

Questions That Can Reveal the Truth About Your Aging Process

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A quiz developed as part of the Take Five to Age Well project, a free, month-long challenge run by experts from Open University & Age UK – making it easier and more empowering to ask questions, reflect and take action.

Healthy aging doesn't depend on just one factor. Research shows that our long-term health is shaped by a combination of physical, mental, and social factors.

That's why experts have identified five key elements – called **the Five Pillars of Healthy Aging** – that form a strong foundation for staying healthy and thriving as you age:

Do you eat healthy?

Are you eating enough fruits and vegetables, limiting ultra-processed foods, and meeting your body's changing nutritional needs? Diets like the Mediterranean diet have been linked to a reduced risk of dementia and other chronic diseases.

Malnutrition is a serious concern in older adults, especially when it comes to maintaining strong muscles and bones.

Are you drinking enough water?

Are you drinking enough water to support both your brain and body? Dehydration can easily set in and affect cognitive function, mood, and energy.

Cutting down on sugary drinks can help you maintain a healthy weight, and sticking to recommended alcohol limits can also help reduce your risk of conditions like dementia. Staying hydrated is really important.

For people with life-threatening illnesses or conditions such as late-stage dementia, where appetite and oral intake may be severely reduced, sugary drinks may be one of the few sources of calories they can tolerate. In these cases, hydration and comfort take precedence over strict nutritional guidelines, so the individual care plan should always guide all decisions.



Are you physically active?

Are you moving regularly? Enough to get your heart rate up? Are you replacing long periods of sitting with movement?

A sedentary lifestyle is associated with many health risks. Simple habits like walking more can help improve fitness, exercise the mind and prevent osteoporosis, especially when combined with good nutrition.

Are you socially connected?

Do you stay in touch with people, spend time in your community, and enjoy meaningful connections? Loneliness increases your risk of depression and cognitive decline.

Building strong social relationships early on can help protect long-term health.



Are you challenging your brain?

Do you keep your mind active by studying, reading, playing an instrument, or trying something new? Research shows that taking up a hobby, doing something like a crossword puzzle, or doing a new physical activity can help keep your brain healthy and potentially delay dementia. There's no magic bullet, but even small actions can have lasting benefits.

The five questions help people reflect on how they're doing in these five areas – and where they could improve. Whether you want to add more greens to your diet, seek expert advice or easy ways to take control of your health, hobbies and happiness, or replace ten minutes of web surfing with a short walk, every step, every positive action counts.

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