**April 2013**

**Hello, and welcome to this month’s article!** Hopefully all is going well for you. This month’s issue has health studies relating to older people. If you’re younger, this gives you the advantage of making some changes to your lifestyle now. If you’re already along in years, you can still take steps to improve your quality of life for your golden years.

These studies show that you can make a positive impact on your health through improved diet and increased exercise. They also give you an idea of what you may have in store as you age if you don’t make these changes.

Of course, as shown in the first study, massage can do you a world of good throughout your life. Combined with other healthy lifestyle choices, your regular bodywork sessions can help you to lessen stress, improve overall function, and rest better.

If you have any questions about how massage can help you to be healthier and happier, be sure to ask at your next appointment.

Remember, it won’t be long until Mother’s Day is here; make it a special day with a massage gift certificate. See you soon!

**Massage Therapy Improves Elders' Balance and Blood Pressure**

When older adults fall, the results can be catastrophic, resulting in decreased mobility and independence, increased morbidity, and even death. Massage can help.

Research conducted recently by investigators in the Department of Kinesiology at Auburn University, in Auburn, Alabama found massage therapy resulted in "immediate and long-term improvements in postural stability and blood pressure, compared to a controlled condition," according to an abstract published on www.pubmed.gov.

This study, which was published in the *International Journal of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork*, looked at the effects of six weekly 60-minute, full-body massage sessions on balance, nervous system and cardiovascular measures in older adults.

Long-term benefits were assessed by comparing the massage and control groups on pretreatment baseline measures at week six and a follow-up assessment at week seven, according to the abstract.

Among the results:

* *The massage group showed significant differences relative to controls in cardiovascular and displacement area/velocity after the week six session, with decreasing blood pressure and increasing stability over time from immediate post-massage to 60 minutes post-massage.*
* *Long-term differences between the groups were detected at week seven in displacement area/velocity and systolic blood pressure.*

**Source:** [www.massagemag.com](http://www.massagemag.com/)

**Sugar is Bad for the Brain**

Lots of studies have indicated the health benefits of eating certain foods. Now research is showing avoiding some common foods is important for health as well.

New research from the Mayo Clinic indicates eating carbohydrates and sugar when older may raise the risk of cognitive impairment.

People 70 and older who eat food high in carbohydrates have nearly four times the risk of developing mild cognitive impairment, the researchers have found. Those who consume a lot of protein and fat relative to carbohydrates are less likely to become cognitively impaired.

Researchers tracked 1,230 people ages 70 to 89 who provided information on what they ate during the previous year. At that time, their cognitive function was evaluated by an expert panel of physicians, nurses and neuropsychologists.

Of those participants, only the roughly 940 who showed no signs of cognitive impairment were asked to return for follow-up evaluations of their cognitive function.

About four years into the study, 200 of those 940 were beginning to show mild cognitive impairment, problems with memory, language, thinking and judgment that are greater than normal age-related changes.

Among the results:

* *Those who reported the highest carbohydrate intake at the beginning of the study were 1.9 times likelier to develop mild cognitive impairment than those with the lowest intake of carbohydrates.*
* *Participants with the highest sugar intake were 1.5 times likelier to experience mild cognitive impairment than those with the lowest levels.*
* *Those whose diets were highest in fat—compared to the lowest—were 42 percent less likely to face cognitive impairment, and those who had the highest intake of protein had a reduced risk of 21 percent.*

**Source:** [www.massagemag.com](http://www.massagemag.com/)

**Baby boomers aging badly —** Thanks to medications and other marvels of modern medicine, baby boomers are living longer than their parents did. But a new study finds they’re aging in much poorer health than the previous generation. The study, based on national health surveys over two generations, found that boomers—defined as those born between 1946 and 1964—are far more likely to be obese and have diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol than their parents were 20 years ago. One reason is that they’re far more sedentary: More than half of boomers reported that they don’t exercise regularly, whereas only 17 percent of their elders said the same two decades ago. And about twice as many boomers need a cane or a walker to get around and have difficulty performing everyday tasks as members of the previous generation did. Overall, only 13 percent of boomers rated their health as “excellent,” compared with 32 percent of their forebears. The boomers’ sorry state comes despite the fact that fewer of them smoke than their parents did—and that advances in medicine have secured them a higher life expectancy than any previous generation. “Unfortunately they may be living longer with a greater burden of chronic disease,” study author Dana King of West Virginia University School of Medicine tells *Time.com*. “It’s not exactly a good public health outcome.”

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