

HEALTHY AGING®



SEPTEMBER IS HEALTHY AGING® MONTH

September is Healthy Aging® Month is an annual health observance month designed to focus national attention on the positive aspects of growing older. The month, created by Educational Television Network over 15 years ago, is part of the Healthy Aging® Campaign, a national, ongoing health promotion designed to broaden awareness of the positive aspects of aging and to provide inspiration for adults, ages 50-plus, to improve their physical, mental, social and financial health.

In an effort to draw attention to the needs of the growing numbers of older adults, the month was developed to offer a second month on the calendar in addition to May is Older Americans Month. September was chosen as a time when many people think about getting started on new tasks after the summer. Drawing on the “back to school” urge embedded in everyone from childhood, the observance month activities are designed to encourage people to rejuvenate and get going on positive health measures. These measures include physical, social, financial and mental wellness.

According to Carolyn Worthington, ETNET president, “we saw a need to draw attention to the ‘myths’ of aging, to shout out – ‘hey, it’s not too late to take control of your health, it’s never too late to get started on something new.’ Why not think about the positive aspects of aging instead of the stereotypes and the negative aspects?”

The health information company created Healthy Aging® Month when the baby boomers were about to turn 50. “At that time, no one wanted to talk about growing older,” Worthington says. “You know, it was that same ‘60’s attitude ... don’t trust anyone over 30, ‘hell no we won’t go’.... Today as the boomers turn 60, it’s a different story.”

“We recognized early on that careful attention to the combination of physical, social, mental and financial fitness was powerful in the pursuit of a positive lifestyle and have built our Healthy Aging® programs around that concept for the government and private sector through the development of September is Healthy Aging® Month, TV specials, videos, books, printed material etc.”

HEALTHY AGING® MONTH MENTAL WELLNESS TIPS FROM WWW.HEALTHYAGING.NET:

"If You Think Old, You Are Old. You don't grow old. You become old by not growing"

A decline in memory is not always a function of serious disease, like Alzheimer's. Sometimes memory loss is caused by factors that can be changed, such as diet, medication misuse, depression, etc. At the National Institute on Aging, research is showing that memory may be like other parts of the body. Research showed that very gradual declines in memory take place until age 70 -- when the pace increases, but not so much as to impair us. The conclusion? ***The processes of normal aging do not rob your memory.***

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HEALTHY AGING®/PO Box 442/UNIONVILLE, PA 19375 WWW.HEALTHYAGING.NET
INFO@HEALTHYAGING.NET

HEALTHY AGING MENTAL WELLNESS TIPS:

- Avoid depression. New activities, hobbies, and exercise are wonderful antidepressants. If you truly are depressed, don't bear it alone -- seek help.
- Stay active doing things that use your memory (take a class, play games, be with people)
- Volunteer your time. Get involved with a cause you believe in or something that interests you.
- Set up a system to keep track of personal items. Carry a diary and make lists.
- Seek out variety and challenge in your daily life.

SUGGESTIONS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS TO CELEBRATE SEPTEMBER IS HEALTHY AGING® MONTH INCLUDE:

1. **Create Healthy Aging® Open House:** Invite a representative of each of the Healthy Aging® measures to speak and pass out free information. Topics:
 - a. Physical: Keep Your Body Fit.
 - i. Presenter: local physical fitness trainer, physician, or hospital wellness spokesperson
 - b. Social: Build Your Social Support System.
 - i. Presenter: Parks and Rec or travel agent to present ideas for social activities in the community;
 - c. Mental: Keep Your Mind Sharp.
 - i. Presenter: Local Community College reps to present continuing education opportunities;
 - d. Financial: How to Be Financially Fit.
 - i. Presenter: Retirement Planning representative: Are You Ready to Retire? What Steps to Take Now Even If You Are Not Ready...

HEALTHY AGING® RESOURCE TOOL: Healthy Aging® Brochure Handout

2. **Set up a Writing Workshop: Family Secrets for Positive Aging.** Invite a local author, newspaper editor or continuing education writing instructor to be a guest speaker. Encourage participants to write family histories, poetry or letters to friends or family using the topic: How Our Family Ages Positively.

HEALTHY AGING® RESOURCE TOOL: *Write From the Heart Discussion Guide* and book, *Healthy Aging...Inspirational Letters from Americans.*

3. **Organize a Healthy Aging® Month “Get Started” Walking Day.** Organize a 5 mile walk with your group as a fund-raiser for a local senior center. Not only will it be fun and encourage exercise but it offers an opportunity to give back to the community.
4. **Healthy Aging® Food Day:** Invite local restaurants to donate food to a special “Taste of (your city/or town)” at your facility. All foods must be healthy and using as many local produced ingredients as possible. Encourage the restaurants to have a representative on hand to explain the health benefits or recipes they have brought.

For further information and resources, go to the official Healthy Aging® website: www.healthyaging.net

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