

What is Anti-Aging Medicine?

By Stuart H Freedenfeld, MD

This is probably the most exciting and rewarding field in medicine today. It is also one of the least understood. Even the name is a misnomer. It may be more appropriate to call it preventive and restorative medicine. It is certainly different from geriatrics, which deals with keeping aged patients safer and more content with the deterioration that has occurred over the years. Many patients say they do not relish growing old, but what they really mean is that they do not want the degeneration that often accompanies aging. Anti-aging medicine aims to prevent or reverse that deterioration so that we might have the opportunity to **die young at a very old age**.

An anti-aging evaluation usually begins with a thorough personal and family history, current diet, and current use of supplements, medications and activity or exercise levels. Previous lab tests should be reviewed and reinterpreted since **laboratory reports of "normal blood levels" only indicates that they are within the frequently seen range for the population but they do not indicate that they are in the range seen in the healthier segment of the population**. Further tests might be recommended that evaluate nutritional status, antioxidant levels and free radical stresses. When appropriate one may evaluate youthfulness of the blood vessels or check for cardiovascular risk factors (looking at much more than the usual cholesterol profile). In some situations it might be warranted to evaluate for toxic levels of environmental pollutants or heavy metals such as mercury. A great deal of importance is placed on the evaluation of hormone levels including thyroid, testosterone, progesterone, one or more of the estrogens, adrenal hormones like DHEA and sometimes reserve capacity of corticosteroids, and finally evaluation of growth hormone will often be undertaken with the aim of bringing these levels back to what is expected in a healthy youthful adult.

Ultimately a program is developed that is designed to maximize current health and prevent decline. This may involve nutritional advice, recommendations for specific supplements, an exercise program or a relaxation program. There may be recommendations for detoxification or rebuilding programs. Chelation therapies and hormone balancing are frequently utilized to maximize one's potential.

Ideally we would all like to have our bodies continue to function as they did in our twenties and thirties throughout a very long and happy life. Anti-aging medicine promises to bring us closer to that ideal, except for the happiness, which we still need to find the same old ways. Optimizing our bodies can help to restore or maintain the cellular responsiveness, the energy production capacity, the hormone levels, the mental and physical capabilities and the body appearance that gives us the ability to fully enjoy our lives. This is the potential of the anti-aging revolution.

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