

The Road to Longevity: Living to 120—and Beyond?

Medical technology can now identify risk factors in the human body long before they impact your health

A medical revolution is underway—one that's making it possible for us to extend our lives for decades by stopping now-fatal diseases before they can take hold of our bodies. In the coming years, we'll not only be able to live longer, but also have fuller lives characterized by enduring physical mobility and mental sharpness.

Here's a closer look at the personal longevity revolution—and what it could mean to you and your family as you seek to live your best life.

Stop disease before it starts: the power of biomarkers and genomes

Perhaps the most interesting component of longevity care is the role of biomarkers in understanding genomic risk and promoting long-term health.

Biomarkers are biological data points that reveal the current physical state of affairs of a particular condition. Most biomarkers are blood tests for future risk, but they also might include other health data points like a calcium score or even simpler values like heart rhythm and blood pressure.

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Biomarkers are nothing new, but they can now be used in advanced ways thanks to personal genome sequencing—a process that can reveal a specific future health risk you face so you can stop it in its tracks. What's more, new health biomarkers are being identified regularly—giving doctors more data points to examine and track in the pursuit of longevity. (Bonus: The costs of gene sequencing and biomarker analysis are also coming down.)

A person's unique genome is just that—unique. Genomic mapping and analysis enables doctors to identify the specific processes that lead to the creation of a future disease state. Once a biomarker corresponding to that future disease is identified, a detailed protocol can be developed to track and manage it.

Bottom line: You can know if you have specific risk factors in your body that could lead to major health problems, long before those health problems ever rear their ugly heads. Armed with that almost predictive insight, you can take steps to stop those problems before they have a chance to do damage.

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YOUR OPTIONS FOR LONGEVITY

The choice is yours

It's a given that you want to live a long, healthy and active life—and that you want the same for your loved ones.

The question therefore is “What are you doing about it?”

Basically, you have two options:

1. Manage the process yourself using available medical resources. For example, you can have your genome mapped by any number of health service providers. The question, however, is how to use the genomic information effectively once you have it. You can adjust your diet and exercise more—but that's not really comprehensive longevity care.

2. Work with longevity care experts. You can work with physician and care teams who have a deep understanding of longevity care and are actively staying abreast of the latest developments in the field. These experts will regularly monitor developments with your particular biomarkers, with the goal of staying out in front of any illnesses, diseases or other negative health outcomes. They will also provide you with a range of options to address any issues that do crop up, often using more advanced and less invasive health care methods.

Longevity care like this is often available through high-quality concierge medical practices. There are a number of different types of concierge medical practices, but two major types typically provide longevity planning:

- **Physician concierge practices**, which provide a high-level patient experience by ensuring greater access through rapid callbacks, extended office hours and shorter wait times
- **Continuous connected care practices**, which use the connectivity provided by technology to deliver care and ensure continuity in the patient experience, regardless of their location or time of day

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