

Obesity may speed Rate of aging

Taken from GANNETT NEWS SERVICE

Adults who were obese as children will show the signs of aging much faster than adults who were of normal weight childhood, a pediatric endocrinologist said recently.

Dr. Henry Anhalt, director of Pediatric Endocrinology Division at Mainmonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY, shared his findings at the 5th annual American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine conference recently in Las Vegas.

“Fat cells accumulated during childhood adversely effect aging in adulthood,” Anhalt says. Obese children have higher overall mortality and die younger than normal weight children. They also:

- ◆ Have an increased likelihood of developing Type II (adult onset) diabetes.
- ◆ Often develop hypertension, abnormal blood lipid levels, and coronary artery disease.
- ◆ Often have respiratory problems and are more likely to develop cancer later in life.

“These diseases begin in childhood and progress throughout adulthood,” said Anhalt. He said that excess calories and fat combine to release free radicals in the body, which damage cells and promote aging.

A daily stroll Strong medicine

Associated Press

BOSTON – All those mall walkers are onto something. A major study found that a daily stroll keeps older people living longer.

The research suggests that for folks in their 60's, 70's, and 80's, walking is powerful



medicine. Over a 12-year period, the study found that covering just 2 miles a day cut the risk of death almost in half.

Clearly, the legions of elderly folks who take the time for a daily stroll through the shopping center or around the park already believe this.

Yet among fitness professionals, the subject is surprisingly controversial. Some have questioned whether leisurely paced exercise does much good at all. And there is virtually no carefully done research to show that walking, gardening, and such keep senior citizens healthier.

The new study provides evidence of this benefit in older people. Amy A. Hakim and others from the University of Virginia calculated that every extra mile they walk per day lowers the death rate by 19 percent.

“The message is that we should become active and remain active,” said Robert D. Abbott, one of the researchers. “Walking is easy, and it can be quite enjoyable with friends on a nice day.”

Despite walking's obvious popularity, especially among older people, most Americans have not gotten the message about this or any other kind of exercise.

Dr. Jody Wilkinson, medical director of the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research in Dallas, noted that 60 percent of Americans don't get enough regular activity to improve their health. And the numbers are probably even worse for the elderly.

The latest study shows “it doesn't take that mush,” Wilkinson said. “Two or three miles is within the ability of almost everyone.”

The research, published in Thursday's issue of the New England Journal of medicine, was based on the Honolulu Heart Program, which has followed the health of 8,006 men of Japanese ancestry living on Oahu since 1965.