

[IMAGE]

Try the Longevity Diet

By Editorial Staff

We all want to live a little longer – and stay healthy doing it. That's called *longevity*, which in health care circles these days has come to encompass more than just *length* of life, but also *quality* of life. After all, living longer doesn't mean all that much if you spend those "extra" years in poor health. In fact, most people would probably shave a few years off their life in exchange for a greater percentage of years spent enjoying good health.

Enter the longevity diet. According to a recent study, the quality of your diet is one way to increase your odds of longevity. In the study, findings from which appear in *JAMA Network Open*, researchers evaluated diet among participants of a nutrition survey of older adults. After assessing overall diet at baseline, the researchers assigned a value for each participant on the Healthy Eating Index from 0 (worst diet) to 100 (best diet).

Over the next decade-plus, they reassessed diet and also tracked how many of the participants died. Older adults who scored higher on the Healthy Eating Index were more likely to still be living *and* be experiencing "successful aging," defined by the researchers as "preserved physical and cognitive function and (subjective) mental well-being and favorable self-rated health."

longevity diet - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Higher Healthy Eating Index scores were established by scoring nine dietary components (the stuff you want to eat in abundance): total fruits, whole fruits, total vegetables, greens and beans, whole grains, dairy, total protein foods, seafood and plant proteins, and fatty acids; along with four "moderation components" (the stuff you want to eat as little as possible of): refined grains, sodium, added sugars and saturated fats.

The lesson: Eat right, live longer (and enjoy it more)! Our "golden years" should be just that: a time to relax and enjoy life, not suffer in misery as our health steadily declines. So, no matter your age, talk to your doctor about the essential role diet, exercise and other lifestyle factors can play in achieving *longevity*.

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