

## Healthy Ageing – Top Tips

**Help combat free radical damage** - make sure your diet is rich in vitamins and minerals from a wide variety of vegetables, seeds & unsalted nuts. These foods contain antioxidants to help protect cells from the ageing effects of pollution, radiation, smoke and ultra-violet light.

**Be aware of increased requirements of nutrients** - our ability to digest and absorb vitamins and minerals decreases with age. Also, many common drugs deplete nutrients from the body. For example, Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs) such as omeprazole deplete vitamin A, vitamin B12, vitamin C, iron, calcium, magnesium and zinc. *All of this means our nutrient requirements increase as we age.*

**Take note of portion sizes for fruit and vegetables** – aim for 5-10 portions a day.

**Ensure protein at every meal** – protein is required for cell repair; insufficient intake is characterised by thinning hair, poor nail condition (including split cuticles) and lack of muscle strength.

**Include oily fish (or consider supplementation)** – studies have found consistently that a higher intake of fish oil is associated with slower rates of cell ageing.

**Take care with sugar (glucose)** – one of the common things that happens during ageing is that tissues (including the brain and muscle) lose the ability to deal with glucose effectively. Researchers can map the process of Alzheimer's disease, for example, by seeing how the body deals with glucose

**Minimise intake of Ultra Processed Foods (UPFs)** - these products may contain a dozen or more ingredients that can disrupt brain function. Repeated intake of a higher level of UPFs is linked to a high dementia risk. *Check labels!*

**Stay hydrated** – aim for 1.5 litres (8 large cups) of fluid every day to help protect from infections, improve energy and concentration, and for radiant skin. Proper hydration means urine is the colour of pale straw.

**Get your hearing checked** - in a recent study, patients experienced a 48% slowing of cognitive decline after wearing a hearing aid for the 3 years of the experiment, compared to those whose hearing was not corrected.

**Make physical activity a priority** – include three types of exercise: stretching, aerobic (cardio) and weight-bearing (strength) training. Even the very elderly have increased strength and muscle mass within a few weeks of starting a physical activity program, reducing the risk of falls, stroke and fractures.

### ***Bev Gibbs***

This information is for education only and does not provide individual advice. If you have any concerns about your health, you should consult a medical practitioner. Do not begin a new programme of exercise without consulting your GP to check it is safe to do so.