

YOUR HEALTH

Understanding Aging

(NAPSA)—The life expectancy of Americans has increased almost 30 years in the last century, from 47 years in 1900 to about 75 years today. This dramatic increase is attributed to improved hygiene, lifestyle changes and medical advances.

Although aging is thought to be an inevitable process of life, medical and scientific researchers are exploring whether the rate of aging can be slowed down.



Many scientists say we may soon understand the secrets of aging and its effects on the human body.

Recent studies with mice, rats, and other animals such as fish, worms and spiders have raised the possibility that diet could control the rate of aging. Rodents, on restricted diets, for example, maintain youthful characteristics long after well-fed animals show their age.

A link between genes and longevity is also being explored. Scientists have doubled the life of fruit flies by inserting extra copies of a certain gene into fruit fly embryos.

Some substances may slow the effects of aging on our bodies. For example, a hormone known as DHEA has been shown to reverse the deterioration of the immune system in mice.

Animal research is helping scientists to understand and possibly reverse the effects of aging.

For more information, visit www.fbresearch.org.