

NEW SURVEY REVEALS HEALTH PRIORITIES, MOTIVATIONS & BELIEFS

FOR AMERICANS 50+

Abbott, the maker of adult nutritional drink Ensure®, and the International Council on Active Aging® (ICAA) conducted a survey* of 600 people ages 50 and older to shed light into their biggest priorities, motivators and beliefs related to nutrition, health and activity.

With Age Comes Perspective

As Boomers enter a new stage of life, their priorities change as well as their fears, and a focus on health becomes increasingly important.

- More than half of those surveyed (58 percent) ranked remaining in good health as a priority. Thirty-three percent identified financial stability and 27 percent identified discovering new places as priorities.
- The biggest fears for adults ages 50 and older as they age are: a health setback* (39 percent), being a burden on family (21 percent) and financial concerns (14 percent).

Motivated by Independence

While checking off bucket list items may seem like the top motivator for Boomers to stay healthy and active, being able to stay independent (72 percent), travel (57 percent) and spend time with children or grandchildren (45 percent) are actually at the top of their lists.

- Nearly one-quarter (22 percent) of respondents ages 56 – 65 say going on dates and having romantic evenings motivates them to stay healthy and active.
- One-third of adults (33 percent) ages 50-55 say staying employed highly motivates them to stay healthy and active.

*A health setback is defined as a surgery, fall, high blood pressure, hospitalization, injury, etc. that requires temporary or long-term lifestyle changes.

Does "Old" Have an Age?

Adults have different opinions on what they consider "old," and unsurprisingly, older adults have a higher threshold of what they consider "old" than younger adults.

- More than one-third (36 percent) of adults ages 50 and older say 80 is the age when they begin considering someone "old," while 20 percent begin considering someone "old" when they are 70.
- Half (49 percent) of adults ages 75 and older begin considering someone "old" when they are 80 or older, compared to only 25 percent of adults ages 50-55.

A "Can Do" Attitude

Nearly 7 in 10 respondents said that they believe a positive attitude can add six or more years to their life, and 83 percent who have experienced a health setback said that a positive attitude was very important in their recovery. These beliefs are backed by science -- in a 2016 study of 4,000 adults ages 50 and older, researchers identified that people with a positive outlook on aging have lower levels of c-reactive protein in the body, a marker of stress-related inflammation. This helps explain why people with a positive outlook live seven and a half years longer than people with negative outlooks^{2,3}.

Advice to Younger Self

When asked what advice adults ages 50 and older would give their younger selves, the top two answers were "prepare for retirement" and "eat healthier" (30 percent and 27 percent, respectively). Surprisingly, activities such as "spending more time with family and friends" (19 percent) and "traveling more" (17 percent) did not rank as highly.

- Older adults emphasize taking advantage of time while you have it more than younger adults. Nearly one-fourth (22 percent) of adults 75 and older would advise their younger selves to "seize the day," compared to only 12 percent of adults ages 50-55.

References:

1 Survey conducted by Clarus Research with support from Abbott. The online survey interviewed a nationally representative sample of 600 men and women over 50 years old during August 2017

2 Levy, BR, et al. "Longevity increased by positive self-perceptions of aging." J Pers Soc Psychol. 2002 Aug; 83(2):261-70. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12150226

3 Levy, BR, et al. "Survival Advantage Mechanism: Inflammation as a Mediator of Positive Self-Perceptions of Aging on Longevity" J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci. 2016 Mar 30. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/labs/articles/27032428/>

