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# Health

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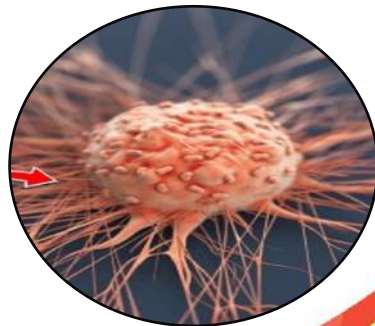


Page No : 08

**Aging Uncovered: The Surprises You Didn't Expect**

Page No : 20

**Saree Cancer**



# AGING UNCOVERED: THE SURPRISES YOU DIDN'T EXPECT

Aging can lead to wrinkles, grey hair, and weakness. But, do you know how it alters our brain, social life, sexual life, and sleep habits? Despite its physical impact, how does it affect our mental health? Does aging play a role in influencing social life, and decision-making skills?

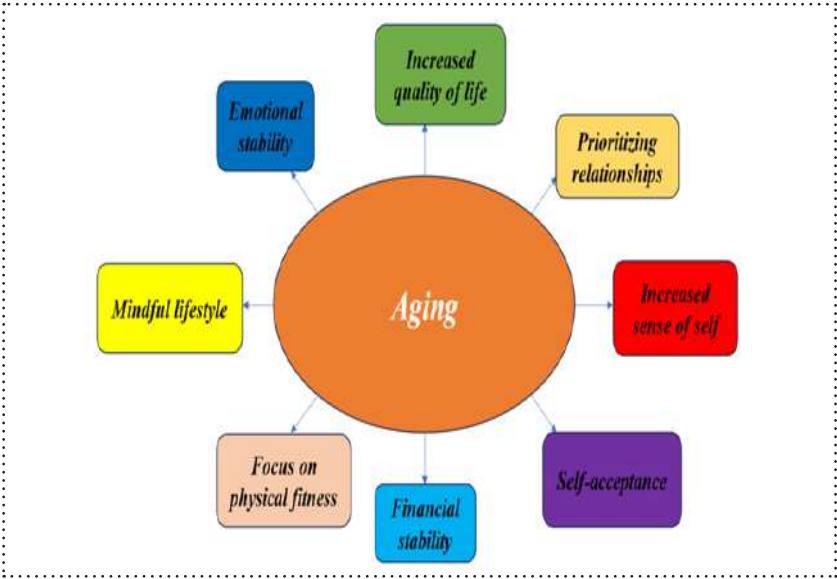
### Introduction:

Aging can be defined as the decline in physiological functions that are crucial for survival and reproduction. Usually, people lose their hope when they age due to social stigma. We believe

that life gets worse when we age. Many people associate aging with decline, but the reality is much more complex. We acquire many benefits and skills as we age. People can enjoy certain aspects of their life better as the age progresses.

### Brain changes in older adults:

After 30s, there will be a decrease in your ability to process information. This scenario becomes more evident, especially after the age of 70. Some truth might align with the old saying



that “the first thing to go is your memory”. However, you don’t need to get depressed with the above statements. For a healthy individual, these changes are generally minor. There is an interesting phenomenon when it comes to your brain. As we age, we get better at a variety of tasks that psychologists address into a category called “Crystalline intelligence”.

Crystalline intelligence refers to the accumulation of skills, knowledge, and abilities developed through experience. For example, skills like arithmetic improve as we age. Your vocabulary continues to improve even in middle age.

### **Impact on social relationships:**

Once, psychologists assumed that our personalities tend to remain fixed after a certain age. But recent research shows that people become agreeable over time, thus defying conventional wisdom. A study of over 130,000 adults aged 21-60 found that when you enter your 30s or beyond, you are likely to become more organized and disciplined. People become more warm, generous, and helpful when they enter their twilight years.



As age advances, people become kind and cool (Pinterest)

### **Sexual satisfaction and aging:**

Wondering if the spark of desire dims as you age? You will be surprised to know that the opposite is true. As the attitude toward sex has become more relaxed over the past century, there is an increase in sexual satisfaction among older adults. Back in the 1970s, only 4 out of 10 women and 58% of men at age 70 reported high sexual satisfaction. Today, 6 out of 10 women and 7 out of 10 men at the age of 70 years enjoy sexual life. Older individuals live comfortably due to the advancement in modern medicine. Conditions like erectile dysfunction are treatable. Seniors seek medical help for the aches of daily life.

### **Flavour shifts:**

As you age, the way you taste

your food can change. It could be due to medications, or illnesses. Allergies, gum disease, and respiratory issues can influence your taste sensation. These changes in taste perception might lead you to adjust your diet. This could be good news as you start using herbs and spices. It will be problematic if you continuously reach for the salt shaker. High salt intake can predispose to an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases. Hence, find healthier ways to intensify the flavors that you could enjoy to improve your health.

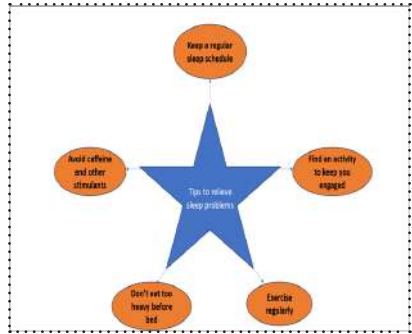
### **Unexpected hair growth:**

As you age, hair growth occurs in different parts of your body. These changes occur both in men and women differently due to hormonal shifts. For men, hair around the nose and ear becomes sensitive to testosterone which leads to coarser growth. Unfortunately, this does not apply to scalp-causing baldness. For women, there will be growth of facial hair due to a drop in estrogen.

### **Sleep changes and aging:**

Sleep patterns evolve with age, and one of these is the tendency to rise earlier. Sleep issues become more evident in older adults. You

spend more time in REM sleep as you age which makes you see fewer dreams.



### **Reduced sweating:**

Do you stop sweating as you age? The sweat glands shrink and become less sensitive over time. This change is more pronounced in women, who sweat less than men. Sweat glands deliver fresh cells to the skin that aid in wound healing, a phenomenon that slows as you age. Sweating keeps us cool, thus playing an important role in regulating body temperature.

### **Reduced tooth sensitivity:**

If you feel thoughtful at the idea of drinking ice water, you will be happy to know that your teeth become less sensitive as you age. This change is due to the deposition of dentin which is a hard tissue of the teeth. When you are young, you have less dentin.

Dentin reduces tooth sensitivity by filling in tiny cracks. It also has a downside: older teeth become more susceptible to cracking.



Your teeth react to temperature changes (Pinterest)

### **Migraines in older adults:**

Migraines are painful headaches that can ruin your day. You might experience fewer headaches as you age, particularly after your 60s. As you age, migraines are less likely to induce nausea and vomiting. For some adults, it may disappear entirely. Although migraine reduces with age, other symptoms like paleness, dry mouth, and loss of appetite start to appear.



Migraine (Pinterest)

### **Reduced frequency of colds:**

There is a correlation between aging and the immune system. Older individuals are more protected against cold than the young. Your body retains a memory of the cold virus that has entered. When the body encounters the same virus, immune fighters called T-cells fight against the infection. Studies show that enhanced immunity is evident from the 40s to 70s. Beyond this age, the immune system starts to weaken.

### **Increased political engagement:**

As we age, there is an increased chance of being into politics. Older Americans show more interest in polling when compared to younger generations. This affects political decisions affecting aging, and retirement, such as Medicare funding, Social Security, and health funding.

### **Self-confidence:**

Does self-confidence increase with age? Our self-confidence continues to increase until retirement age. Experts suggest that older adults experience a lack of confidence as retirement disrupts the stability of professional life. Some believe that retirees feel that they are not contributing to

family and society as they did once. Research indicates that financial stability and good health help to maintain better self-esteem.

### **Age and height:**

Researchers asked over 8500 women aged 60 years and above about their height and then measured them. The height was estimated to be two inches shorter than their highest recorded height. Everyone shrinks as they age. You get shorter with age because the cushion surrounding your spine dehydrates as you age. The spine can curve or collapse which leads to stooping. The average person loses half an inch in height after the age of 40. A balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and not too much healthy fat is associated with less shrinking. Avoiding tobacco, limiting alcohol, and regular exercise help to preserve height.

### **Happiness and aging:**

Think aging is all doom and gloom? Not at all! Older people dealing with health issues are happier when compared to younger individuals. The rates of depression among the elderly have been dropping for about a decade. A survey of 1500 people aged 21 to

99 reveals that wisdom and mental health improves with age. So, don't worry about getting older. Life gets better with age.



Studies show that mental health improves with age (Pinterest)

### **Turning useless information into an advantage:**

Studies show that older people are easily distracted by irrelevant information. Older adults are less likely to filter out irrelevant information, they tend to retain it more easily than younger people. This helps them to remember more associations between things that influence their decision-making.

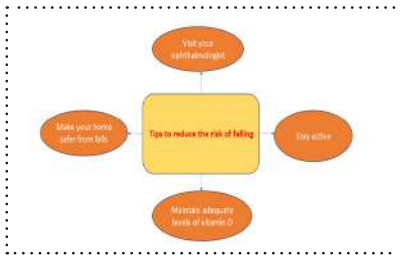
### **Living with reduced stress:**

Stress can lead to serious consequences, either from work, family pressure, bad habits, or other sources. Research indicates

that high-stress levels cause premature aging that can lead to earlier death.

### Fear of falling:

It is sensible to be cautious about falls, but there are certain tips to reduce your risk



### Conclusion:

Elder people who stay active both physically and mentally lead fulfilling lives, making the

most of the wisdom they have accumulated over the years. Although aging faces challenges, it provides unique opportunities for growth, satisfaction, and a deeper appreciation of life.

Primary keywords: Aging, sleep changes & aging, happiness & aging

Secondary keyword: Crystalline intelligence.



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**HOW TO BURN MORE CALORIES WALKING**

POSTURE, STAMINA, HEART RATE, ABS, LEGS, WEIGHT

*Courtesy: Dr. Sanjay Agrawal, Visiting Faculty, GIHM, Delhi.*