

The York University Staff Association Health and Wellness News and Views

Ya, Ya, we know that we should be exercising and eating well. But, let's face it some days there is barely enough time to make it through the drive thru. Small changes in our lives can make a huge impact on our health as well as our longevity. Want to live to see 100? Well luck and good genes are a part of the equation, making just a few changes in your lifestyle can help you live longer. Here are a few simple steps that you can take today - and everyday - to live a longer, healthier, happier life.

Focus on Fitness

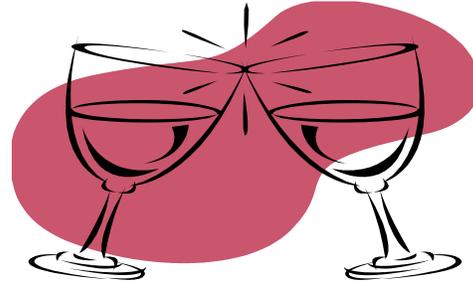
Daily exercises may be the closest thing we have to a fountain of youth. Many studies have found that exercise can add up to four years to your life. However it is not necessary to "train with pain". Forcing yourself to commit to a grueling fitness regiment can shed pounds, but it may not add years. Over time you are more likely to stick to lower impact activities you truly enjoy than high impact workouts you dread. Going for a bike ride with the family or a long walk with the dog contribute as much to your health, and longevity as half marathon.



What are Friends For?

When it comes to living a long healthy life, maintaining strong social relationships may be as important as not smoking. Social relationships provide meaning to our lives that influences us to take better care of ourselves. Friendship can help fight illness and depression, speed recovery, slow aging and prolong life: While friends can run errands and pick up medicine for a sick person, the benefits go well beyond physical assistance. In fact it can also be said that "It is not what your friends do for you; but what you do for your friends that counts". Many

studies show that people both young and old who liked to lend a helping hand to friends, the people who cared for their neighbours, the people whom others turned to for advice - lived the longest.



Cheers ! To a long and healthy life.

Everyone knows the old wives tale that drinking red wine comes doctor recommended, but now it seems as if the health benefits of red wine have been scientifically proven - and it can apparently make you live longer! These days, any savvy connoisseur is aware of red wine's health benefits. The flavonoids found in grapes can help protect the skin from sun damage. Resveratrol, its highly touted "healthy" ingredient, reduces inflammation in humans that can lead to heart disease and strokes as well as Type 2 Diabetes. Some even argue the polyphenols in wine can ward off bacterial infections. However, like every other one of life's guilty pleasures, "Moderation is the Key". Alcohol, as anyone who has been affected by alcoholism will tell you, has a dark side; and we all intuitively know the difference between moderate and not moderate. Just be certain not to overindulge, more than 14 drinks a week can negatively impact your longevity.

Floss Daily

In addition to keeping your teeth from rotting out of your mouth, regularly flossing reduces the risk of heart disease. Flossing your teeth daily can make your arteries younger. Studies show that flossing helps keep your immune system young. The same bacteria that causes periodontal disease also triggers an immune response, inflammation, that causes the arteries to swell. The swelling of the arterial walls results in a constriction of blood flow that can lead

to a higher incidence of cardiovascular disease. Try it for 21 days and you'll not only see the difference but you'll also develop a new habit that will remain with you for the rest of your life.

Let It Out!

Madonna was onto something when she sang, "Express yourself, don't repress yourself" It's not a secret that holding in aggression can lead to unwanted stress. So it's only natural that releasing pent up anger or aggression places less pressure on the heart. Internalizing strong emotions raises pulse rates and over time, could lead to heart disease and cancer. According to researchers at Stockholm University, males who vent their anger are 50% less likely to experience a heart attack or die from serious heart disease. There is a key difference between healthy and unhealthy venting. Not all expressions of anger are positive, or good for you. Expression of anger in any type of volatile way—screaming, violence or destroying property doesn't help anybody. Part of processing anger is being able to listen to another person's feelings as well as expressing your own. You want to accept your anger and control it rather than allowing it to control you. After all, why would you want to waste all that valuable energy?

Carpe Diem or Seize the Day.

Live each day as if it's your last. Like they say yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery but today is a gift, that's why it's called the present. Life presents us with a lifetime of opportunities. Be present to enjoy each moment. Every day is a fresh start with options just waiting to be explored, so what are you waiting for? Living longer has a lot more to do with your own behavior and the choices you make than luck or good genes.. No more excuses, just do it.