



## Brain exercises delay, then speed up, cognitive decline

An interesting new look at brain exercises adds to the body of knowledge on the relationship between planned cognitive activity and the potential for cognitive decline.

**STUDY:** With no dementia at baseline, 1,157 people ages 65 or older answered questions about how often they participated in activities such as listening to the radio, watching television, reading, playing games and going to a museum. A five-point scale was derived to measure how often people participated in mentally stimulating exercises.

**FINDINGS:** During the next six years, the rate of cognitive decline in people without cognitive impairment was reduced by 52% for each point on the cognitive activity scale. For people with Alzheimer's disease, the average rate of decline per year increased by 42% for each point on the cognitive activity scale.

**COMMENT:** "Our results suggest that the benefit of delaying the initial signs of cognitive decline may come at the cost of more rapid dementia progression later on, but the question is, why does this happen?" asked study author Robert S. Wilson, PhD.

Wilson speculated that mentally stimulating activities may enhance the brain's ability to function relatively normally despite the buildup of lesions in the brain associated with dementia. As a result, those with more mentally active lifestyles may experience a faster rate of decline once dementia begins. "This reduces the overall amount of time that a person may suffer from dementia," Wilson commented.

**SOURCE:** Neurology, online (September 1, 2010)

## Change for the Better Health Fair Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup> 9:30-2:00

Please join us in the Village Green for our fourth Health Fair for residents and employees. The theme, *Change for the Better*, encourages lifestyle changes to improve quality of life and taps into the community dimension of wellness through our collection of loose change to be donated to a local charity.

The following booths will be available that day:

- Blood pressure testing
- Blood sugar testing
- Bone density screening
- Medication Safety
- Waterbury Heart Center
- Spiritual Wellness
- Posture Analysis
- Thyme and Season Natural Food Store
- Hearing Screening
- Dermascan Skin Screening
- Podiatry
- Chair Massage

Booths will be open for the duration of the Fair. The morning is the busiest time, so feel free to wait until later to avoid the crowd.

### Wellness Center Reminder

When checking into the Wellness center, if you are using the computer mouse to indicate the reason you are at the Center (green land, yellow aquatic, etc.), please remember to check the box **BEFORE** scanning your card.

## 7 HABITS THAT AGE YOUR SKIN

Many of the external causes of aging skin are determined by the health and lifestyle decisions you make every day. Making unhealthy choices can cause prematurely aging skin, and this makes you look older, faster.

An important part of any anti-aging skin care program is to know what you may be doing that is harming your skin and speeding up your skin's aging process.

Here are 7 habits that contribute to aging skin, making you look older than your years:

**Cigarette smoke:** Whether you smoke, or you spend time with a smoker, cigarette smoke is damaging -- and aging -- to your skin. Research has shown that exposure to cigarette smoke significantly increases skin wrinkles and dryness. This is partly due to the behavior of smoking, and also because cigarette smoke depletes your body of Vitamin C, which is a key ingredient for keeping skin plump and moist. Some researchers believe that exposure to cigarette smoke (whether you smoke or not) is as damaging to aging skin as exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays.

**Sun exposure:** Sun exposure is very aging to skin. Unprotected skin that is exposed to the sun becomes more mottled in appearance. Freckles can turn into brown sun spots, the skin takes on a dry, leathery appearance, and wrinkles and sagging increase. The risk of skin cancer is significantly increased by sun exposure.

**Lack of exercise:** Living a sedentary life contributes to aging skin, because exercise helps to tone your muscles and gets your blood flowing. Exercise should be an important part of every anti-aging skin care program. In addition to the physical benefits of exercise, the benefits of a regular exercise program will show on your face. Having a bright smile and lots of energy will help you look and feel younger, at any age.

**Exposure to cold weather:** Cold winds and low temperatures contribute to aging skin by making skin dry, so if you venture out in the cold be sure to use a good moisturizer. It's important to use moisturizer indoors too, as heated rooms can be very drying to skin. Consider using a humidifier to help keep your skin more comfortable and reduce the aging skin effects of heated rooms.

**Alcohol use:** Alcohol contributes to aging skin by dilating small blood vessels in the skin and increasing blood flow near the skin's surface. Over time, these blood vessels can become permanently damaged, creating a flushed appearance and broken vessels on the skin's surface.

**Stress:** Maybe you've heard this expression: "Don't frown; your face could stay that way." Stress and worry cause frowning, and over time the muscles in the face actually conform to that movement. To help reduce aging skin due to stress, be aware of your stress level and try to vary your facial expressions during the day. A good anti-aging skin care program should include meditation, gentle exercise or other relaxation techniques. Keeping stress in check will help you look and feel younger.

**Lack of sleep:** Too little sleep makes you look and feel tired. One of the first places lack of sleep shows up is on the face, with dark circles and bags under the eyes, and sagging skin. Lack of sleep is also a major factor in memory loss and symptoms of depression that include low interest in daily activities and negative thinking. Research has shown that most adults function best with 8-9 hours of sleep each night. Reduce caffeine during the day (with none in the evening), avoid eating at least 2 hours before bedtime, and maintain a sleep routine that includes going to bed at the same time each night. If you are having trouble sleeping, for any reason, it's important to see your health care provider.

While some signs of aging skin are inevitable, there's a lot you can do to look your best at any age. Taking good care of your self is the most important step in your anti-aging skin care program.

**No Exercise Classes  
Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup>  
Due to Health Fair**

Monday, October 4, 2010  
Change in Aquatics Schedule  
No Blue Aquatic Class  
Green Class begins at 10:30am instead of 10:15am  
Yellow Class as regularly scheduled