



Long Term Solutions
LONG TERM COMMITMENT. LONG TERM PEACE OF MIND.

This study, sponsored by the National Institute on Aging of the National Institutes of Health and published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, finds there are multiple paths that can lead to longevity.

Led by Dr. Thomas Perls, associate professor of medicine at Boston University School of Medicine, the study emphasizes that the ability to survive to extreme old age appears to be the result of a complex combination of genetics, environment and lifestyle.

While a healthy lifestyle and behavior will get people into their mid- to late-80s, genetics plays a role beyond 80. Good genes are shown to defend against, or slow, the aging process, for example, by protecting against toxins that build up in our systems as we age.

Another study, New England Centenarian Study in Boston, supports the notion that longevity does run in families. In fact, the sibling of a centenarian is four times more likely to live past 90 than the general population. But good genes are just part of the story.

Further research suggests that lifestyle habits play a huge role in keeping the body and mind in excellent shape well into the eighth and ninth decade of life. In fact, many of the centenarians in these studies blew the top off the common assumption that old age must be filled with pain and disability and had lived well past 90 without the disabling symptoms of heart disease, diabetes or even Alzheimer's Disease.

Of course, researchers can offer no guarantee that people who make lifestyle changes will live to age 100. Study findings suggest that most people can live well past 65 if they treat the body well by eating a healthy diet, exercising, and managing stress while keeping away from cigarettes and other toxins such as growth hormones.

An additional factor with regard to longevity is continuous learning. Learning something new such as ballroom dancing, chess, or another language does good things for the brain," says Gene Cohen, director of the Center on Aging at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. "People who learn new skills or information probably build new brain cells and make connections between existing neurons," he says.

Finally, whoever said attitude is everything was right. Centenarians and people who live long productive lives tend to be optimistic and have fun. They tend to let troubles roll off their backs," said Dr. Mitchell Harman, founding director of Kronos Longevity Research Institute. They learn how to let go of anger, resentment and are not bitter.

**What these studies continue to demonstrate is
not just how to live a long life, but how to live a good long life.**