

FROM THE SPAMEC HEALTH CONCERNS COMMITTEE

This month is about healthy aging -- encouraging you to take charge of your well-being by aging with a healthy body, a healthy mind and acting how you feel -- instead of acting your age! It's never too late to strive for a healthier lifestyle and a more positive outlook about growing older. Some genetic diseases can be beat by adopting a healthier lifestyle and by taking the preventive actions to help assure you're as healthy as you can be as you move into your 60s, 70s and beyond. Here are a few tips to improve yourself physically, socially, and mentally:

- **Get Moving/Exercise**

Move more, sit less. Physical activity is your weapon to help control blood pressure, help prevent heart disease and stroke and lower your risk for depression, anxiety, and conditions like certain cancers and type 2 diabetes. Choose something fun so you can keep at it, like cycling, walking, dancing, swimming, or aerobics.

- **Maintain a Healthy Diet**

Cut back on salt. A diet rich in sodium has been linked to high blood pressure, stroke, and heart attack. Adding more fiber to your diet can help lower cholesterol, control your blood sugar, as well as help maintain good digestive health. Eat a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, and try to avoid excessive processed foods. Additionally, stay hydrated by drinking a lot of water, at least 6-8 glasses per day.

- **Stay Social**

Volunteer.... Being of service is an excellent way to bring happiness into your life and not focus on yourself. Refocus on others and volunteer your time and expertise (e.g. United Way, the American Red Cross, VolunteerMatch, AmeriCorps, etc.).

- **Beat back loneliness.**

Don't wait for the phone to ring. Be proactive and call someone for a lunch date. Set up a calendar of lunch dates and challenge yourself to have at least two lunch dates per month. It doesn't have to be expensive ... pack a picnic, and head to a park. Mix up your get-togethers with old friends and new acquaintances. Surround yourself with people who make you smile and laugh.

- **Rekindle or follow a new passion.**

Take a hard look at what you like to do rather than what other people tell you to do to meet new people. Pick some activities where you might meet new friends.

- **Balance Both Your Body and Mind**

- **Be realistic with what you can accomplish.**

Learn to say no ... don't overwhelm yourself with a to-do list.

- **Plan for your next passage.** Capitalize on your career experience and start a new one. Yes, enjoy a brief "retirement." Travel, and spend more time with family and friends. Develop new hobbies. Redefining your purpose to maintain a sense of identity and purpose is essential to a healthy lifestyle.

- **Take Classes.** Its never too late to take classes, even if to just enhance your skill set. Remaining active and engaged is the best gift you can give yourself. Staying physically and mentally active, and nurturing social connections with friends and family, are all part of the bigger picture in helping to keep your mind and body well

- **Get regular Check-Ups and yearly physicals**

Don't ignore symptoms. If you're not feeling well, don't "wait for it to go away." Know yourself and your body well enough to detect if there is something out of the ordinary.

Don't neglect regular medical check-ups; have an annual physical examination and schedule the tests your doctor recommends. This would include your eye doctor and dentist as well as your physician. Take medications and vitamins/supplements as prescribed in order to ensure you are feeling your best.