



Age *before* beauty?

By Lisa Ferguson

You've followed all of the rules: you didn't smoke (too much); you got plenty of rest (on most nights) and drank plenty of water (even if it was in your coffee). It is inevitable that one day you will wake up looking and feeling older than you did the day before. With a little preventative care ... ***those days don't have to come so quickly.***

"Age is an issue of mind over matter," Mark Twain once said. "If you don't mind, it doesn't matter." Yeah, right. Try telling yourself that when you spot the first wiry gray hair snaking from your scalp. Or a pesky little sunspot that's popped up on your cheek ... Was that there yesterday? After coming face-to-flab with the "bat wings" that jiggle in defiance where your graceful upper arms once were.

If you are like most women, you do mind the physical changes that accompany each passing decade of life, because they certainly matter. You may grapple with adult acne in your 20s; work to shed the so-called "baby weight" in the 30s; face fluctuating hormones in your 40s; and manage

menopause in the 50s, before getting your groove back in your 60s.

The good news is there are ways to slow—and, in some cases, reverse—aspects of the aging process, according to Las Vegas health, fitness and skin care experts. They are Dr. Susan Boyd, a partner at Las Vegas OB/GYN Associates; Pam Wagner, a registered dietitian and owner of Nutrition House Calls of Las Vegas; Paul Rosenberg, owner of Real Results Fitness personal training service; and Jamie Lee Metz, owner of Jamie Lee Metz Advanced Aesthetics, a skin care center. All agree it's never too early for women to begin prepping themselves inside and out for the years ahead.

your 20s

Go ahead and party like a rock star, “as long as you get plenty of sleep, drink lots of water and slather on sunblock,” Metz says. Tend to your skin now to ward off blemishes—not only acne,

but also sunspots and clogged sebaceous glands—later. Use a broad-spectrum sunblock containing zinc oxide or titanium oxide, which can double as a moisturizer.

Sexually active twentysomethings should undergo gynecological exams, advises Boyd, who hosts a blog called “Know Your V” at knowyourv.blogspot.com. She also recommends vaccinating against the human papillomavirus if one didn’t receive the injection during the preteen years—even if they’ve already tested positive for the sexually transmitted virus. Following vaccination and treatment for HPV, she explains, women are “less likely to contract the virus again.”

Wagner says women in their 20s should get the Department of Agriculture recommended daily dose of 1,000 milligrams of calcium, to help keep osteoporosis at bay decades from now. Not a milk moustache-type of gal? Try drinking calcium-fortified orange juice instead, or sip a latte (even non-fat versions boast about 400 milligrams of calcium).

your 30s

“In order for you to be in good condition, you’ve got to make your health one of your big priorities,” Rosenberg reminds. Hot yoga—where the workout studio is heated to temperatures

upwards of 90 degrees—is a red-hot fitness trend among women, he says, as are marathons. “It gives you something to work toward, to train for and not just (focus on) looking good.”

Boyd warns premenstrual syndrome symptoms can worsen during the 30s, and monthly cycles may become erratic. She encourages women to have a general hormone panel of blood tests performed by a doctor now, and use the results when considering hormone replacement therapy later, during menopause. “Then you would know, this is how my body was functioning when I was younger,” she says. At around age 35 (and depending on family history), Boyd recommends women get a baseline mammogram, which doctors can refer back to should a breast cancer diagnosis be made in the future.

Now is the time to quit smoking and cut back on alcohol and refined-sugar consumption, as these can break down collagen and leave skin looking less youthful, according to Metz. Meanwhile, the effects of sun damage from decades past can start to surface in the 30s. Exfoliate to ditch dead skin and speed up the cell-regeneration process as the skin’s natural oil production begins to lessen. Finally, use products containing glycolic acid or retinol to help chemically reclaim the radiant-looking skin of your 20s.

your 40s

“The hormones become so erratic” during the 40s, as estrogen levels decline and menopause nears, Boyd says. Around this age, she often orders blood tests for her patients to check for diabetes and

gauge cholesterol levels as well as thyroid function, which also can slow. While you’re at it, have a doctor to measure your vitamin D level, Wagner urges, since scientific evidence shows a connection between low levels of the crucial vitamin and an increased risk of breast cancer in women over 40.

It may be time for your face to make friends with such fillers as Botox, Metz explains, to smooth wrinkles and “take the place of where there used to be more collagen” in the skin. Also, opt for creamy, mineral-makeup formulas and avoid pressed powders that can settle into the skin, making wrinkles more noticeable.

Rosenberg suggests focusing fitness efforts in the 40s and beyond on increasing flexibility through exercises such as swimming and yoga. The good news: Even massage therapy “can really help to loosen people up,” he says.



your 50s

Menopause, which typically occurs between ages 49 and 52, is unlike anything a woman has ever experienced, Boyd insists. Its 30-plus documented symptoms—from hot flashes and mood swings,

to fatigue and even joint aches—can wax and wane for years, due to disappearing estrogen levels. “It’s very devastating to our bodies. Our bodies just kind of panic,” she says. Women, on the other hand, should not. Some doctors are taking a more “designer-type” approach to hormone therapy these days, tailoring treatments to suit individual needs. “Just because our ovaries (shut down) doesn’t mean we don’t need those hormones; it means our body has to look for a different source to get those hormones from.”

More worrisome is how ovarian cancer risk rates rise sharply starting in the 50s. Boyd urges women to learn their family’s history with the disease, which is difficult to detect early on. “We don’t have a Pap smear for ovarian cancer; we don’t have a mammogram for ovarian cancer,” she explains. A blood test, when combined with an ultrasound exam, can offer some clues to women who are considered at high risk for the disease.

Foods rich in antioxidants—including fruits, veggies and fish—are not only cancer fighters, but also help stave off heart disease, which is an even bigger threat to women, Wagner reminds. Also, “No one eats perfect, so taking a multivitamin to supplement your food can be a helpful habit,” she says. Recently revised USDA nutritional guidelines explain that people over 50 may also need to supplement their intake of vitamin B12 due to changing gastric acidity levels. “You don’t absorb ... those nutrients

in your stomach out of the food as well as you used to,” she explains.

When it comes to skin care, “Some women at 50 sort of give up, and some women want to attack it,” Metz contends. “I tend to say attack it,” preferably with an arsenal that includes creamy cleansers to boost the skin’s

moisture, and heavier-duty chemical peels to lessen the appearance of deeper lines. Fat injections—done by a doctor using a woman’s own harvested body fat—can help to plump sagging cheeks. Cosmetic dentistry, in the form of veneers and teeth-whitening procedures, “creates more of the look around the mouth that we have when we’re younger,” she explains. “When you give a little more oomph to the teeth, you create a natural facelift. Plus, whiter teeth make us look younger, too.”

your 60s

If you decide to get serious about skin care in your sixth decade, be prepared to break out what Metz calls “the big guns,” by way of plastic surgeons to perform face, neck and brow lifts, as well as more “aggressive” facials. “If you really want to look your best, they should be some of your best friends,” she says. “Not for a false look, but they can really turn back the clock.”

Do not forsake fitness as you age. Simply switch to lower-impact exercises that keep the body flexible while avoiding workout-related injuries, Rosenberg advises.



Wagner suggests weight-bearing exercises to help force into bones the 1,200 milligrams of calcium that sixtysomething women require daily.

Once through the menopausal minefield, Boyd says, women’s energy levels tend to tick up, due either to an adjustment to life including hormone replacement therapy, or without it. “You see these women who want to go whitewater rafting; they’re out golfing; they’re out having a good ol’ time, because they’ve gone through (menopause) and now they’ve gotten themselves in a position of being balanced hormonally ... so that everything kind of levels off again,” she says. “I think a lot of it is mental attitude. Wherever they are at that point is how they’re gonna move on.”

No matter which stage of life they’re in, Boyd reminds women about the importance of taking care of themselves. After all, “You only get one chance with what you have.” ♦

