

Health Trends

Boomers Fight Aging But Only Take Baby Steps to Health

(NAPSA)—While they express anxiety about aging, America's 75 million Baby Boomers are only taking baby steps to good health. Half of them confess they aren't eating as well as they should, and one in three say they will act to alter their diets if diagnosed with a disease.

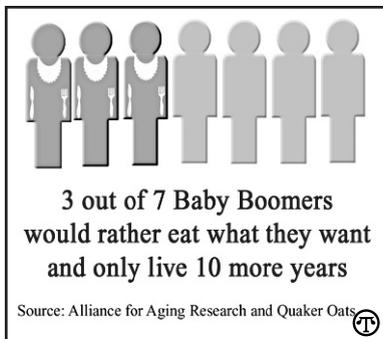
A startling 43 percent claim they would rather eat what they want and live just 10 more years, suggesting a level of frustration when it comes to managing their own health.

These are findings from "A New Age of Aging—A Study of Baby Boomer Behaviors on Growing Older," a survey released today.

The study was conducted by the Alliance for Aging Research, a Washington, D.C.-based not-for-profit group, that promotes medical research into aging, and sponsored by an educational grant from Quaker Oats, a leader in heart health research. In addition to Boomers, the study surveyed "Matures," Americans 57 years and older.

"The Boomers are filled with denial about aging and are overwhelmed on how to translate nutrition information to benefit their own health," says Daniel Perry, the Alliance's executive director. "Unfortunately for many Boomers, they are about to have a close encounter of the most serious kind with diseases associated with aging. Mentally and physically, they're not ready."

Previous research has indicated that Boomers feel youth is slipping away and, increasingly, are receptive to anything that makes them feel younger—



whether it's vitamins or vacations.

Boomers are making modest changes in their eating and lifestyle habits but they don't stick to the healthy practices. For instance, 89 percent of Boomers say they've done something to fight getting older and 86 percent say they've made dietary changes in the past year. Two-thirds report they've eaten healthier food—fruits and vegetables and more foods with fiber such as oatmeal and whole grain bread—and 57 percent say they've taken vitamins, minerals and dietary supplements to look or feel younger. Forty-two percent say they've dieted.

"But given the incidence of obesity, high blood pressure and other health-related problems among Boomers, this generation knows they should be doing more," said Perry. "Good nutrition is always important, especially as people age."

Eating whole grains and oatmeal, for instance, can lower cholesterol and improve heart health.

Thirty-two percent say that being told by a physician they have a medical condition or disease would prompt them to alter

their diet. Seventeen percent would eat differently if their physician advised it.

Take Charge

"Obviously, when it comes to the 'wake-up call' about their health, many in the 'me' generation turn into the 'show me' generation," says Dr. Vaillant. "Yet, the good news is that at age 50, you are in control of your future health and well being—and diet is an easy way to take charge."

Emerging evidence suggests Boomers feel most at risk for high blood pressure, heart disease and cancer, but they feel more threatened by diabetes and cancer than do those 57 years and older. Nutrition and diet choices can help quiet some of those fears, and Boomers appear to understand that.

Fifty-four percent of them, significantly higher than the 40 percent of Matures, agree that their generation has more health-related information available than their parents' generation did.

Founded in 1986, the Alliance for Aging Research is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health and independence of aging Americans through public and private funding of medical research and geriatric education. For more information, visit www.agingresearch.org.

Quaker Oats is a leader in helping Americans reduce their risk of heart disease and has supported research in this area for nearly 40 years. To learn more about the role of Quaker Oatmeal in a heart-healthy diet, log on to www.quakeroatmeal.com.

