



March 23, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

How to Get to 90

On Monday, I told you that I was returning home from helping celebrate Aunt Peggy's 90th birthday. It was a great celebration with her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren, brother Donald, and nieces and nephews. Here's the complete roster: three children, eight grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and 10 great-great grandchildren.

Later in the day, I asked her why she thinks she's lived so long. The first thing she said was that she was glad she quit smoking years ago; her husband did her a great favor when he insisted she quit. Then she said that she tried to eat right. Her husband Walter was a vegetarian because he had high cholesterol; he lived to 95. Then she said she tries to exercise when she can, and looking back at the family pictures, you can see that she's stayed very close to her ideal weight. Finally, she said family. Her grandmother lived to 96, one brother lived to 92, and baby brother Donald, Paula's Dad, is 88 and still going strong. That's Dad and Peggy in the photo.



What can we take from all this? If you want to live a long and healthy life, lifestyle is critical. It doesn't hurt to have good genes as well. I told Paula that I could never have a family event like this—everyone in my Mom and Dad's generation is dead. Many smoked and drank, and their diet wasn't good.

I think that there is one more factor in all this. Walter was a career Army officer, so their family had access to a great healthcare system throughout their marriage and retirement. Aunt Peggy has over 10 stents throughout her body, but nothing seems to slow her down.

Now, if we could just find a way to reverse her (and Dad's) hearing loss, that would be great!

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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