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## Healthy aging: Americans living longer

In all the talk about health disparities among the races, there is finally a silver lining for African American men and women in Massachusetts.

For men who reach the age of 85, blacks are expected to live an additional nine years, two more than whites. For women, the number is eight more years for blacks and 7.6 years for whites.

Of course, the only problem is making it to 85.

But change is coming.

Dr. Monera B. Wong sees it every-day. A geriatrician at MGH Senior Health, Massachusetts General Hospital's geriatric medicine unit. Wong attributes the longer life spans of all Americans to

not just one thing, but a combination of everything from healthier diets and lifestyles to better medications and medical technologies.

Wong does not make predictions on how long people will live. "Suffice to say,"

she quipped, "the numbers keep going up and up and women usually do better by about five years."

Indeed, America is becoming a "mature" country.

According to Census 2006 Estimates, people aged 65 and above accounted for 36.8 million, or 12.4 percent, of the population, an increase of 9 percent since 1995. A fast-growing part of that group is the 85 and older population, which numbers more than 4 million.

Baby boomers are one reason for the large increase in the number of senior citizens. The number of Americans aged 45 to 64 who will reach 65 within the next 20 years increased by 40 percent this past

decade.

African Americans are a growing part of the aged population. In 2006, 18 percent of persons 65 and over were minorities, and of this number, more than 8 percent were black.

**“The good news, however, is that poor health is not an inevitable consequence of aging.”**



Esther Williams (right) is a reading coach for Generations Incorporated, a nonprofit organization that connects Boston residents 55 and older with children who need help in reading and mathematics. Here, Williams is coaching Elise Santiago. Lera Shawver photo

There are several reasons for the increase in years — improvement in public health, better understanding of diseases and advances in medications and treatments — to name a few.

The results are very clear. In Massachusetts, for example, those born in 1900 were expected to live to the age of 45, while those born in 2005 had a life expectancy of almost 80.

Esther Williams is 74 years old, and she says, God willing, she will continue to "feel good" for a long time.

For Williams, living long is about "doing things sensibly" and heeding the words of the late comedian Richard Pryor, who once observed in one of his Mudbone routines that people don't grow old being no fool.

Apocryphal or not, growing old does have its problems. Many of the illnesses and conditions that make up the leading causes of death in this country occur more frequently in the elderly. Heart disease, cancer, stroke, flu and pneumonia are more

*Esther, continued to page 4*

## At 93 — A dandy dancer

If anyone should know about health, it's Osceola B. Nathan.

Last month, she celebrated her 93rd birthday, and with the exception of a few little health problems, she is still strong enough to teach line dancing on a regular basis.

Nathan is not your typical senior citizen. She was in her sixties when she picked up belly dancing.

It was a surprise, then, when she noticed something strange after returning home from Sunday church services a few years back. It was "a twinge in the corner of my mouth," she said.

Startled, she got up to look in a mirror and said she "started walking sideways."

"I knew something was wrong," Nathan said. "I don't walk sideways."

As she later learned, that strange twinge was the onset of a minor stroke. But on that day, Nathan didn't appear too stressed.

She had called her doctor and explained her symptoms. The doctor told her to immediately get to a hospital. Nathan agreed but explained that she would take the subway.

Flabbergasted, Nathan's doctor advised that an emergency ambulance was soon to be dispatched.

Nathan compromised by catching a



Osceola B. Nathan, 93, keeps herself healthy by eating right and line dancing.

cab, arriving at the hospital 20 minutes later. She was admitted for the night and discharged the next day.

So much for the weak and feeble nonagenarians in this modern medical era.

Nathan attributes her longevity in part to one simple thing — hard work.

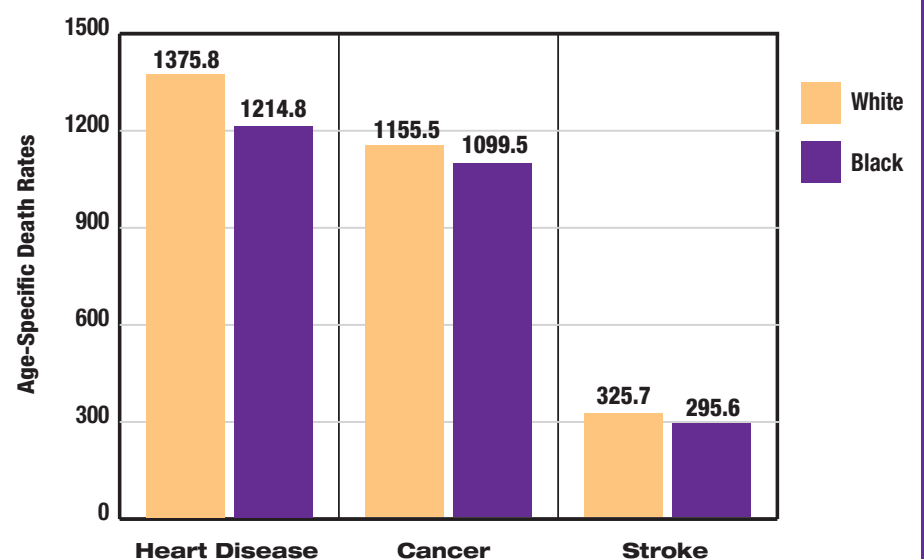
The oldest of eight children, she has worked most of her life. At an early age she and her father were the breadwinners in the family.

She has also had great habits. She

*Osceola, continued to page 4*

## Reversal of Disparities

The disparities in certain death rates between blacks and whites in Massachusetts decline with age. In 2005, for those 65 and older, death rates for the three leading causes of death — heart disease, cancer and stroke — for blacks were less than those for whites by 13, 5 and 10 percent, respectively. Blacks who lived to the age of 85 had more expected years of life remaining than whites.



Age-specific rates are the number of deaths per 100,000 persons 65+

Source: Massachusetts Deaths 2005, Center for Health Information, Statistics, Research and Evaluation, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, March 2007.

# Making the most of your golden years

**A**s you age and enter your senior years, there are certain health tips to keep in mind to ensure that your life is not hindered by infirmity and stays vibrant as the years progress.

## Diet

First and foremost, it is important to maintain a healthy diet. In general, according to Healthwise, an organization that provides consumer health information, you should follow a diet that is low in salt and fat, but rich in fruits, vegetables and fiber to prevent common chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and osteoporosis, among others.

More specifically, there are certain items that you should be sure to include in your daily diet. The first is protein, which helps build and maintain muscles — muscles tend to lose strength with age. Protein can be found in poultry, fish, eggs and soy. Make sure that the protein that you consume is low in fat, such as beans and low-fat yogurt.

Secondly, it is important to eat a diet rich in carbohydrates, the fuel for your body. There are two kinds of carbohydrates: simple sugars and complex carbohydrates. Simple sugars include the sugar in candy and desserts, as well as sugar found in fruits and milk or dairy products. While refined sugar products like candy should be limited, valuable nutrients can be acquired from fruit, which is also a good source of fiber, and dairy products, which contain vitamin D and calcium.

Complex carbohydrates, on the other hand, are found in vegetables and grain, which contain vitamins, minerals and fiber. Most of your carbohydrates should come from complex carbohydrates.

Third, be careful of the fat you consume. While a small amount of fat is necessary to provide energy, try to get most of your fat from monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, such as salmon, olive oil and nuts. These types of fats will help keep your cholesterol low. Limit your intake of saturated fats, such as those from beef, pork, butter and cheese. Particularly dangerous are trans fats, found in most processed and fried foods and commercially baked goods. Trans fats are a leading cause of high cholesterol.

Also, it is important to drink plenty of water. As you age, your kidneys become less efficient, so staying hydrated

takes a little extra effort. To make sure that you're hydrated, try to drink between six and eight glasses of water each day.

You should also keep in mind that as you age your energy needs will decrease, so your calorie intake should also decrease. Your body will begin to produce fat much more easily than it does muscle, so maintaining a diet high in protein is important to continue muscle growth.

## Exercise

It is also important to continue to exercise. Because the type of physical strain your body can withstand changes with age, it is beneficial to consult a personal trainer accustomed to designing workout plans for seniors. A trainer can help develop an exercise regimen that will prevent injury but maintain a healthy amount of activity and muscle growth.

Consult your doctor before starting any exercise regimen to make sure that the routine takes your heart health into account. Examples of exercises for seniors are walking, yoga, stretching and swimming. Exercise is also necessary to prevent bone loss.

## Screening

There are certain medical exams and tests that are important to get as you age. The type and frequency may vary depending on your health. For instance, your blood pressure should be checked at least yearly to make sure your heart is healthy and stays that way. Your cholesterol should also be checked regularly. Be sure to watch your weight gain and ask your doctor what a healthy weight is for you.

You should get screened for colon cancer at age 50 or earlier if you have a history of colon cancer in your family. In addition, a yearly rectal exam is important not only for early colon cancer detection, but also for early prostate cancer detection in men. Men should also receive yearly prostate-specific antigen (PSA) tests for prostate cancer. Women should get a mammogram each year and a pap smear and pelvic exam every three years, as the risk for breast, cervical and vaginal cancer increases with age.

Have your eyes checked every couple of years — more frequently if you have vision problems — and your hearing every three years. As you age, both vision and hearing will decline, and regular checkups are a great way to ensure you are

taking advantage of the latest technology to provide the best sight and hearing. As you age, your bones thin, so ask your doctor if a bone density test is required.

In terms of vaccinations, it is important to vaccinate yourself against pneumonia and the flu. Ask your doctor about any other vaccinations that may be beneficial for you.

## Emotional Health

Beyond the physical, there are emotional and mental aspects of your health that you should consider. An important step to mental health is staying physically active. Other than the physical benefits, exercising releases chemicals that increase emotional well-being while inactivity can worsen depression and stress. There have also been studies that suggest exercising regularly delays the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

There are also several ways to keep your memory and mental faculties sharp. You should try to challenge your brain daily. This could mean doing a crossword puzzle or learning a new instrument, but whatever it is, the key is keeping your mind active. If you have trouble remembering things, write down important details and try to develop routines for those things in your life that you do regularly so there are fewer things that you must remember. Smoking can also increase the decline in your mental faculties.

It is important to be mindful of your emotional state. If you begin to struggle with depression, talk to your doctor about getting help. While staying active can help prevent depression, there are times when only professional treatment can relieve the emotional distress.

These tips are meant only as guidelines. Keeping a running dialogue with your doctor is the best way to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Your doctor knows your situation the best; therefore, it is important that you actively pursue a healthy relationship between you and your primary care physician.

## Stay quick on your feet.

Aside from the obvious physical benefits, activities such as running, swimming, and cycling are great for your mind too.

Exercise releases endorphins in your brain that give you an emotional boost and may even delay the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's.

If aging has you a little concerned, talk to your physician about what types of exercise are best for you.



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## Graceful aging

Sickness is not a normal part of aging. Through lifestyle changes and regular health screenings, it may be possible to minimize or control certain medical conditions that increase in incidence with age.



Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Exercise for 30 minutes most days of the week. Start with 10-minute intervals if necessary.



Maintain a healthy weight.

Check for high blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes.



Continue screenings for cancer.

Get yearly flu shots and other immunizations as recommended.



Do not smoke.

Drink plenty of water every day.



Remain connected to family and friends.

## Questions & Answers

### 1. Why does the incidence of high blood pressure increase with age?

An increase in blood pressure is not a result of normal aging, but may result from other changes in your body as you age. For example, if you've smoked over the years, your arteries can harden leading to high blood pressure. High blood pressure is very common, and many times we don't know exactly why it happens. Eating healthy (especially a low-salt diet) and exercising regularly can help keep your blood pressure at a normal level, but you should routinely have it checked by your doctor.



**Joseph R. Betancourt, M.D.**  
Director of the Disparities Solutions Center, Massachusetts General Hospital

### 2. What is the oldest age at which a person can begin to exercise to improve his or her health status?

It is never too late for anyone to begin an exercise regimen that is tailored to his or her abilities and needs, and is safe. In fact, regular exercise is even more important for seniors than for other age groups since the risk of disease and lost mobility is greater. Exercising can lower blood pressure, reduce risk of stroke and heart disease, and prevent osteoporosis and arthritis. You can also experience other benefits — reduced stress, increased mobility and independence and avoidance of boredom and depression. Exercise regimens for older people can range from simply walking more to regular strength training. Older people who are thinking of beginning a more strenuous exercise program should seek the advice of a health care or exercise professional before beginning their regimen.

### 3. Is memory loss inevitable in older people?

As our bodies age naturally over time, so do our brains. That being said, memory loss is not inevitable, and is often caused by longstanding high blood pressure, diabetes or mini-strokes. The most common effects of brain aging include an inability to think as quickly or remember things as well as we used to. However, research has shown that these effects are counteracted by the knowledge we gain from life experience. Your memory may not be as good as it used to be, but you have increased information about how to complete a task or experience that can help you make a decision. In addition to the benefit of increased knowledge to compensate for memory loss or quick reactions, studies have shown there are other ways to slow mental decline. They include playing board games, reading, playing a musical instrument, completing word puzzles, and even continuing to stay physically active.

### 4. Is it true that the older you get, the sicker you get?

While it is true that as we get older and our bodies age naturally, it is not realistic to expect to get increasingly sicker the older we get. It is extremely important to continue to take good care of yourself as you age in order to stay in the best possible physical and mental condition. You should stay physically active, follow a healthy diet and make regular doctor's appointments to screen for any potential diseases and prevent the worsening of any existing medical conditions you may have. In addition, it is essential to have a positive attitude about aging, continue engaging in activities you love and maintain relationships with friends and family.

### 5. Should people over 65 be immunized?

Some shots (also called vaccines or immunizations) are even more important for adults than they are for children. Vaccinations can prevent serious illness or even death and are especially important for people who may not be able to fight off infection with a normal, healthy immune system — this includes younger children and older adults. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest several vaccinations for diseases in people over the age of 65: influenza (the flu), pneumonia, tetanus and diphtheria, chickenpox, herpes zoster (shingles) and measles, mumps and rubella. Some of these vaccinations do not need to be repeated if they were given earlier in life, while others should be received annually. You should check with your doctor about which shots are right for you and how often you should receive them.

### 6. Why do older people often experience depression, stress and other mental health behaviors?

Depression and stress are not in and of themselves a normal part of aging. They often occur as a result of dealing with other serious illnesses, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, and Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. Other factors may add to stress or depression, such as worries about finances and social issues, including loneliness, isolation or the most common cause — loss of a spouse. Should you experience symptoms of stress or depression, you should discuss this immediately with your doctor as there are many things that can help you deal with this.

*Elizabeth Donahue of the Disparities Solutions Center assisted in the preparation of these responses.*

## The Power of Prevention

More than one third of deaths in this country are preventable. Furthermore, black Americans often share a disproportionate burden of many chronic diseases and conditions. Many of these conditions — high blood pressure, diabetes and cancer — are largely preventable or controllable by adopting healthier behaviors and obtaining regular screenings. Medicare provides coverage for many preventive screenings. Call 1-800-MEDI-CARE for additional information.



CONDITION	TEST	FREQUENCY*
Breast cancer	Mammogram	Yearly
Cervical cancer	Pap test	1 – 3 years
Prostate cancer	PSA, DRE	Yearly
Colorectal cancer	Various**	1 – 10 years

Source: American Cancer Society

Hypertension	Blood pressure check	Every regular health care visit
High cholesterol	Fasting lipoprotein profile	Every 5 years
Diabetes	Blood glucose	Every 3 years
Obesity	Body Mass Index and Waist circumference	Every regular health care visit

Source: American Heart Association

\*Frequency depends on risk factors and the type of test. Consult your doctor for appropriate exam and schedule.

\*\*Sigmoidoscopy, barium enema, colonoscopy, fecal occult blood test or fecal immunochemical test

Healing the racial divide in health care

## Dr. Joseph Betancourt wrote the book on health care disparities. Now he's trying to erase them.

When Joseph Betancourt was in medical school, he often saw children acting as interpreters for family members who did not speak English. Originally from Puerto Rico, and as the only Spanish-speaking medical student on his team, he had to interpret for hospitalized patients.

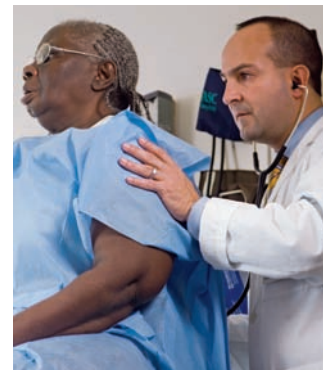
Years later, Joseph Betancourt, MD, MPH, co-authored a landmark study by the Institute of Medicine that found striking inequities in health and health care for racial and ethnic minorities across the US.

When Massachusetts General Hospital president Peter Slavin, MD created the Disparities Solutions Center at MGH, he chose Dr. Betancourt to lead it. "It is time to move from diagnosing the problem to treating it," said Dr. Slavin.

The MGH Center is the first hospital-based Disparities Solutions Center in the country to move disparities beyond research into policy and practice. It has \$3 million in support from MGH and Partners HealthCare.

The Disparities Solutions Center will:

- advise MGH in its efforts to identify and address racial and ethnic disparities in care;
- develop and evaluate customized solutions to



eliminate disparities in the health care community in Boston and beyond;

- educate, train and expand the number of leaders working to end disparities nationwide.

Perhaps most important, the center will transfer what it learns to hospitals and health centers, community groups, insurers, medical schools, educators, government officials, and of course, physicians

and nurses across the country.

One of the Center's first efforts is the new Diabetes Management Program at the MGH Chelsea Health Care Center, where more than 50 percent of patients are Latino. Latinos are more likely than whites to die from diabetes complications including kidney failure, blindness, heart disease, and amputations.

MGH Chelsea health professionals will help patients control their diabetes, get regular screenings, and prevent complications through telephone outreach, individual coaching, and group education sessions in English — and Spanish.

Translating talk into action is what Dr. Betancourt has been doing all his life.

More information at Boston Public Health Commission at [www.bphc.org](http://www.bphc.org)

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common in those over the age of 50, and increase in incidence with increasing years.

Time does take a toll.

Wong refers to the “geriatric syndromes” — conditions that commonly afflict older adults.



Esther Williams works with Fatima Sillah on her reading skills. Lera Shawver photo

“Yes, people are living longer,” Wong cautioned, “but people have a lot of other conditions that go along with that.”

The eyes don’t focus and the hearing doesn’t work quite as well. Gray hairs are commonplace, and sexual dysfunction is a reality.

There are more troublesome changes as well. Kidneys lose efficiency in removing waste from the bloodstream. Some conditions common in African Americans, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, can damage kidneys even further. Medications can also be harmful.

Incontinence, or loss of control of the bladder, is fairly common. Older men often experience an enlarged prostate, which makes emptying the bladder difficult. Postmenopausal women can experience stress incontinence as the muscles controlling the bladder weaken.

Harder hit is the cardiovascular system — the heart and connecting blood vessels. An older heart becomes a less efficient pump, and the arteries, which carry oxygen-rich blood from the heart to the muscles and organs, become narrow and inelastic, leading to high blood pressure. According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, there is a 90 percent chance of developing high blood pressure after the age of 55.

High blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart failure, heart attack and kidney failure — all common in the elderly and blacks as well.

Of principal concern are the brain and nervous system. Memory gets a bit fuzzier; reflexes a little slower. A major fear is Alzheimer’s disease, a chronic, debilitating condition that strikes the elderly.

The good news, however, is that poor health is not an inevitable consequence of aging. A healthy lifestyle can keep many of the changes at bay. Even better news is that it’s never too late to adopt the triad of

healthy living — smoking cessation, healthy eating and weight control, and exercise.

The risk of heart disease drops almost immediately after smokers quit. Eating a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains can improve nutrition. Choosing foods low in trans and saturated fats, sugar and salt can minimize the dangers of cardiovascular disease and obesity.

According to recent studies, exercise not only helps the heart, muscles and bones by increasing blood flow throughout the body, it has also been found to keep the mind sharp and improve memory.

Although 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week are recommended, it is not necessary to fulfill the time requirement in one session. It can be broken up into 10-minute segments.

Old age is no excuse to stop getting regular screenings. Unless directed by a doctor, seniors should continue regular exams for breast, gynecological, prostate and colorectal cancers. Tests should also continue for chronic conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes, which lead to cardiovascular diseases.

With one glaring exception, Williams is no stranger to leading a healthy lifestyle.

She walks four miles a day — two in the morning and two in the afternoon with her dog Coco — and is a member of a walking club called “Shangri-La” that was formed by the Colorado Street Citizens’ Group. She has also completed the 20-mile “Walk for Hunger,” sponsored by Project Bread. She likes yoga, and is part of a bowling league.

Williams said she cooks all her food from scratch. She does not eat frozen foods at all. She checks ingredients in the foods she buys for trans fat and salt.

For someone who rarely visited a doctor, Williams is remarkably healthy. A self-proclaimed naturalist, she never took drugs of any kind, including aspirin. All of that changed last August, when she was having trouble with her vision in her right eye.

When she went to the eye doctor, she told him that she hadn’t seen a primary care physician in years. The eye doctor made her find one and set

up an appointment. She did, and was later diagnosed with high blood pressure and high cholesterol. She is on medication for those conditions.

She still remains cautious about medications. “I ask a lot of questions,” she said. “I always look at the medications for side effects. If something makes me dizzy, I’ll ask if there is an alternative drug that I can take.”

Her one unhealthy behavior, surprisingly, is smoking. Like most smokers, she wants to quit, and has taken significant steps in reducing the number of cigarettes she smokes from 15 a day to about five or six.

Because she doesn’t believe in taking what she considers to be unnecessary medicines, she is trying to quit on her own.

She has asked God for strength and set a quitting date: New Year’s Eve. “Hopefully, I’ll be able to say goodbye to smoking,” she said.

If she does, the chances are even greater that she might celebrate her 85th birthday.

And no telling how long after that.



Monera B. Wong, M.D., Geriatrician MGH Senior Health

## Free Screenings for Cardiovascular Diseases and Cancer

Date	Institution	Test	Address	Time	Tel. No.
12/7	Boston Public Health Comm.	BP, Chol., Gluc., BMI	Elderly Commission 1 City Hall Plaza	10 am - 3 pm	617-534-2295
12/19	Boston Public Health Comm.	BP, Chol., Gluc., BMI	Mozart Park Jamaica Plain	1 - 4 pm	617-534-2295
12/11	Boston* Mammography Van	Mammogram	Bowdoin St. Health Center 200 Bowdoin St, Dorch.	By appt.	617-632-1974
12/12	Boston* Mammography Van	Mammogram	Martha Eliot Health Center 75 Bickford St., J.P.	By appt.	617-632-1974
Ongoing	Mt. Auburn Hospital	PSA, DRE, Urinalysis	330 Mount Auburn St. Cambridge	10 am - 3 pm By appt.	617-499-5722
Mondays	The Family Van	BP, Chol., Gluc., BMI	Dudley Square	1:30 - 4:30 pm	617-442-3200
Tuesdays	The Family Van	BP, Chol., Gluc., BMI	Park Ave. & River St. Hyde Park	9 am - 12 noon	617-442-3200
		BP, Chol., Gluc., BMI	302 Warren St. (near McDonald’s) Roxbury	1:30 - 4:30 pm	617-442-3200
Thursdays	The Family Van	BP, Chol., Gluc., BMI	Codman Square	9 am - 12 noon	617-442-3200
		BP, Chol., Gluc., BMI	Forest Hills T-Stop	1:30 - 4:30 pm	617-442-3200
Fridays	The Family Van	BP, Chol., Gluc., BMI	Upham’s Corner	9 am - 12 noon	617-442-3200
		BP, Chol., Gluc., BMI	Mattapan Square	1 - 4 pm	617-442-3200

BP - blood pressure; Chol. - cholesterol; Gluc. - glucose for diabetes; BMI - body mass index for obesity  
PSA - prostate-specific antigen for prostate cancer; DRE - digital rectal exam for prostate cancer  
\*A fee may apply. Call for information.

## Osceola

continued from page 1

never drank alcohol. She tried smoking only once. She was 21 years old, and told her father that she thought smoking was glamorous. Her father gave her a cigarette. She took one puff and choked. She never smoked again.

She also has had the benefits of a Southern diet. She grew up in Virginia. “People down there ate healthy,” she explained. “Everyone had a garden.”

Eating healthy foods is deeply rooted — she still dines on lots of fruits and vegetables. She has cut back on salt and fat and eats a banana every day. She has a special fondness for berries — blueberries and raspberries, in particular.

Nathan is even particular about the milk she drinks. She drank whole milk for most of her life but switched to 1 percent, mixing that with dry milk to reduce the fat content even further.

Regular exercise has been an integral part of Nathan’s life.

It started by happenstance.

She said that she lived a stressful life. Her husband, now deceased, was a minister and they traveled with their two children across the country, starting small parishes wherever they went. The constant moving caused a lot of upheaval for the couple and two children.

She needed an outlet to reduce the stress.

She found one shortly after moving to Boston about 30 years ago. She started belly dancing. She loved it.

She joined a group of belly dancers and they performed all over the city, including at Boston’s annual First Night celebration on New Year’s Eve.

And then came line dancing. She loved that just as much, even taking belly and line dancing classes back to back.

Eventually, she was asked to teach line dancing. She started at Kenmore Abbey, a low-income housing center for seniors and mentally disabled. She taught there for two years and then started classes at the Harriet Tubman House. But when the classes got too small because of illnesses or deaths of the students, she moved to Freedom House, and works



Osceola B. Nathan kicks up her heels while leading her group of line dancers.

with the Roxbury Goldenaires.

For a time, she worked at Symphony Plaza, teaching dance to Russians, none of whom spoke English. She said their language skills didn’t matter; they still ended up being good students.

At just under 5 feet tall, Nathan is a modern day miracle. She does have hypertension and high cholesterol, but is taking medication for those chronic illnesses.

Other than a touch of arthritis in her hands and shoulders — the result of a lot of sewing and needlepoint over the years, she thinks — she is doing just dandy.

Her biggest problem, she says, is with her medicines — she has already been hospitalized three times due to over-medication. But she is doing much better now.

Nathan has always had an independent streak in her.

She reads everything carefully and said she knows what drugs she’s on and why. She asks lots of questions.

“Sometimes the doctors don’t always want to listen or take the time to answer my questions,” she said. “I think it might be because they think that I am old.”

Shame on them.

Anyone who knows Osceola B. Nathan knows what she really is — a dancer.