

Any integral discussion on Aging would necessarily have to have a section devoted to the Skin – the largest organ of the human body. That's where the first ever signs of aging would be evident and seen.

• Why and how does the skin age ?

Just like any other body organ the skin too ages. The two theories in vogue as regards ageing are the programmed cell death theory (that DNA is programmed to die over a period of time) and the wear and tear theory (that skin undergoes wear and tear over time and just cant keep pace repairing itself)

• What are the features of an aging skin ?

Lack of elasticity , wrinkling , dryness , yellowish/white discoloration are the major changes the skin undergoes as it ages. It are mainly these that give rise to skin related problems seen in old age. Some problems are directly as a result of ageing others are skin problems occurring in all ages but complicated because of old age.

• What all should one do to delay all that to the maximum possible extent ?

The simple answer lies in the importance of balanced diet , exercise , minimizing sun exposure and routine skin care.

Majority of the skin problems can be managed by using moisturizer based soaps, massaging oil after baths, drinking lots of water (tea / coffee / cold drinks don't count !!!!). Regular exercise – as simple as walking too – keeps the circulation going and is of great help in keeping the skin supple. And if meditation can be added nothing like it. Tensions worry anxiety all rob the skin of its sparkle.

Another group of conditions which occur in all ages but need to be specially treated in the elderly are Herpes , Psoriasis , Vitiligo .The right treatment form the right doctor and at the right time should be the dictum .Self medication is never recommended. Allergies to hair dyes is very frequent .One should test them before first use and use good quality ones only

Women in menopause have their own set of skin complaints – what are they and what needs to be done? Flushing , dryness , hair loss (or even excessive growth in some) are commonly encountered. Moisturizers, right diet, relaxation and if required medication form the gynec is what should alleviate majority of the complaints

...Not all is grim. There are a couple of conditions that are rare in the aged too !!! Fungal infections, allergies ..

A word that chills all – Cancers of the skin – How to recognize them ?Any persistent non healing growth (or one having rapid growth , change of colour , bleeding or pain) should be investigated .More so if there is a positive family history. A simple biopsy can confirm the diagnosis.

As a final word , commonsense approach to health and fitness with a couple of few additional tips is just that will work for the skin as well. With a whole range of treatments (mildest to strong ones all with minimal side effects) available, practically all skin problems – if presented early , can very well be managed.

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