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Anti-Aging in Men

By Dr. Ihab Matta



Most articles about anti aging are directed to women, but nowadays men are just as interested as their female counterparts in fighting the clock. There are two main aspects to consider, the health side and the cosmetic side and I hope to discuss them both in this article.

In terms of staying healthy, hundreds of books have been written about it in the past and new ones are coming out every day, so I won't be able to cover it comprehensively in a few pages. We all want to enjoy a good quality of life as we age, not just a longer lifespan. To do this, the most important thing is still lifestyle... diet, exercise, don't smoke and minimal booze. It's common to find patients who want a magic pill to fix all the things that they have done to themselves, but unfortunately, it's not possible.

Diet is the cornerstone of a healthy lifestyle. You are what you eat and food is medicine...it raises blood pressure, lowers blood pressure; affects blood sugar levels; contributes to depression; increases or decreases your risk of dying of a heart attack... the list goes on. The most important part of a healthy diet is to keep it as natural and close to the earth as possible. Man usually ruins everything he touches; the same is true for the processing of food. You can't eat burgers and fries all day and expect to be operating at peak function, just like you can't put poor quality fuel into a Ferrari and expect it to perform to its optimum ability. The food industry, fast food outlets and the departure from a natural diet are all contributing to an unhealthier generation and we are now seeing a massive epidemic of childhood obesity which will result in our children's generation not living as long as our generation. We simply eat too much as a society. Your mother is gonna kill me for saying this but skinniness is healthier. The one thing that we have found to prolong life without question is calorie restriction. The lowest

body weight short of being anorexic is also healthiest, it reduces your risk of developing diabetes three fold compared to being a "normal" weight. Without writing a diet book, let's review the basic principles...Eat fruits, veggies, lean protein (ie fish, seafood, chicken, lean pork, veal, lean beef and eggs), nuts and seeds. Avoid anything man has touched (breads, pasta, obvious junk food, such as sweets, chips, fast food, anything in a "box" at the supermarket). You might not want to hear it but there is no such thing as a healthy bread, nor have I ever seen a study showing that one exists. All refined foods cause a rapid rise in sugar in the bloodstream, followed by an increase in insulin to lower the blood sugar. This can contribute to insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome...a fancy way to say big belly, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. All of which reduce lifespan and quality of life. It's terrible to say but sometimes the "health benefits" of a lifestyle change aren't enough to motivate a patient to make the changes, but other "fringe" benefits such as cosmetic improvement might do the trick. This happens frequently when I try to encourage women to quit smoking...it's not unusual that they are more motivated by the improvement in their skin than they are the lower risk of heart and lung disease. In this case, metabolic syndrome is associated with a reduced effect of nitric oxide, which in turn can affect a man's ability to get and maintain an adequate erection. In fact Viagra and other such drugs work directly on nitric oxide and that's how they can help men. This can be improved with a low glycemic index diet by itself.

A few other stats to convince you that diet is the most important aspect of anti-aging:

30 % of cancer is diet related

90% of diabetes can be improved by diet and exercise

The majority of high blood pressure and high cholesterol can be improved by dietary changes

Fish oil and fish consumption can reduce sudden cardiac death by 50%

Vitamin D deficiency likely occurs in more

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than 50% of Canadians (officially 30%, but my experience is more) and is associated with multiple chronic diseases and can be corrected by a simple supplement.

For the significant women in your life: iodine deficiency is common in North America and leads to thyroid and breast disease...seaweed is a great source of iodine and Japanese women don't have the same thyroid and breast problems that North Americans do.

Alzheimer's disease is linked to low levels of DHA in the brain.

Once again, the list goes on. Suffice it to say that if you are serious about improving the quality of your life, you won't get it from a pill. You need to make a healthy diet your number one priority.

Exercise:

I hate to admit it but I'm incredibly lazy. I find diet much easier to do than exercise. Saying that, exercise is the second most important part of your anti aging plan. For those of you that are like me, even a small amount of exercise will help. Walking, running, stairs, biking...it doesn't really matter. Any exercise will improve bone mass, mental function, cardiac health, and raise testosterone levels... all good things for a man. One shouldn't fall into the trap of "perfection paralysis", meaning that if you can't do it perfectly, you don't bother doing it at all.

Cosmetic:

As you can see, diet and exercise have tremendous effects on health, but they also provide cosmetic benefits as well. If diet and exercise aren't enough, there are other treatment options that we have to assist patients wanting to look "younger".

I must admit that I don't try to make patients look "younger", instead I like to make you look good for your age. If you try too hard to look younger then often you can end up looking silly; you can see many examples of that in the media.

The most common cosmetic concerns that men come to see me for are:

- Wrinkles and Folds
- Hair Removal
- Skin Texture,
- Fat

For wrinkles and folds, nothing works as well as Botox Cosmetic and Restylane. Botox Cosmetic works to relax muscle action that causes a wrin-

kle, so it works best on "dynamic wrinkles", while Restylane is a filler and is used to fill in a deep wrinkle, fold or lift up falling cheeks.

On men, the most common area treated with Botox are the frown lines that make one look angry, the crows feet and the horizontal lines on the forehead. In women I don't usually like to treat the horizontal forehead lines because it can reduce the amount of eyebrow lift they can get. Men tend to have a lower set brow so it's not a problem, although I still tend to treat that area conservatively. It lasts 3-4 months at the beginning, but lasts longer the longer you've been treating with Botox. Side effects are minimal; a small bruise is possible in the crows feet area. With too much treatment in the forehead lines, one can develop a bit of a "brow ptosis", which means the eyebrows drop. Again, in men it's not as troubling as in a woman, but it can still be bothersome and last 3 months or more. There is also a less than 1% chance of dropping the eyebrow a bit, but that usually resolves in 2 weeks or so, and can be improved with eyedrops. The chance of side effects is almost eliminated when you go to an experienced injector. You always want to know how long the doctor has been performing the procedure that you are interested in; this applies to all cosmetic procedures, not just Botox. You want to make sure the doctor attends continuing medical education and an added bonus would be if the physician teaches or trains other physicians. Some men don't want to do Botox because they like the rugged "lines" or wrinkles that make them look masculine. In that case, one can simply lower the dose to reduce the lines rather than eliminate them.

The most common area for Restylane is to lift and fill the cheeks and improve the smile lines (from the nose to the corner of the mouth), although it can be used all over the face and your doctor can advise you best of all of your options. Restylane is non animal stabilized hyaluronic acid...the same stuff that's in your own body which holds water and plumps up the skin. Restylane works exceptionally well in men to raise the dropped cheeks that happen as we age, as well as provide a chiseled jaw line or raise and fill a dropping chin. The possibilities are endless since with Restylane, you are "sculpting" and you can achieve great results. I find it tremendously helpful for the patient to bring in a picture of 10 or 20 years ago and see how their face has

changed, to provide a framework of what they want to achieve. My philosophy is not to "change" the face, but to restore it to a more youthful appearance in a natural way. My patients don't want to look "done" they want to look rested or relaxed. One wants to look good for their age, so it keeps your friends guessing. Restylane usually lasts between 8-12 months, although I've had patients in which it has lasted over two years, and others who break it down within 4 months. It all depends on your body. You guessed it...smokers and sun worshippers break it down faster.

Hair removal:

Men are most bothered by hair on their shoulders, backs, ears and a "unibrow". Laser hair removal is now a common treatment and I think the best.

Men have terminal hairs in those areas and they respond very well to laser. The best candidates have lighter skin with darker hair. Most areas need between 6-8 sessions. It is important to start early before the hair goes grey, because nothing really works well on grey hair. It is very important to stay out of the sun during your laser treatments to reduce any chance of burning and hyperpigmentation.

Skin texture:

Again, diet is going to come into play. Your skin is the largest organ of the body so if you are unhealthy, it will show up in the skin. Over and above quitting smoking, reducing excessive sun exposure and a healthy diet, you should use good quality skin products to nourish and hydrate your skin. I'm a big fan of Vitamin C and E topically.

Fraxel is a fractional non ablative laser that works to improve general skin texture, reduce pores, and improve scars, stretch marks and acne pitting. It's easiest (although not accurate) to think of it as an "aerator" for the skin...it creates microthermal heat zones directly into the dermal layer to stimulate collagen production. It works well on both men and women and starts to provide results within 1 month, with continued improvement over 6-12 months.

Fat:

You guessed it...diet. The leaner you are, the less fat you will have. Over and above that, one can consider liposuction or some of the new machines (ultrasound and radiofrequency) that can improve localized areas of fat. I do not have a lot of expe-

rience with the machines so it would be best to consult a reputable, experienced physician to see if you are a good candidate.

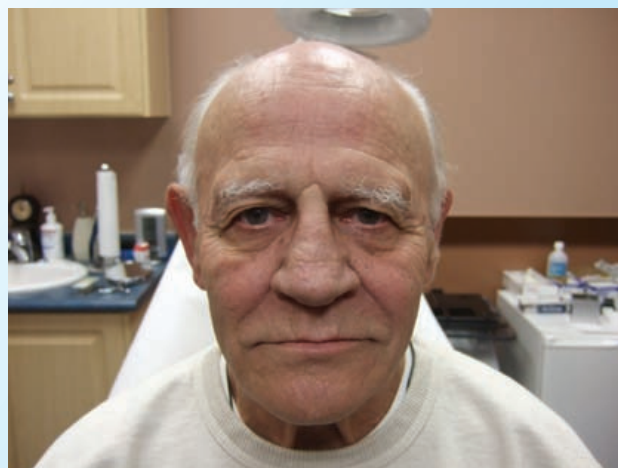
Hopefully this article shed some light on the principle of "anti-aging."



Before Restylane Injection



Immediately after Restylane Injection



2 Weeks after Restylane Injection

For more information or to contact Dr. Matta, please visit www.dr.matta.com or call: 905.790.6644

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