

## 11 Early Signs You May Have Health Issues When You Get Older



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The process of aging happens to all of us, to one degree or another. So don't fret over those wrinkles, or the fact you can no longer stay up until three in the morning. But if you notice a few health concerns in your 20s and 30s — like brain fog, painful joints, or oral health issues — they can be a sign you'll be more likely to [have health issues when you get older](#) .

Many of these early issues can be a sign of inflammation, which is incredibly aging to the body. That's why, if you notice them early on, it's important to do something about it ASAP. Same goes for hormonal issues (also very aging) and unhealthy lifestyle habits, like not brushing your teeth or getting enough exercise (again — but perhaps more surprisingly — *very* aging).

The good news is that, in many ways, you do have control over how healthy or unhealthy your body will be as you get older. "Lifestyle changes are the key," [Dr. Scott Schreiber](#) , a chiropractic physician, nutritionist, and acupuncturist, tells Bustle. "Start by looking at your diet and adding fruit and vegetables. Increase your

activity by going to the gym or taking the stairs. Reduce your stress by doing meditation and yoga. And make sure you get plenty of sleep!"

It may sound simple, but these changes can make a big difference in how your body holds up through the decades by reducing inflammation and improving your health. And they can even [keep you younger longer](#) . Read on for a few signs you may have inflammation and other age-related issues in your body, as well as how to turn things around, so that you can stay as healthy as possible in the years to come.

## 1. You Were Diagnosed With "Leaky Gut"

"Chronic inflammation increases with age, which is why systemic inflammatory and autoimmune conditions, such as leaky gut, can be an early sign of aging," says [Dr. Josh Axe, CNM, CNS, DC](#). If this is the case for you, you'll likely experience food sensitivities, digestive troubles, and maybe even skin issues, like acne or psoriasis — among other things.

You can help turn this issue around by fighting off inflammation with anti-inflammatory foods. "Some examples of these include bone broth, steamed vegetables, healthy fats, and fruit," Axe says. "To support healthy bacteria in the gut, you can also incorporate probiotic-rich foods and beverages into your diet, like kombucha, raw cultured dairy, kefir, sauerkraut, and kimchi."

## 2. You've Been Feeling A Bit Foggy

Brain fog is another symptom often associated with age, and one that can get worse as you get older. "It's characterized by several symptoms, including fatigue, irritability, concentration problems, forgetfulness, headaches, lack of motivation/mild depression, anxiety, and insomnia," Axe says.

Again, diet can play a major role in feeling better and keeping your brain healthy for decades to come. "First, your diet should focus on anti-inflammatory foods like protein and healthy fats," Axe says. "In addition, healthy carbohydrates are

necessary for brain health, so don't be afraid of carbs in the form of healthy options like sprouted bread and brown rice." You might also consider de-stressing more often and getting more/better sleep.

### 3. You Don't Have Enough Muscle Mass

Cardio is great, but don't forget about those muscles of yours. "Since we tend to lose strength as we age, you're not helping yourself by starting off weak," says [physical therapist Dr. Jasmine Marcus, PT, DP](#), in an email to Bustle. Strength [training helps keep your bones strong and healthy](#), which is super important for women as they age — especially if osteoporosis runs in your family.

So do your future self a favor and get to working out. "This can mean doing body weight exercises at home or working out in a group training class — it doesn't need to mean becoming a cross-fitter," Marcus says. "You just need to start building strength now."

### 4. You're Having Oral Health Issues

Believe it or not, your mouth can serve as a tiny glimpse into the overall health of your body. So if it's full of cavities and gum disease, you can reasonably expect that infection and inflammation may be elsewhere in your body.

And that's why the sooner you can clean up your act, the better. As [Dr. Gary Glassman D.D.S, FRDC\(c\)](#), chief dental officer at Dental Corp says, "Keeping your gums healthy, which you do by removing the plaque/bacteria from your teeth readily ... will prevent swelling and bleeding in your gums and ward off infection that can damage the bone underneath your teeth." And keep it from spreading to the rest of your body.

## 5. Your Knees Have Been Aching

As Axe says, "Joint pain is often also associated with inflammation and swelling." Which isn't going to go away on its own, and may even get worse with age. Apart from checking with your doctor, one way to improve your joint health is by walking on into your kitchen.

"To keep your joints healthy and to minimize symptoms, fill your diet with anti-inflammatory foods like fruits, vegetables, ginger, and turmeric," Axe says. "Also be sure to eat lots of foods rich in inflammation-busting omega-3 fatty acids, such as fatty fish, walnuts, chia seeds, and flax." That'll keep your knees and hips oiled up, so to speak, so you can be limber for years to come.

## 6. You've Spotted A Few Varicose Veins

Those bulgy blue veins on your legs, known as varicose veins, tend to surface when there are other health concerns going on. As Axe says, "... they can be due to hormonal fluctuations, loss of skin elasticity, blood pressure changes, or increased inflammation." If you spot them, it may be a good idea to pop off to the doctor and find out what's going on. And, as always, you can keep those aforementioned health issues by in check by exercising and eating lots of anti-inflammatory foods.

## 7. You're All Out Of Energy

While it's normal to feel tired after a busy week, it's not so normal to experience decreased energy levels, especially if it's also affecting your ability to exercise — which doctors say can be a sign of age-related health concerns.

"Typically, this correlates with declining hormone levels including thyroid, adrenal, and hormones decline," says [Dr. Christopher Calapai, DO](#), an osteopathic physician and board-certified family medical practitioner. Healthy hormone levels are key to aging well, so get those checked by your doctor ASAP.

## 8. You've Noticed Changes In Your Skin And Hair

As Calapai tells me, women with hormone imbalance may notice early signs of aging, like thinning hair and changes in the strength of their fingernails. "For example, the thyroid hormone is important for controlling factors like metabolism, energy, memory, focus, concentration ... as well as hair, skin and, nail growth," he says.

"As this hormone declines, we typically feel our bodies change. We might feel like we can't do the things we used to physically, or we start to look and feel different. These are often considered 'age-related changes,' but can also be explained by hormone decline. Correcting these levels can reduce or reverse many of these symptoms."

## 9. Your Vision Isn't What It Once Was

It's totally normal for vision to get slightly worse with age. But if you're noticing changes in your 20s, definitely speak up. As Schreiber tells me, you shouldn't be having issues like macular degeneration, glaucoma, or cataracts. "If you are diagnosed with one of these, a lifestyle change is probably necessary," he says. All in the name of warding off potential eye issues, that are likely to get worse with age.

## 10. Your Posture Isn't The Best

It's OK to slouch every now and again. But if your back is "stooped" or rounded, it could be a sign of more issues to come. "If our muscles are not flexible, they shorten and pull the bones closer together — that's what causes joint pain and stiffness," [Amanda Sterczyk](#), a certified personal trainer, in an email to Bustle. "A stooped back (i.e., poor posture) is a sign of weak muscles and joints being pulled together."

To combat the issue and stay feeling younger longer, Sterczyk follows the "move it or lose it" line of thinking. "Our bodies are perpetual motion machines — they were

designed to move. But if we don't move, the muscles and joints become stiff and weak."

## 11. Your Balance Is Off

Balance is one of those things we take for granted, until it's gone. As Sterczyk tells me, it's normal for balance reflexes to start to go in your late 20s. But that doesn't mean you should give into your fate, and allow them to get worse with age.

"That's why it's so important to take off your shoes and exercise all of your muscles, from your head right down to your toes. Embrace your body's notion for motion and keep moving."

*This article has been updated from its original version.*

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