Introduction to Healthy Aging

• As we age, numerous challenges surface that our society, our families and culture must acknowledge and address

• Integrated medicine is a trend that blends physical, emotional and spiritual elements into the preparation for healthy aging and for patient-centered care

• Healthy aging is more than a lack of disease. It involves quality of life matters
Objectives

• Trends in our Society
• Challenges
• Residential Considerations
• Quality of Life Matters
• Positive Mental Attitude
• Nutritional Tips from Dr. Weil
• Move It, or Lose It
• Rest, Restore and Renew
• Next Steps
Aging Process

• The aging process is a transition, a journey for which most of us are unprepared. With the proper resources, attitude and support, the adventure can be more enjoyable, safer and healthy.
Vocabulary

- Aging in Place
- Integrative Medicine
- Mind/Body Correlation
- Patient-Centered Focus
Trends to Consider

- The vast majority of families prefer to retire at home
- Women who were born after 1960 stand a very good chance at spending more time with their parents...than with their own children!
- Falls account for 90% of hip fractures
- We are living longer, sometimes beyond our financial and physical means
- Caregiving is becoming a significant concern for many families because of aging trends
Challenges Presented by Trends

• Healthy aging includes preparing for caregiving possibilities for aging loved ones.
• Residential safety is critical to avoid injury, falls, accidents and associated medical expenses.
• Plan and prepare ahead!
Residential Considerations

• Most people prefer to age in their own homes, rather than a planned community after retirement. This trend is called “Aging in Place”
• Create a “Sensory Supported” home utilizing all the senses including aromas, sounds, color and touch
• Anticipate the aging process by integrating technology and adaptive devices into the home before they are needed
Quality of Life Matters

- Strive for balance & blend
  - Work/life compatibility can reduce stress, anxiety and improve wellness
- Life Purpose—What does it mean?
- Passion for Life—How does it happen?
- Stay Connected—Community
- Take Care of Yourself
- The Power of Laughter, Fun and Smiles
Some Tips on *Balance & Blend*

- Learn something new
- Change your habits and routine
- Do something for someone else who is not expecting it!
- Find a passion, hobby or purpose other than work or family responsibilities
- Be relevant...make a difference!
Positive Mental Attitude

• The power of positive mental attitude and its correlation to mind/body wellness has been linked to healthy aging
• Speaking more than one language postpones dementia by up to 4 years longer than those that speak one. (source: Bialystok, Craik and Freeman, Neuropsychologia)
• Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction, CFIDS, is a condition in which the body’s immune system is severely compromised due to external and internal factors often linked to the “fight or flight” conditioning
• Solution: Balance, blend and support of mind and body
Natural and Proper Nutrition

Healthy Aging has been linked to Healthy Eating. Dr. Andrew Weil is a renown expert in the field of Healthy Aging and has the following guidelines for proper nutrition:

• Strive for a variety of foods with emphasis on fruits and colorful vegetables
• Avoid processed and “fast” foods
• Use whole wheat products
Nutrition and Proper Nutrition (cont.)

- Use extra virgin olive oil or organic canola oil (the latter has no taste) Avoid margarine
- To reduce sugar, (High Glycemic Index, GI) avoid high-fructose sugars
- For Omega-3 fatty acids, eat wild salmon, sardines, flaxseeds, almonds and walnuts
- Protein—eat more vegetable protein, such as: red kidney beans and soybeans
- Alcohol—drink red wine
- Candy—dark chocolate (with at least 70% cocoa content)
Move It, or Lose It--Exercise

Three basic types of exercise essential for healthy living:

– **Aerobic or “Cardio”** is important to maintain the body’s cardiovascular system. It burns calories, tones the heart muscle, provides the endorphin “high” and improves the elasticity of arteries. Examples include: running, walking, swimming, cycling and exercise machines.
**Strength Training** — is the second type of exercise. This is needed to maintain bone and muscle mass, especially since both decline as we age. Examples of relevant exercises include using free weights, machines, tubes or joining a Pilates class.

**Flexibility and Balance Training** — is important to prevent injury by ensuring that our body can compensate for sudden twists, bumps, skids and prevent falls. Yoga, exercise balls and tai chi can help.
Rest, Restore and Renew

- Individual need for sleep will vary and decline as we age
- If you can’t fall asleep in 30 minutes, don’t stew about it...get up and read, or do something else outside of your bedroom
- Keep your bedroom dark
- Prepare for sleep in what you eat and do prior to bedtime
- Naps are good...work with your own bio-rhythm
- Melatonin and valerian are natural sleep aids
Next Steps Towards Healthy Aging

• Eat and rest well
• Stay connected with your community
• Keep your mind active by learning new things
• Be kind to yourself
• Prepare for age-related challenges that might include caregiving
• Think of others...as you think of yourself
Where to Get More Information

- **HEALTHY AGING**, Andrew Weil, M.D.
  - A lifelong guide to your physical and spiritual well-being.
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