, but even only once is exhausting if you have to practically carry a fat negative subject with a big complaining mouth the principal vital organ.

Finally the ordeal is over, the giver and taker extremely exhausted. Youngster pleads for more of the same and remarks on her high blood pressure, some sort of heart irregularity and the doctor's threat that if she doesn't appear in his office at least for or five times a year, he could not be responsible for her well being.

Oldster regarding this as her big charitable deed for the day, says: "See you tomorrow without the Caddy."

Tomorrow becomes tomorrow and one block becomes two and then three, youngster now walking with alacrity, a thin-shade thinner. She then presents herself to her physician. He applies his stethoscope and in complete disbelief remarks, "What an amazing improvement! Who is treating you?"

Youngster mentions her oldster friend's name. Medical man: "I know her. She's no doctor."

Patient replies, "Apparently she is a very good doctor." She wanted to add "better than you," but there is a very young grandchild who is not yet able to walk and who may have inherited her high blood pressure and heart irregularity (God forbid) and she may need this professional's ministering.

I feel certain all reporting and recording media are replete with incidents in which this form of activity conquered all – the ills befalling man, woman and child.

One outstanding incident supporting this theory concerns a college professor who was also a golf enthusiast. One day he noticed a slight swelling on his left wrist. He assumed it occurred because of too much golf and ignored it. About a week later it increased in size, but still evoked no real cause for alarm. Three or four weeks later pain

accompanied the swelling and the professor decided to seek a professional opinion concerning it. His physician took a biopsy and reported the presence of a small malignancy – a melanoma – one of the most virile malignancies.

Patient's discomfort following chemotherapy was very intense. When the physician was consulted as to the introduction of exercise as a counterpart, he discouraged it, claiming it might accelerate the disease.

The original incident happened more than 10 years ago – the professor is very much alive and increasingly eager to involve mature people in exercise, hoping his experience would aid those similarly traumatized.