



The Real Truth About Aging: A Survival Guide for Older Adults and Caregivers

Neil Shulman

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As life expectancy continues to increase, millions of seniors are living well into their eighties and nineties. With the aging of the baby boomers, the population of senior citizens will swell dramatically in the coming decades. These statistics will inevitably draw more attention to the aging process. What should middle-aged people expect as they grow older? What should caregivers of the elderly know about normal aging? How can we all stay healthy despite the limitations of age?

In this authoritative, user-friendly guide, three experts in geriatric medicine provide the latest evidence on: healthy aging, an understanding of the modern and often confusing health care system, and information about the medical issues affecting frail older adults.

They begin with the basic facts of aging, distilling the current research on the underlying molecular mechanisms, organ system changes, and associated disease risks that occur as our bodies get older. They devote separate chapters to preventative medical testing, so-called anti-aging therapies, vitamin and herbal supplements, exercise, and medication problems.

In the next section, they present an overview of the American healthcare system, from making the most of a doctor's visit and an explanation of various healthcare professionals involved in elder care to guidelines for choosing a nursing home or assisted care facility. They also discuss the health risks of a stay in the hospital, including antibiotic-resistant infections, temporary delirium, and bedsores.

In the following section, they tackle the challenges of caring for a frail senior, covering a range of issues from falls, osteoporosis, and infections, to sleep difficulties, depression, and dementia. A chapter is also devoted to the last days of life and how hospice can help.

The authors also provide a section on the need to plan ahead. Among the questions considered are: When should an advance directive be written? How much money will be needed for the elder years? When should a senior give up driving?

At a time when geriatric medicine is becoming a rare specialty and doctors receive little training in this area, the wealth of information compiled in this outstanding volume is invaluable. Senior citizens, their families, and even healthcare professionals will find it to be an unparalleled resource.

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