

[IMAGE]

Bad for the Bowel

By Editorial Staff

Chronological vs. biological aging: Do you know the difference? It's a critical distinction when it comes to our health as we get older. Chronological age is our age in years; how long we've been alive on this planet. If you were born in January 1950, you're 72 – that's a fact. Biological aging has nothing to do with whether you were born in 1950, 1975 or 2000; it's your body's age in terms of its overall health.

You can be incredibly healthy at age 65; or incredibly unhealthy at age 40. Your biological age determines which way you go. If your biological age accelerates past your chronological age, it means your quality of life could be degraded compared to what it should be for your age; in fact, it could even mean you develop health issues or die sooner than you should. One example: bowel health, particularly your risk of bowel cancer.

Researchers have found a significant (12 percent) increased risk of bowel cancer for *every year* of biological aging vs. chronological aging. That means if you're 50 years old, but your biological age is 51, you have a 12 percent higher chance of developing bowel cancer. If your biological age is 55 or 60, the risk is substantially higher. Findings appear in *eLife*.

bowe - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark What increases your biological age? While genetics and demographics play a role, unhealthy lifestyle behaviors can certainly "age" you: smoking, not exercising, eating poorly, not managing your stress, failing to get adequate, restful sleep, and more. That long list of *modifiable* health behaviors is what you and your doctor can target to not just ensure your biological and chronological age match, but actually keep your biological age far *below* your chronological age. Not that's healthy aging.

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