

# Affect the daily lives of elderly

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“ I’ve fallen and can’t get up! ” How many times have you heard and laughed at that expression? Although there are countless jokes to go along with aging, the fact is the age process brings about numerous bodily changes that can affect the lives of older adults. With such a large p of changes that may happen, not all elderly people have the same changes. This is called probabilistic aging (changes that may happen to some, but not all people as they grow older). The majority of aging changes not only cause physical disability, but mental and social setbacks as well.

The ones that have the largest effects of the quality of daily life in the elderly are the loss of bone density, kidney dysfunctions, and hypertension. As we progress through the years, our bones begin to decrease in density. We all lose some bone mass as we age and it reaches its peak between the ages of 25 and 35. Our bones lose calcium and other minerals and become more porous, lighter, and less dense. The loss of density causes our bones to become weak and possibly break. There are many different stages to bone loss, but osteoporosis is the most debilitating.

It is most commonly found in women over the age of 60 when their bones begin to break and can even cause hip and spinal fractures. In women who have experienced menopause, they can use hormone therapy to help increase bone density. Through calcium and vitamin D supplements as well as exercise (weight lifting and walking), we can also increase our bone density. Of course, the earlier we start, the healthier our bones will be when we get older. Another common ailment is kidney disease. Our kidneys have the job of removing waste from the bloodstream.

As we age and have chronic conditions like: diabetes or high blood pressure, damage can be done to our urinary tract and kidneys. When poisons and toxins are not being eliminated properly, problems can range from fatigue and frequent urination to incontinence (loss of bladder control) and the need for dialysis (blood is cleaned out) may occur. The most extreme cases would require kidney transplants. Reducing the intake of sugar and carbohydrates, maintaining a low cholesterol and fat diet, as well as drinking plenty of fluids is what doctors suggest to avoid these types of problems.

The third and most significant bodily change as we age is hypertension or high blood pressure. It is a silent change that is linked to various other diseases and is the most deadly. Hypertension is caused by fatty deposits that form on the walls of the heart vessels known as atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). The body receives blood through arteries pumped by the heart muscles. This blood carries oxygen, carbon dioxide and nutrients to the necessary areas in the body. If there are fatty deposits on the walls of the vessels, it impedes the blood flow, resulting in the heart working harder to push the blood through blocked arteries.

The effect is an elevated blood pressure reading medically known as hypertension. Stress is one of the main causes of hypertension which is directly linked to overeating, smoking, and drinking. Research indicates that cold weather can be related to high blood pressure in older people because it is related to stress. Without treatment, it increases the risk of kidney disease, erectile dysfunction, eye problems, diabetes and more importantly heart disease and stroke which can be fatal. A proper diet, exercise and

healthy choices are necessary to decrease the fatty deposits in our blood vessels.

All of these bodily changes can cause some form of physical disability which in turn can cause emotional and social problems as well. When a physical body change occurs, the elderly may become depressed because they may need to rely on others to help them. They also may avoid social situations because they are uncomfortable, in pain, or have a level of embarrassment due to their disability. Although biological aging cannot be avoided, there often are many ways to prevent some of the probabilistic changes from happening or be less debilitating.

A common thread found throughout the bodily changes is many of them can be averted with a healthy lifestyle change of a proper diet and exercise. So get wiser with age by seeing a doctor regularly and begin your lifestyle changes to ensure an enjoyable aging process. Works Cited Aging. (Last modified March 21, 2009. ) In Wikipedia Online. Retrieved March 21, 2009 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aging> Bone Mineral Density. (2005-2009) WebMD. Retrieved on March 21, 2009 from <http://www.webmd.com/osteoporosis/bone-mineral-density>

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