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13th Episcopal District
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St. Paul AME Church (Lexington), Host Church
Dr. Robert A. Strode, Host Pastor
Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath, Presiding Prelate
Dr. Susan J. Leath, M.D., Episcopal Supervisor
Rev. William R.T. Hale, Presiding Elder
Rev. Kenneth J. Golphin, Presiding Elder
Report on Health & Wellness

September is Healthy Aging Month

September is Healthy Aging Month, a time when older Americans should not only look at what aging has done to them, but what they can do to slow down the aging process. Let's face it, aging is not fun. It hits us where it hurts (both figuratively and literally). Our bones become thinner and more brittle. The walls of our heart may thicken. Our brain cells can be damaged by the formation of plaques and tangles what aging has done to them, but what they can do to slow down the aging process, causing abnormalities that may lead to dementia.

Our digestive system becomes firm and rigid, possibly resulting in stomach pain and irregularity. Our senses become less sharp~~we don't see or hear as well, and we may start to lose our sense of taste. Teeth can start to erode and gum disease can leave us susceptible to tooth loss. Our skin loses its elasticity and may be more susceptible to the sun. Diseases like cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes are more likely to finally catch up to us.

That's the bad news. The good news is that there's a lot we can still do to fight the ravages of aging. Even if you're late in getting into the game when it comes to practicing good health, there's still time to make a difference in your health.

Here are seven healthy aging tips that you should make a part of your life:

- Start exercising. This doesn't have to mean running miles. Start out walking for 10 minutes and gradually increase your time and tempo. If you have mobility issues, consider getting into the pool and swimming or doing water aquatics. Doing it with a friend or family member makes it easier and more fun.
- Eat a healthy, well balanced diet. Focus on eating fiber-rich, low-fat and low-cholesterol foods. This means avoiding fried foods. and foods and beverages that are high in sugar content.
- Make regular checkups with your medical specialists. When you're older, it's more important than ever to see your physicians, optometrist and dentist on a regular basis. If you sense a problem, don't wait. Maintenance and early intervention should there be a problem are critical as you age.

- Take all medications as directed. Make sure you know what you're taking and when, and that your doctor or pharmacist knows everything you are taking. This will help prevent negative interactions or side effects.
- Limit your consumption of alcohol and cut out smoking. Both are potential killers.
- Get plenty of sleep. Sleep problems are common in the elderly, yet doctors recommend that all adults get seven to eight hours of sleep each night. If you have problems sleeping, see a sleep specialist.
- Stay socially active. Studies have shown that people who mingle regularly with friends and family tend to stay healthier than those who are isolated. Get out and enjoy life!

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