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Aging is a Mistake

by Raymond Francis

"Aging is a mistake," said Dr. Deepak Chopra. Actually, aging is worse than a mistake, it is a catastrophe. Aging reduces quality of life and causes so-called "diseases of aging" such as cancer, Alzheimer's, and arthritis. Making yourself old and sick is not a sensible choice—it is a mistake. Each disease, even a cold, accelerates aging, makes you sicker, and causes more disease. Then our physicians manage these diseases with treatments that create still more aging and disease. It's a vicious cycle, and we have to learn how to break that cycle.

To live a long disease-free life, it is essential to learn how to prevent and reverse aging and disease. Fortunately, this is not difficult to learn. With just a little bit of effort, any of us can become healthier and biologically younger. While we cannot control our chronological age, we do have control over our *biological* age. Recently, I had my arteries measured. I have the arteries of a thirty-year-old; I am sixty-six. The biological age of my arteries is less than half my chronological age—anyone can do this. Aging is a mistake you don't have to make.

Historically, people such as the Hunzas lived well into their hundreds in robust, vigorous health without suffering as much as a cold, so we know this is possible. For you to accomplish something similar you must learn how to prevent aging and disease, and to do this, you must learn how to prevent and reverse *inflammation*. There is only one disease, malfunctioning cells, and a malfunction common to *all* chronic disease is a process called inflammation. No matter what so-called disease you have, inflammation is a major part of your problem. By learning how to prevent and reverse inflammation, you are learning how to stay young and *never be sick again*.

Inflammation is a natural and healthy process. If you cut your finger, the body begins an inflammatory process immediately. This process neutralizes harmful microorganisms, helps to repair the wound, and cleans up the debris resulting from the injury. Inflammation is beneficial when needed, but it is disastrous when *chronic*. Chronic inflammation generates a constant supply of free radicals that overwhelm our antioxidant defenses and damage DNA, aging us and causing disease of every description, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, arthritis, allergies, Alzheimer's, autoimmune disease, and infections.

Unfortunately, more than three out of four Americans suffer from chronic inflammation. This is why we are aging so rapidly and why more than three out of four of us have a diagnosable chronic disease. Even our children are increasingly suffering from "diseases of aging" in epidemic numbers. To put an end to this tragedy, as a society and as individuals, we must learn how to prevent and reverse chronic inflammation.

What causes inflammation? *The standard American diet causes inflammation!* Most of us suffer from chronic inflammation and disease because the American diet is pro-inflammatory. Our diet lacks nutrients that help to prevent and control inflammation, while being rich in pro-inflammatory compounds.

How do you reverse inflammation? In my book *Never Be Sick Again*, I advise people to avoid the Big Four: *sugar, white flour, dairy, and processed oils*. These so-called "foods" are pro-inflammatory—they cause rapid aging and disease. Indeed, I have had numerous calls from people who have read my book, got off the Big Four, and were cured of terrible, chronic diseases. All it took was to stop promoting the inflammation in the first place. I have been off the Big Four for 17 years and I have been taking lots of antioxidant supplements, thus controlling inflammation and allowing my arteries and other tissues to repair and become those of a much younger person.

Sugar and white flour are deadly poisons. They have an inflammatory effect on the body. Unaware of this hazard, the average American consumes more than 160 pounds of sugar and 200 pounds of white flour per year. Tragically, we expose children to these deadly poisons, accelerating aging and causing lifelong health problems. Both of these poisons increase blood sugar levels. Even a modest increase in blood sugar generates free radicals that cause inflammation, thereby causing disease of every description. Because most people eat these poisons every day (in the form of bread, pasta, breakfast cereal, cookies, cakes, soft drinks, candy, etc.), disease is a growth industry.

Milk products also cause inflammation. Modern dairy cows eat grain-containing diets that change the proportions of fatty acids in the milk, leaving very little omega-3 fats and creating a pro-inflammatory imbalance. In addition, a substantial percentage of our population (some estimate fifty percent) is allergic to dairy, often unknowingly. Daily consumption causes chronic allergic reactions, creating chronic inflammation.

The fats and oils in the American diet contain excessive omega-6 fatty acids, causing chronic inflammation. Omega-6 fatty acids promote inflammation, while omega-3s are anti-inflammatory. Historically, humans consumed roughly equal amounts of these oils, achieving a balance. Today, we consume 20 to 30 times as much omega-6 as omega-3. The modern processed-food industry fills our stores with pro-inflammatory oils, including safflower, sunflower, peanut, and even most commercially available olive oils; all of these contain excessive amounts of omega-6 and insufficient omega-3 fatty acids. Grain-fed beef, poultry, and farmed fish also contain excessive omega-6. These imbalances create a huge excess of pro-inflammatory compounds. Unable to turn the inflammation off, chronic inflammation and disease are the result. It is extremely important that only healthy fats and oils be consumed.

Hydrogenated oils are also pro-inflammatory. These oils find their way into a myriad of products including candy, baked goods, margarine, breakfast cereal, and peanut butter. These deadly oils disrupt body chemistry, causing many abnormalities—including inflammation. The trans fatty acids contained in hydrogenated oils inhibit the activity of enzymes that make anti-inflammatory compounds, but not those that create pro-inflammatory ones, chronic inflammation is the result.

In addition to diet, infections also contribute to inflammation. Avoiding infections by keeping your immune system strong pays off in many ways. It is important to minimize the number of infections you suffer. Infections are inflammatory, triggering powerful inflammatory processes to destroy invading microorganisms. Unfortunately, the inflammation damages you as well as the invaders. Having one cold after another will do lasting damage, shortening your life and leaving you susceptible to every imaginable disease. Repeated infections, as well as chronic infections, lead to chronic inflammation that damages and ages the entire body. One way to help keep your immunity strong is to avoid eating sugar, which is known to damage immunity as well as causing inflammation.

Physical injuries also create inflammation. Nature intended inflammation to subside once an injury is repaired. However, by consuming a pro-inflammatory diet, injuries are seldom fully healed and often result in chronic low-grade inflammation in the injured tissue. This is why athletes have problems with old injuries as they age. These incompletely healed tissues, by producing pro-inflammatory compounds, become sources of chronic inflammation for the entire body.

Allergies and food sensitivities also create inflammatory responses. Chronic allergic reactions create chronic inflammation. This is why allergic reactions must be minimized by strengthening the immune system and avoiding allergens. Unfortunately, allergies have become epidemic. Contributing to this epidemic has been the irrational misuse of antibiotics, NSAIDs, and hormones by our obsolete disease-care system. These dangerous drugs disrupt gut tissue, causing leakage of undigested food molecules into the blood, thereby promoting food allergies. A good idea for almost anyone is to stay away from the most common allergens such as dairy and gluten (half the population may be allergic to gluten, found in wheat, rye, and barley).

Yet another promoter of chronic, systemic inflammation is fat cells. Given that two out of three Americans are overweight, this is a huge source of inflammation. Pure and simple, if you are more than five pounds overweight, you have a serious chronic disease. The inflammatory process unleashed by being overweight accelerates the aging process and leads to every conceivable disease. Fat cells, especially those that form around the abdomen, produce large amounts of inflammatory compounds that affect the entire body.

If you want to prevent disease, or if you are diseased and want to get well, what should you do? First and foremost, stop promoting inflammation. Get the Big Four out of your life—now! Eat a diet low in pro-inflammatory foods and high in anti-inflammatory nutrients. Get rid of those excess pounds (exercise and get off the Big Four to lose weight). Take high quality anti-inflammatory supplements. If you take these principles to heart, you will be well on your way to a longer, higher quality, disease-free life.

Consume a diet low in refined carbohydrates and high in a variety of fresh, organic vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds. Eat high quality organic animal protein, such as eggs, fish, chicken, turkey, and grass-fed beef plus olive, coconut a

nd flaxseed oil. Supplementing with antioxidant nutrients is critical to preventing and reversing inflammation. Supplement with omega-3 fish oil, vitamins A, B complex (including folic acid,

B6 and B12), C, D, and E, plus quercetin, glucosamine, chondroitin, beta-carotene, selenium, CoQ10, N-acetylcysteine, and alpha-lipoic acid. (Call Beyond Health to get the supplements I use.)

The health of the American people is in a catastrophic, long-term downtrend. The result is pain, suffering, unnecessary loss of loved ones and an economic threat that is projected within a few decades to bankrupt our country and plunge it into third-world status. This is happening because, in a relatively short period of time, we have completely changed our diet. We now consume insufficient anti-inflammatory vitamins and minerals and an enormous surplus of pro-inflammatory "foods" in the form of the Big Four: sugar, white flour, dairy and processed oils (remember the oils we consume are 20 to 30 times more pro-inflammatory than our ancestor's).

Inflammation is a common element in virtually all disease. By consuming the Big Four, the cumulative effect of the inflammation we are creating is aging us prematurely, causing us to look old, feel tired, and suffer every imaginable disease. By learning how to prevent and reverse inflammation, we can achieve power over aging and disease. What a wonderful goal—and so easy to do.

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