

Primary Care Associates

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These recommendations also available at www.primarycareak.com

To help enhance and prolong mental alertness and physical vigor you should consider:

- **A daily fitness program** of flexibility, stamina and strength exercises. Aerobic exercise improves circulation to the brain as well as to the heart (Brainrules.org, or “Spark”, the book). Strength training helps preserve muscle mass which we begin to lose after age 30. Flexibility helps prevent injury to the tendons attaching muscles to bone if done after you have warmed up. “You don’t get old and stiff; you get stiff and then you get old!” 45 minutes/day or more, at least 5 days a week, dedicated to a fitness program is ideal, but any amount is salutary to your physical and mental health.
- **A nutrition program** that is balanced, tasty, continuously updated with ethical science, and which controls your cravings. Weight Watchers is an excellent program to help you get traction toward proper nutrition. It provides a friendly structure of accountability, information, and support: it can be considered the “how” to eat. “The Mediterranean Diet” by M. Cloutier describes the “what” to eat. “The Zone” by Barry Sears is another choice.
- **Drinking more water.** One formula is based on weight: half to 2/3 your weight in pounds equals the number of ounces of water recommended/day (e.g. you weigh 150#, you should drink 100 ounces/day). Water works wonders toward wellness.
- **Not smoking anything.** Do not chew tobacco.

Supplements, vitamins, disingenuous diet programs, foster a multi-billion dollar industry. 99% is hype, misleading, sometimes even harmful. But 1% of the offerings are worthwhile. Prior to starting anything, you should review it with your physician.

At every age there is likely a supplement (e.g. Vitamin D) that you should include. The best and first source for all vitamins is a diet rich in fruits and vegetables. As we get older however, our digestive system becomes less efficient and supplements become even more relevant. Look for the “USP” label on products. It helps ensure a level of quality and consistency. Consumers Reports points out that aggressively marketed “brands” (touting “better absorption, better quality”, etc.) of vitamins are no better and are significantly more expensive.

1. A multivitamin with trace elements included (e.g. zinc, chromium, selenium...). Trace elements should not be taken in “mega-dose” quantities.

2. B vitamin supplements (e.g. folate and B12) may be appropriate for you. Remember that 400 mcg of folate is included in most multivitamins. More than this is not appropriate in some individuals. Over 50 years of age consider 1000IU B12 as supplement. Talk to your doctor.

3. Vitamin C, up to 2000 mg/day. Anyone with gout or kidney stones should avoid high dose Vitamin C. Also one should be checked for iron storage disease because Vitamin C facilitates the absorption of iron. Consult your doctor.

4. Vitamin D is hugely important; 1000IU for children and 2000IU for adults is safe for nearly everyone. Your vitamin D level can be measured accurately; talk to your physician. At least eight major health problems have been linked to vitamin D deficiency.

5. Vitamin E. Doesn't need supplementation beyond what is in your multivitamin. In any case, do not exceed 400mg/day. Almonds are a good source (6-10/day).

6. Calcium 1200-1500mg/day through diet or supplement taken with food. Calcium citrate is one of many choices; but please ignore "coral calcium".

7. A low-dose aspirin/day. Clotting disorders, blood thinners, stomach problems, asthma/allergies can all be contraindications; discuss this with your physician.

8. Fish Oil (at least 1 gram DHA/EPA/day). Ideally we should include fish in our diet, but because few are able to do that every day, supplemental fish oil is thought to enhance heart, kidney and brain health, and diminish harmful inflammatory processes. OmegaRx by Barry Sears provides a useful review.

9. Coenzyme Q 10 is an interesting anti-oxidant. Dosing is similar mg dose as your weight in lbs (150lbs=150 mg) Read about it at a reliable web site (see below).

Other considerations include glucosamine 1500 mg/day for degenerative arthritis. Specific hormonal replacement (e.g. thyroid, estrogen, progesterone, DHEA, testosterone...) should be individualized based on age, symptoms, risk factors, exams, blood tests, and measurable endpoints. These recommendations are based upon ethical, reproducible research and unbiased, evidence-based reviews of applied scientific theories.

The recommendations of good nutrition, regular exercise, adequate water intake and no tobacco products are as self-evident as any useful health advice can be.

Tune into KENI 650 AM on Tuesdays 12:30 to 1:00 p.m. where for over 22 years Dr. Kiessling has reviewed these and other topics of medical interest. Each week's broadcast is also available as a pod cast at www.650KENI.com

Reliable web sites for accurate medical information:

Family Physician- <http://www.familyphysician.org/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention - <http://www.cdc.gov/>

National Institutes of Health - <http://www.nih.gov/>

Mayo Clinic - <http://www.mayoclinic.com/>