



HEALTH

Is "getting old" natural?

By Dr. Marc W. Ugell

By the time most people reach retirement age they are experiencing joint stiffness and generally poor health. Old age does not have to mean being unhealthy. It is important to realize that it is possible to stay both physically and mentally healthy as we advance in years—in fact, even for our entire life! There should be a difference between old age (i.e., advanced years) and "old".

As a practicing health professional, I frequently encounter the fact that the elderly are laboring under a heavy regimen of prescribed medications. Some of these may be more or less than the individual needs, others may not be needed at all, and some may actually work at cross purposes with one another in a way that can be very dangerous for the individual.

It's a fact that physiology (bodily functions) of most people diminish as they grow older. And let's face it, most of us have not lived our lives in a healthy fashion.

When these changes begin to express themselves as symptoms, we usually seek medical care. Some of the resulting prescriptions only add to our problems. Furthermore, most medications seem designed to suppress symptoms, even though they are warnings of some underlying problem.

On the other hand, chiropractic care is designed to correct the underlying problem or cause of many health conditions which eventually become medically diagnosed as diseases. This is why we say that chiropractors do not treat diseases, but rather focus on helping the body to solve its own health problems. The chiropractor approaches this important task by administering "adjustments" that remove interferences of the function of the nervous system.

Restoration of proper function of the nervous system results in the restoration of health. The immune system and vital organs function better. Energy and vitality increase. The senior citizen of advanced years no longer feels so "old" but rejuvenated and able to again enjoy life.

It is said that old age is a state of mind. And it is, to the extent that the individual expects to feel old once he or she has lived many years. It may seem to be "just natural" for one to become impaired and infirm as the years pile up, and it is to the extent the body is just responding to the kind of life you've lived.

Feeling old and decrepit with all kinds of aches and pains and health problems is "natural" for most people because they are paying the price for years of living their lives poorly—poor eating, poor sleep habits, lack of exercise, smoking, drinking, poor relationships, habitually negative attitudes, etc.

These are all problem areas that the individual at any time can do something about on their own. One "silent killer" problem, however, really requires the help of someone else—the chiropractor. That killer is the nerve dysfunction produced by a misaligned vertebra in the spine. The chiropractor calls this a "vertebral subluxation".

The vertebral subluxation is especially harmful for the older individual whose immune system and other body functions are already below par. Removing the vertebral subluxation and resulting nerve dysfunction releases the inborn tendency of the body to be healthy and to heal itself. This is why after adjusting you the chiropractor will caution you to pay attention to how you respond to your medications because your physician may just find that your prescriptions now need "adjusting" too!

DR. UGELL practices at Family Chiropractor Center in Smyrna and is on the faculty at Life University in Marietta.