



BABY BOOMERS WANT IT ALL

We have heard it before... 50 is the new 40, and so on. Baby boomers are being accused of being obsessed with staying young. Doing everything possible to look and feel decades younger. To show that they are more active and vital than their parents were at the same age. As a result, Botox, wrinkle fillers and hormones are said to have become big business with this age group. Is it all safe?

As baby boomers age, we are told by futurists that they will have more money than ever before. They will also live longer than the generation ahead and behind them. However, as the World Health Organisation stated when I last checked, we now not only know that they will live longer but they will spend an average of 8 years in disability and poor health before they die.

So why blame them for wishing to stay as healthy as possible and to extend their quality of life as long as possible? As one gets older, you see what happens to some elderly folk and certainly do not wish that to happen to you.

As a family doctor, I learnt that patients with certain health patterns would develop specific problems in the future. You know this but can only watch them get sicker and give more drugs.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is an old saying that still rings true today. We know for instance that correcting low vitamin D levels, taking omega 3 fish oils, and paying attention to nutritional deficiencies can reduce mortality more than 26%.

Attention to lifestyle, diet and other interventions will extend life and increase the quality of life.

As for hormones – they are controversial. The term itself conjures up visions of people having anabolic steroid injections to pump up their muscles, and 60 year old people trying to be 25. In truth, the bio-identical hormone movement started more than ten years ago in the USA, I believe, in sports medicine – not necessarily for doping but to help athletes who were seriously draining their body's testosterone as a result of training.

Now, having shied away from synthetic hormones which cause an increase in breast cancer and heart disease, the public are looking for more natural solutions for their hot flushes and emotional problems around the menopause. There is a noticeable trend towards using progesterone cream. We don't think it harms.

It would be ideal to have excellent quality of life, all the way through until you are 95, and then die in your sleep! Sadly, this is a pipe dream for virtually everyone. So, I don't blame the baby boomers who have money and wish to spend it on their health and wish to have the best quality of life for as long as possible, - and avoid being a vege in a resthome.

And how about cosmetic treatments like Botox and wrinkle fillers? There are two types of people out there – those that would never touch the stuff, and those that embrace it, and love the psychological boost it gives. But amongst those that like it – most would never tell a soul about it!

So, what can you do if you are getting to that age group to age gracefully?

1. Get enough sleep at the right time by being in bed before 10:30pm and getting at least 7-8 hours sleep.
2. Eat a healthy diet with lots of fruit and vegetables, and avoid sugar and starchy foods. Eat plenty of nuts and seeds, and avoid anything that is processed.
3. Exercise regularly – it definitely keeps you young.
4. Breathe – so many people breathe shallowly with their upper chest because they are so busy and stressed. Breathe with your lower abdomen.
5. Meditate, relax, or take some quiet time regularly for yourself. Still your mind and be with yourself regularly. This calms the body and the mind, and enhances the immune system.
6. Keep your brain active.
7. If retiring, keep a daily routine going.
8. Think about the way you think...make sure the glass is half full...