

Optimal Aging: Slowing Down the Clock

(From "Body & Soul" TV show on PBS)

<http://www.pbs.org/bodyandsoul/202/>

Medical practitioners are now defining aging as a hereditary disease that all people eventually develop.

Chronological aging occurs at the same rate for all. It is constant and uniform. Two people who are fifty years old share the same chronological age. But the rate at which biological aging happens varies widely from person to person, and there is much that you can do to slow the process.

A fundamental anti-aging prescription is the maintenance of a strong immune system. This includes keeping our digestive organs, liver and kidneys healthy. Most important is living a balanced lifestyle – practicing some form of stress reduction, doing regular exercise, and eating a diet packed with nutrients and fiber-rich foods.

Serafina Corsello, M.D., is a renowned physician and an expert in longevity, women's health, endocrinological disorders and natural hormone therapy. She oversees the Corsello Centers for Integrative Medicine, which are dedicated to assisting women and men in maintaining optimal health. The following are excerpts from an interview.

Gail Harris: If you were to write a prescription for healthy aging, what would be on the pad?

Serafina Corsello:

1. Try to smile.
2. Take care of your intestine and watch your liver.
3. If you can, change your attitude from negative to positive.
4. And if you feel you're beginning to have problems, look for a doctor who is capable of assisting you.

GH: What about this whole thing about attitude? Because if you're a happy person, doesn't that show on your face?

SC: Of course, of course, Gail. I go around singing. This is my defense. I maintain a joyous attitude and I use myself as an example. Because I don't want to say this comes easily. I try to train other people: when in doubt, smile. First of all, if you always have your face downward, you're going to get those ugly, downward wrinkles. I tell my patients, you want to be ageless, learn to smile. Learn to be positive.

GH: What if you have always been able to eat well and had no problem, and all of a sudden, you start having problems digesting food. What does that tell you?

SC: The digestive tract is one of the major components in anti-aging. It's the biggest step in my anti-aging pyramid. As long as the digestive functions and the intestine are well defended, we have very little to fear.

GH: So, is that one of the busiest parts of your body? Is that why it's so important? Because you're eating all the time?

SC: Not only one of the busiest parts of the body, yes, but because **the body has delegated many of the immunological functions to the intestine... So as soon as you have a sense of poor digestion, immediately you have to consider that a warning sign, because 60-70% of the immune resources reside in the intestine.** We're bombarded by infectious agents all the time. It is a balance of power between them and us.