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Sr. Lilly Maria F.C.C., Chairman and President

From the Editors Desk

Editorial

Many a time in our lives, we understand only too well that we are powerless. We realize our entire world can suffer a cataclysmic change in the blink of an eye. Often at these moments, we take refuge in prayer. It becomes our sole recourse and we pray with the belief that prayer will be our shield against misfortune and a source of blessing.

Christ promised, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

But though often prayer is an appeal for help, it is in truth more than that. For immediately following the above words, Christ says, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you". One follows the other. Our thoughts and words of surrender to God, is

necessarily reflected in how we behave towards others. A prayer takes the form of thoughts, words and actions. It is a surrender to God both in good times and in bad times. It is an act of love towards a fellow human. Scientific studies have shown that the happiest people are people who pray. May all our readers be filled with the blessings of peace and serenity that flows from a prayerful life.

One such humanitarian is Professor V. S. Natarajan. We thank him for permitting us to share his advice to senior citizens as expounded in his booklet 'Let us conquer old age' published by Dr. V. S. Natarajan Geriatric Foundation. Prof. Natarajan, rightfully referred to as Father of Geriatrics, is a pioneer in the field of elderly care. He was the first to start a separate department for Geriatric Medicine in Madras Medical College. He has dedicated his entire professional life for raising the standards of elderly care and continues to do so through his foundation. The Govt. of India, as a way of appreciation of his selfless service to the elderly population, conferred on him the title of 'Padma Sri' in the year 2012. We wish him long life and good health to continue his service to the elderly.

Sr. Lalitha Teresa
Editor

Let us conquer



OLD AGE

Padmashri **Dr. V.S. NATARAJAN** (Father of Geriatrics)

Age 60 is considered young amongst the elderly. 60 is the best time to take steps to nurture ones physical and mental health in order to live healthily ever after. Plan your

strategy for a healthy old age by following the suggestions given hereunder. As time goes by, you will see old age life turn into another pleasant springtime.

1. Periodical health checkup is a MUST. It is the best way to detect many diseases which lay dormant and attack unexpectedly. Do not wait till the affliction of diseases turns serious. Periodical health checkup helps in early detection of many diseases. Early intervention is the best way to treat a disease or totally prevent it.

2. While visiting your physician, do not forget to carry your prescription and if possible, the medicines that you are currently taking. Also carry along reports of lab tests if any. Inform the physician about medicines you are allergic to. These simple steps will help your physician to advice accurate treatment.

3. As far as possible, try and consult with the same physician. Do not change the physician frequently. This will only lead do distrust between you and your physician.



4. It is essential to consult with your family physician and obtain medicines required in case of an emergency. These medicines should be stored at an easily accessible place. Contact numbers of your family physician, ambulance, and pharmacy, elder's helpline and police should be kept handy in order to handle any emergency.

5. Even if it is for a little distance, it is highly advisable to carry your identity card at all times. This habit could even save your life.

6. As the old adage goes, have breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and supper like a pauper.

7. Self medication is equivalent to suicide. Avoid this habit at any cost.

8. Do not go to bed immediately after a meal. This may cause heartburn, indigestion or even heart attack at times. It is advisable to go to bed 1 or 2 hours after taking food.

9. Thirst sensation diminishes as one ages. This would lead to reduction in water intake and result in physical weakness. One should drink a minimum of 1 ½ to 2 of liters water per day .

Those with heart and /or kidney disease should consume water as per their physician's advice.

10. Eat in moderation and pave way for healthy life. Reduce intake of rice, potatoes, fatty and salty food items. Include millets in your daily diet.

Health benefits of millets:

- Prevents constipation due to high fibre content
- High calcium strengthens teeth and bones
- Presence of high quantity calories ensures instantaneous energy upon consumption.
- Lowers blood sugar due to slow absorption of sugar from the intestines
- Aids in reduction of Cholesterol
- Prevents a few types of Cancer (eg: Colon Cancer)

11. Our body synthesizes Vitamin D when exposed to sunlight. This Vitamin is essential for the absorption of calcium from intestines. Hence, exposure to sunlight for a minimum of 30minutes per day is advisable. Food rich in vitamin D such as fish, fish oil, egg yolk, liver, milk and butter to be added to the diet.

12. Chances of constipation increases as one age. Passing motion on alternate days can be considered normal and may not be a cause for concern. Constipation can be rectified by regular exercise, adequate water intake, moderate medication, inclusion of millets to the diet and consumption of fruits and vegetables that are high in fibre.



(eg : Vegetables such as greens, plantain stem, cabbages, cauliflower, snake gourd, bitter gourd and fruits such as dates, figs, mangoes, guava etc have high fibre).

13. Obesity is the friends of many diseases. Strive hard to maintain optimum weight.

14. Weight gain in elderly women can be due to thyroid disorders. Consult with the physician and get the necessary tests done.

15. Do not ignore sudden loss of weight thinking it as an effect of ageing. It could be something more serious like diabetes, initial stages of tuberculosis or even cancer.

16. While loss of appetite could be normal in old age, increase in hunger could be symptomatic of a few diseases such as Thyroid disorders, diabetes, and peptic ulcer or due to certain medicines. It is advisable to consult your physician.

17.  Loss of Teeth disfigures face, alters speech and hinders nutritional intake. Hence it is advisable to get dentures fixed.

18. Diminishing vision is not always because of Cataract. There are other causes like glaucoma, retinal bleeding and detachment of retina. Do not mislead yourself as cause of ageing. Consult an Ophthalmologist without any delay.

19. Most precious of all gifts is gift of sight. The eyes which may get resigned to ashes after death can give sight to two souls. Elders should bear this in mind and pledge to donate their eyes. Register with an eye donation program now.

20. Hard of hearing should not be ignored as cause of ageing. Even blockage of ears due to accumulation of wax can reduce hearing. In case of hearing problems, consult an ENT specialist immediately.

21. Is there any change of voice and is the change of voice persistent? If so, throat cancer has to be ruled out by consulting the specialist doctor. Those chewing tobacco, pan and smoking cigars should be vary of change of voice.

22. Elders fracture their bones when they fall. Elders with unsteady gait must use a walking stick or a walker to prevent themselves from falling. Areas frequented by them should be well lit, handrails fixed and floors should always be dry and non slippery.



23. Do not get up from bed in a swift manner and attempt to walk immediately. First slowly get up from the supine position and sit upright on your bed, then stand up gently and stay there for a short while. Proceed to walk only after this. This will prevent vertigo and fall that may happen while getting up from bed suddenly.

24. Osteoporosis (Brittle bone) does not exhibit any outward symptoms. Fracture without an injury or a fall is the peculiarity of osteoporosis. Intake of calcium rich foods are ragi, milk, guava fruit, leaves of drumstick, fenugreek greens, agathi, curry leaves, fish, prawn and crab.

25. Those with diabetes should follow these precautions while stepping out:

- Never venture out on an empty stomach
- Always keep a bar of chocolate or candy or a packet of glucose with you.
- Never leave without your identity card

26. Those with diabetes may suffer from cracked heels, unhealed wound, numbness, pain amputation of the limb. This may occur due to lack of blood circulation to the legs, nerve disorders or infections. Hence, it is advisable to wash the feet can use a mirror.

27. Heart attack can happen without chest pain. If you Experience discomfort in the chest then it is advisable to consult your physician immediately and get an ECG done. Do not try to dismiss it as indigestion etc.

28. Asthma patients should always carry their inhaler and medicines. Severity of asthma will be controlled in accordance with the treatment taken. Medicines that should be avoided during breathlessness are sedatives, anti allergic drugs and antihypertensive drugs like propranolol.

29. Do not ignore trembling of hands as effect of old age. It could be because of Parkinson's disease. Consult your Physician immediately and clarify your doubt.

30. Do not panic if you experience epilepsy for the first time in old age. The exact cause can be diagnosed through blood test and scan. Treatment can be given to prevent future recurrence.

(will be continued in the next issue of the newsletter...)



CHRISTMAS & PONGAL CELEBRATIONS




Scan this QR code on your Smart Phone to view the Jeevodaya Anthem on YouTube

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