**Feeling and Looking Younger!**

As the kids get older and as my life stays busy, I often look in the mirror and take count of the new wrinkles and the drawn, sleepy eyes. A common topic amongst my girlfriends is that dreaded “looking older.” We all know that in the fight against time, time always wins. However, in our fight against time there are some ways to keep ourselves looking and feeling younger. Here’s a list of what the research says.

The single best thing that you can do for your health and longevity is to quit smoking. Smoking is continually linked to shortened life spans, not to mention the havoc it plays with every organ of your body. Smokers look and sound older than they really are.

Drink only in moderation. Alcohol infuses and damages many cells and organs of the body. Alcohol also makes you look older and is cause for early death not only from your body deteriorating but also from accidents caused by alcohol. Alcohol in moderation might be beneficial to health, but it must be kept in control.

Sleep. Sleep has too many benefits to list in this short paragraph. Mostly, it regenerates, repairs and prepares the body for daily living. Your body will physically suffer from lack of sleep and sleep deprivation is also a leading cause of deaths by accidents. Everyone needs to sleep well to live well.

One of the things that every skin care specialist will tell you is to stay out of the sun and more importantly always avoid getting sunburns. It’s one of the simple ways to keep your skin looking younger.

Create a diet and supplement regimen that is right for you. Yes, this means making sure that you are supplementing any and all vitamins, minerals and hormones that are not being made or eaten anymore. It is recommended that you are tested regularly for various biomarkers, including lipids, DHEA, estrogen, cortisol, thyroid, lung function and micronutrient profiles.

Cut saturated fat and increase omega-3 fats. Healthy fats will benefit you so much more by keeping oxygen free radical molecules from damaging your cells. Cut out the cookies and cakes and add the fish.

Moderate your total food intake. Studies show that 30% calorie restriction means longer life. This also includes the necessity of keeping your body weight near normal. Excess pounds mean more strain on your systems.

Supplementation of lost hormones are somewhat controversial, however the outcomes for many individuals are positive. Always discuss options, benefits and possible concerns of hormone replacements with your physician. There are many different beliefs and concerns with these. There are also some natural alternatives that might be worth discussing too.

Supplement for the malnutrition that most people suffer from. Our diets are generally poor, so taking multi-vitamins and minerals daily are now being recommended. Also recommended are to supplement antioxidant vitamins C, CoQ10, vitamin E, alpha lipoic acid (another antioxidant), and perhaps some “mental acuity” mixtures. Discuss the best options with a professional nutritionist or herbalist.

Exercise your body, your imagination and your options. Reprogram your vision of old age. A study from Yale showed that those with a positive view of growing older lived seven years longer than those who griped about it.

Kick guilt out of your life. Laura Berman Fortgang, author of Living Your Best Life, says: “Be future-minded. Guilt and regrets are part of the past. Evolving and changing is how we stay young.”

“Don’t say you’re too old to do something.” Sometimes making a big change can be life enhancing. This could include moving, traveling, changing careers, getting married, getting divorced and maybe even correcting poor decisions made earlier in your life.

Always do something useful. It’s been said that retirement is a contagious, debilitating disease and can often take away your vigor for life. Take some time off for vacation and smell the roses but always come back and do something useful with your days. Don’t check out permanently, stay connected.

Remember that it’s your own decisions and behaviors that will give you the quality of life you’re going to want when you reach those “golden years.” I hope you make the choice to live now for your health later.