



AGING TODAY

Bringing Sexy Back



By Bob Roth, Managing Partner of Cypress HomeCare Solutions

In 1975 who could have predicted that the prophetic words of Harry Wayne Casey would be the best advice for healthy aging. You may know him better playing with his solar sidekicks, KC and the Sunshine Band. "KC" turned 67 this year and back when he was only 24 his mantra was; "Do a little dance, make a little love, get down tonight". Baby Boomers, I challenge you to come up with a better battle cry!

For my mature audience, I'd like to go straight to the R rated portion of this song. Creating and/or maintaining the sexual intimacy in monogamous relationships is an important component to healthy aging. So, why are we so silent on this subject? I thought there was this big sexual revolution happening?

Are senior citizens exempt? Has our sexual wellbeing expired? Timed out like a web browser with our banking passwords? If your web page timed out, you put your passwords back in... you don't say, "Oh well, I guess I won't be transacting anymore. You figured out how to do online banking. This challenge is much more rewarding. Just go ahead and use the app.

In this case, not short for application but appendage, be it the external male or internal female. The use it or lose it cliché could not be more profound. It is all about blood flow, be it the heart, the brain or south of the equator. Managing expectations is the key to keep the spark alive and fan it to a flame.

As young lovers we were propelled by our soaring hormone levels with no shortage of desire or arousal. Mature lovers are propelled by seeking a closeness, a connection even when our body's response is hampered by declining hormone levels. As desire and ability waxes and wanes with illnesses, surgeries, death of a spouse, etc. there may be times when sexuality melds into sensuality. The important point is that we never outgrow our need for touch.

The new normal may take longer, be less intense, or more sporadic. The new normal may be kissing and cuddling that is less goal directed. You and your partner can define intimacy in other ways; perhaps expand the definition of what sex is. Apologies to Bill Clinton.

Communication is the key to prevent a dry spell from becoming a drought. Joan Price, author and advocate for ageless sexuality and fitness urges seniors to speak up and advocate for their own sexual health. Be direct and arrive at your appointment with this script in hand if necessary: "Doctor, my sexuality is important to me, here is what is interfering with it: Let's run the tests and find out what's going on. If you can't help me, please refer me to someone who can."

It's not surprising that seniors have low sexual expectations. Society and pop culture keep aging and imperfect bodies invisible. The media de-sexualize people over a certain age. Aging seniors are portrayed as comical or deviant (dirty old man) when sexual desire is discussed.

In her book, *The Ultimate Guide to Sex after Fifty*, Joan Price states 33 health benefits of sexual activity. The most important takeaway is that our sexuality is not a little box that is separated from our blood flow, our hormones, or our brain. It is one big connected loop. We have been the generation keeping an open sexual dialogue with our kids. Let's keep the conversation going long after the nest is empty. Seeking and maintaining the connection with your beloved with every fiber of your being and nerve ending of your body, is what life is all about.



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