

Good nutrition is important to all of us. Properly fed and tuned, your body is just plain better. The immune system will function at a higher state, wounds will heal properly and quickly, and your energy level will be up to any task you undertake. If not taken care of, you may find yourself weak and ill more often, wounds will not heal well and unsightly scars may result, and you will not be able to do the activities you have enjoyed in the past. It can even adversely affect your senses, your teeth and gums, your hair, and contribute to a faster onset of joint and disk failure leading to arthritis, osteoporosis, and overall decrease in your quality of life. Good nutrition, positive thinking, and smart practices will improve your overall health and wellness, and also assist with slowing down the aging process.

Good basic recommendations include a “portion controlled” low fat, high fiber, high protein diet with plenty of exercise/activity, fresh air, good sleep, and sufficient hydration. Coffee, Cokes, and alcoholic beverages don’t count, as they tend to dehydrate. I would also recommend a fiber supplement, not just for bowel regularity, but high fiber diets are known to be a natural way to keep down “bad” cholesterol. If you don’t like the flavored powders, there are capsules, wafers, and even “power bar” versions available. Take a good Multi-Vitamin with Iron every day to ensure you get the essentials and trace elements.

Evidence is mounting that Omega-3 fatty acids are also very beneficial to nutrition, health, and wellness. Not only do they seem to naturally reduce cholesterol, but they have also been implicated in the improvement of bone and joint health, reduction of high blood pressure, boosting immunity, and wound healing. Most folks refer to these fatty acids as “fish oil” (due to the original source). But, they can also come from plant derivatives such as Flaxseed and other sources. Recommendations are currently for about 2 grams per day, and are available in easy to take gel-cap form.

Last but not least, ladies (especially) need extra calcium to ward off osteoporosis and bone loss later in life. Start now, in your 30’s or early 40’s, and you can help this by prevention instead of reacting to the loss later. Take an extra calcium supplement each day in addition to your multivitamin, and try to keep your Vitamin D up as well, as this allows the body to better utilize the calcium properly.

Take care of your body, and it will be there for you. Neglect or abuse it at your peril, or at least reduce your performance expectations for later in life. If you are diabetic and/or have high blood pressure, please keep these under control, as this will prevent long term complications that are eventually irreversible. Let health and wellness be your way of life!

--Stephen Jarrard, MD, FACS