

Innovative Healthcare & Specialist Clinics

A vision of health through the ages



There are ways to protect our health and wellbeing, whatever our age Image: iStockphoto

Protect your family's health now to help you all stay in better shape, says Dr Dawn Harper



We Brits spend billions of pounds every year on beauty products that promise to ward off the signs of age. It seems we're obsessed with staying forever youthful, but how many of us put as much thought into how we could be ageing on the inside?

Don't get me wrong, I have nothing against a bit of hair dye here and there to ward off the grey, but it's no good looking a million dollars in middle age if your bones are crumbling with osteoporosis and every day is filled with pain.

So here's my guide to what you should be doing to ensure you not only look good in middle age and beyond, but that you feel good too. Sixty really can be the new 50, and 50 the new 40, and it's never too early to start thinking about preventing disease.

20s

It's important to include regular weight-bearing exercise and a healthy diet with plenty of calcium,

as your bones reach maximum density in your 20s and you need them to be as strong as possible to prevent osteoporosis in later life.

Watch your intake of alcohol and fizzy drinks too, as these leach calcium. Everyone should be allowed to party but try to stick to recommended limits of alcohol — namely 14 units a week for women and 21 for men, with at least two dry days each week.

Women will get their first invitation for a smear test in their 20s — don't ignore it. It's a 10-minute test that really could save your life. And

guys, you need to get into the habit of regularly checking your testicles. Unlike most cancers, testicular cancer strikes young, but if it's caught early it can be curable.

30s

Many of you will have a young family in your 30s and it's easy to forget your own health needs when you're trying to juggle children, the home and a career, but it's important you make time for things like regular dental check-ups. Stress can be a big problem at this time of life, too. Often there just doesn't seem to be enough



Eat a well-balanced diet for healthy blood pressure iStockphotos

hours in the day, but you'll be a better parent, friend, partner and colleague if you find some time to unwind. And ensure that you establish as good a sleep routine as you can. A few bad nights' sleep may leave you short-fused and unable to concentrate but chronic sleep deprivation is linked to serious health problems, including type 2 diabetes and obesity.

40s

For me, your 40s are all about knowing your numbers. Contrary to popular belief, most people with high blood pressure don't get headaches, so unless you get it tested you could be sitting on a time bomb you know nothing about. The same goes for cholesterol. Only about 10–20% of your total cholesterol is derived from your diet. The rest is down to your genetics, so it's possible to eat a well-balanced, low-fat diet and maintain a healthy body mass index yet have high cholesterol. And don't forget your eyes. Most people notice a deterioration in their eyesight in their 40s. It's important to get your eyes tested every couple of years, especially if you have a family history of glaucoma or if you're diabetic.

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50s

We've all become so politically correct that we rarely hear the phrase 'middle-aged spread' these days, but that doesn't mean it doesn't happen. It does! Our metabolism changes in middle age, so most of us — even if we don't alter our diet or activity levels — can expect to gain a few pounds, and those tend to be around the midriff.

Pound for pound, weight carried around our middle carries a greater risk of developing into heart disease and type 2 diabetes than weight carried around the hips, so ditch your scales and invest in a tape measure. Ladies, if your waist is over 32 inches, and gents, over 37 inches (36 inches if you're of South Asian descent), then you need to act now.

And ladies, you'll be invited for your first mammogram. Please go. It may not be a fun day out but just like the smear test, it could save your life.

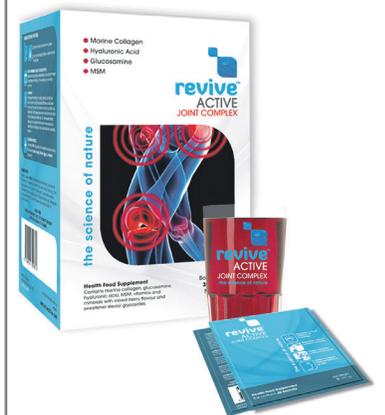
60s

If you've made it to your 60s in good health, you must have been doing something right! Now's the time to reap the rewards. Try to stay active not just physically but mentally too. The brain is like any other part of your body — if you don't use it, you risk losing it, so do something each day to stimulate your mind.

Dr Dawn Harper will be featuring on *Embarrassing Bodies*, every Wednesday, at 9pm on Really

The Golden Years recommends:

• **Natural health benefits:** Revive Active formulates premium, award-winning products with you, the customer, at the very heart of everything it produces. Revive Active health supplement has 26 ingredients, including two that are associated with the Nobel Prize. It offers multiple benefits, including sustained energy and an improved immune system, and it supports a healthy heart. The new Revive Active Joint complex gets to the inflammation at source, lubricates the joints and helps repair and regenerate cartilage. www.reviveactive.com



• **Leading medical care:** As one of the largest private hospitals in the UK, London Bridge Hospital provides the highest standard of clinical expertise and nursing care. By offering the latest technology, and state-of-the-art hospital facilities, it attracts world-leading doctors and surgeons from London's leading teaching hospitals. London Bridge Hospital offers those living in London and the South East rapid access to diagnosis and treatment with the capital's top doctors and consultants. As well as the central London site on the River Thames, the hospital has five diagnostic outpatient centres equipped with the latest imaging techniques and world-class doctors across the city, at Canary Wharf and in Sevenoaks, Kent. The hospital strives to remain at the forefront of medical innovations in the private sector, and offers a range of specialties across cardiac, oncology, orthopaedics, neurology and more. www.londonbridgehospital.com

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