



Health And Well-Being

Secrets To A Longer, Healthier Life

(NAPSA)—People who live for 100 years or more aren't just lucky. Researchers have found that those who live exceptionally long and healthy lives often have company—in their very own families. Scientists are now aiming to understand what makes these elders unique, so we can all benefit.

Recent studies have revealed that people who live past age 100 were usually healthier at younger ages than their peers.

Unique “protective” factors against disease and disability may have been at work throughout their lives, not just at very old ages. So what exactly protects these people and contributes to their extraordinary survival?

Genetics may play a role. Studies of very old people and their families in specific populations—such as those in Iceland and in Mormon and Amish communities—have shown that remarkably long life runs in families. Researchers have even found specific genes that may contribute to exceptional survival.

While genes likely play a role, other factors that tend to run in families, such as lifestyles, can also contribute.

You're probably already familiar with these from when you were a kid: Eat your fruits and vegetables, don't smoke, get enough rest, exercise several times a week, monitor your health and see your doctor regularly.

NIH's National Institute on Aging (NIA) has begun a major study of long-lived families to learn more about the factors that lead to longer life.

The Long Life Family Study (LLFS) will focus on what protects



Both lifestyle and genetics play a role in living past the age of 100. A new study aims to find out more.

against disease and disability by following exceptional families over time.

You may be able to help researchers discover the secrets to a longer, healthier life. LLFS investigators are looking for people ages 80 or older who have at least one living brother or sister age 80 plus. If this describes you and your family, please go to <http://www.longlifefamilystudy.org/> or call one of the recruitment offices toll-free: Boston University, (888) 333-6327; University of Pittsburgh, (800) 872-3653; or Columbia University in New York, (800) 304-4317.

“The more families we get, the better the chance we can find robust results,” Winifred K. Rossi, deputy director of NIA's Geriatrics and Clinical Gerontology Program, said.

—Adapted from *NIH News in Health*, a publication of the National Institutes of Health (newsinhealth.nih.gov).