

TIPS

to Boost Your Health
as You Age

Healthy aging is not just about living longer – *it's about living better*. Research suggests that only 15 – 25% of aging is dependent on your genes. That means the rest is up to you. Healthy habits can play a major role in preventing and managing chronic diseases associated with getting older.

Recently, we talked with **Dr. Alaa Ahmed** and **Dr. Thiri DeMars** of CalvertHealth Primary Care (CHMG PC) to discuss healthy aging and learn more about what each of us can do every day to enhance our quality of life and maintain our independence well into our later years. CHMG PC has locations in Prince Frederick, Solomons and Twin Beaches.

“As we get older, having a primary care provider who truly knows us is essential.”

“It can also improve trust, ensure better follow-up and make it easier to address medical issues early,” said Dr. Ahmed. “Research consistently shows that strong continuity of care leads to better outcomes, fewer hospitalizations and lower mortality.”

Dr. DeMars agreed: “Having a positive and respectful relationship with a primary care provider fosters honest conversation and discussions that can lead to better understanding of health goals as well as achieving those goals more efficiently.”

“Regular visits catch health issues earlier, when treatment is easier and outcomes are better.”

Dr. Ahmed stressed: “Vaccines and age-appropriate screenings help prevent serious infections and detect conditions like cancer, heart disease and osteoporosis before they become more complex.”

Dr. DeMars added: “Honestly, regular checkups, vaccines and screenings are important for everybody but even more so for older adults. Ideally, you want to maintain a proactive approach to health due to the natural aging process.”



“Healthy habits play a major role in preventing and managing chronic diseases.”

Dr. DeMars emphasized: “Healthy habits can not only prevent chronic disease progression, it can even reverse chronic disease. Most of my visit time with patients is focused on these healthy habits. It is the one thing that patients can do that has only benefits with no side effects that medications often come with.”

Dr. Ahmed concurred: “Healthy daily routines – such as staying active, eating balanced meals, getting adequate sleep and avoiding tobacco use – play a major role in preventing and managing chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, many cancers and cognitive decline.

“Positive lifestyle choices can not only add years to your life but also life to those years.”

Dr. DeMars added: “For those of us that are looking to continue to do the things we love and enjoy the hobbies and activities that we have been looking forward to, and spending quality time with friends and family, healthy lifestyle choices is how we maintain our health so we get to do those things.”

Dr. Ahmed highlighted, “Physical activity and healthy eating support both body and brain health. Exercise, especially resistance training, helps maintain strong bones and muscles, *reducing the risk of falls and fractures*. Research also shows that regular activity and good nutrition are among the most effective ways to *protect cognitive function and lower the risk of dementia* as we age.”

Dr. DeMars also underscored the importance of mental wellness. “While physical activity, nutrition, sleep

“Your primary care doctor is your best partner in guiding and supporting you toward healthier aging.”

– Dr. Alaa Ahmed, CalvertHealth Primary Care

and stress management are all very important – mental wellness plays a key part in your overall health. Your social connectivity and social wellness also play a huge role in our health.”

“Start small – every step counts.”

“Even 10-15 minutes of daily activity can make a difference,” said Dr. Ahmed. “Choose exercises you enjoy and stay consistent. Incorporate simple nutrition changes, like adding one extra serving of vegetables per day.

“It is never too late to build healthier habits,” she said. “Research shows that adopting healthier habits at any age – 60s, 70s or beyond – can improve longevity, mobility, cognitive health and overall quality of life.”

Dr. DeMars concluded, “There is no one size fits all for everybody. It is never too late to establish care with a primary care provider and discuss your lifelong goals and health goals and how you can achieve them.”

MEET THE DOCTORS

Primary care physician **Alaa Ahmed, MD, PhD, MPH** of CHMG PC in Prince Frederick completed her training at Johns Hopkins University where she gained extensive hands-on experience in both clinical and community-based settings. She is passionate about helping her patients stay healthy and has a special interest in obesity medicine and chronic disease prevention. Board-certified family medicine physician



Dr. Thiri DeMars, MD, MPH of CHMG PC in Solomons has been practicing seven years including positions in primary care, obstetrics and most recently as regional medical director for an urgent care facility. She wants her patients to know they have someone in their corner.



Tips To BOOST Your Health as You Age

Did you know that making lifestyle changes can help you live longer and better? Try these tips to get started.

Manage stress – try yoga or keep a journal.

Learn something new – take a class or join a club.

Get moving – try gardening, biking, or walking.

Choose healthy foods rich in nutrients.

Go to the doctor regularly.

Connect with family and friends.

Learn more about steps you can take to promote healthy aging at www.nia.nih.gov/healthy-aging.

