Facts and Myths of Aging

Made available by:
Beth Gambel
Family and Consumer Sciences Educator
South Central/Crescent Region
Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep you mind young!

Henry Ford
Human Aging

- Begins at birth
- Influenced by a composite of biologic, psychological, social, functional and spiritual factors
- Varies from person to person
Fact or Myth?
The majority of people over the age of 65 have Alzheimer’s disease.
As people grow older, their intelligence declines significantly.
It is very difficult for older adults to learn new things.
Tell Me and I Will Forget.
Show Me and I Will Remember.
Involve Me and I will Understand.

David Kolb quoting Confucius
Personality changes with age.
Memory loss is a normal part of aging
As adults grow older, reaction time increases.
Depression occurs more frequently in older adults than in young adults.
Older adults are at high risk for HIV/AIDS.
Alcoholism and alcohol abuse are greater problems in those over the age of 65.
Older adults have more trouble sleeping than younger adults do.
Older adults have the highest suicide rate of any age group.
High blood pressure increases with age.
Older people perspire less, so they are more likely to suffer from hyperthermia.
Osteoporosis is a normal part of the aging process for women.
A person’s height tends to decline in old age.
Physical strength declines in old age.
It is better to wear out than to rust out!

Richard Cumberland
Most older adults lose interest in and capacity for sexual relations.
All five senses tend to decline with advancing age.
As Americans age, many have trouble eating well.
Older people are increasingly targets for fraud and scams.
As people live longer, they face fewer acute health conditions.
Retirement is often detrimental to health—i.e., people seem to become ill or die soon after retirement.
Older adults are less anxious about death than are younger adults.
Older adults should have the opportunity to discuss their final wishes and plan their funeral.
People 65 years of age and older currently make up about 20% of the U.S. population.
Most older people are not living in nursing homes.
The modern family no longer takes care of its elderly.
Social security benefits automatically increase with inflation.
Living below or near the poverty level is no longer a significant problem for most older Americans.
Most 80 year-old drivers are quite capable of safely operating a motor vehicle.
Older workers cannot work as effectively as younger workers.
It is not the years in your life but the life in your years!
Most older adults become set in their ways and are resistant to change.
Older adults (65+) have higher rates of criminal victimization than younger adults.
Older people tend to become more religious as they grow older.
Older people do not adapt as well as younger age groups when they relocate to a new environment.
Volunteering in the community tends to decline as we grow older.
Geriatrics is a specialty of American medicine.
Abuse of the frail elderly is not a significant problem in the U.S.
Older adults take longer to recover from physical and psychological stress.
Most older adults consider themselves to be in good health.
Older females exhibit better health care practices than older males.
Research has shown that old age begins around age 65.
Listen to the aged........
For they will tell you about living and dying.
For they will enlighten you about problem-solving, sexuality, grief, sensory deprivation, and survival.
For they will teach you how to be courageous, loving and generous.

Irene Burnside, 1975