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Staying healthy

Healthy choices are just as important during retirement as they are in your younger years.

That doesn't make it easy all the time, though. Exercise, sleep, healthy eating and regular visits to the doctor can often be more complicated as your body ages. Dartmouth-Hitchcock offered tips to stay healthy so you can fully enjoy retirement.

Eat Healthy Foods

Talk to your doctor about how many calories are good for you and make sure you're sticking within a good range. But developing healthy eating habits is about more than calories. Pay attention to sodium, cholesterol and other ingredients on the label. Studies show most Americans eat twice as much sodium as the recommended daily amount, which can lead to hypertension and heart disease. Eat whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains like wheat bread and pasta, brown rice, while minimizing fast food and highly processed foods.

Get Plenty of Sleep

Your body may not be growing like a teenager's, but older adults still need seven to nine hours of sleep a night (perhaps with a nap thrown in since afternoons are free). Not getting enough sleep can lead to depression, irritability and memory problems and just make your day-to-day functioning more difficult. Get into good sleep habits such as going to bed and getting up at roughly the same time each day, and keep your bedroom screen-free — no taking your laptop to bed! Avoid caffeine late in the day.

Preventative Care

Keep your vaccines up to date, including the annual flu vaccine; flu tends to be much more dangerous for older patients. Be aware of fall risks around your home and take precautions to reduce those risks. See an eye doctor regularly and keep glasses and contacts up to date, which will make getting around your house and neighborhood more safely. Talk to your doctor about vitamins or supplements like calcium or vitamin D.

Exercise

Find what works for you and do it regularly. You don't have to be the 90-year-old running a marathon; a brisk walk around your neighborhood or a low-impact class at the gym work just as well. Weight lifting, cycling, yoga and hiking all are good ways to stay fit. If you're not sure, talk to your doctor or a trainer about a good exercise routine.

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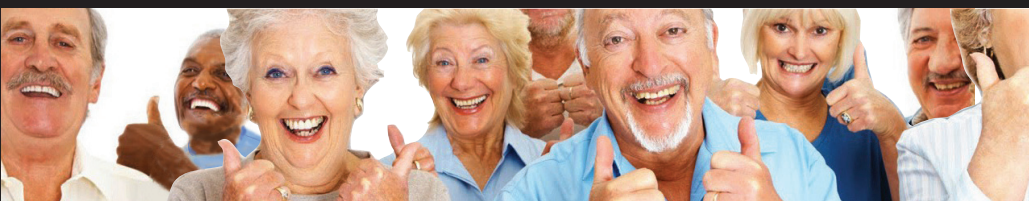
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