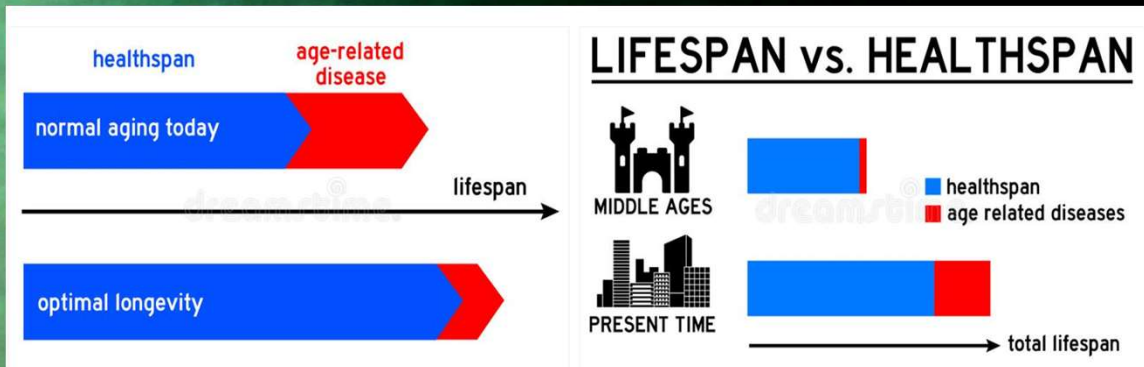


# Lifespan versus Healthspan

OUR LIFESTYLE CHOICES CAN GREATLY INFLUENCE THE  
PATHWAY WE FOLLOW

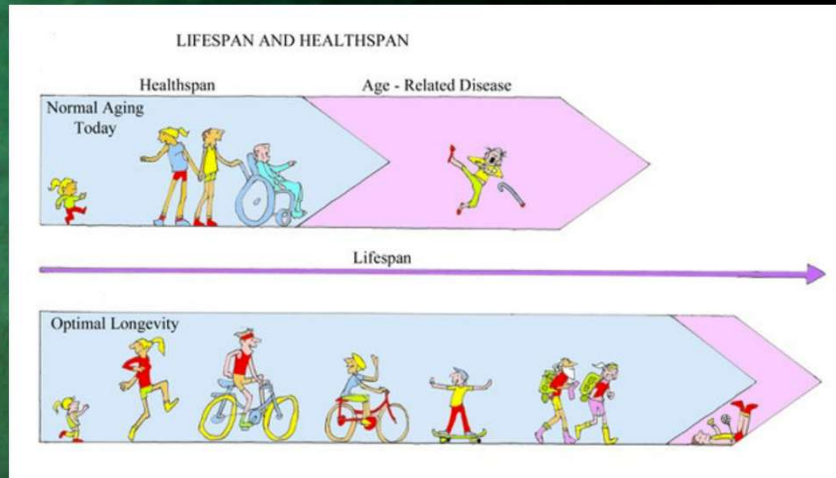
Why our lifestyle choices can affect our Healthspan

As we age what we really want is to live as fulfilling a life as possible without the burden of chronic disease, something we refer to as morbidity. In the ideal world we might live to the ripe old age of 100, for example, enjoy a game of golf in the morning, tend to our garden, visit with family or friends in the afternoon, and quietly pass away in our sleep that evening. That is our lifespan. Our ability to maintain of physical, mental, social, and psychological well-being until that day is healthspan.



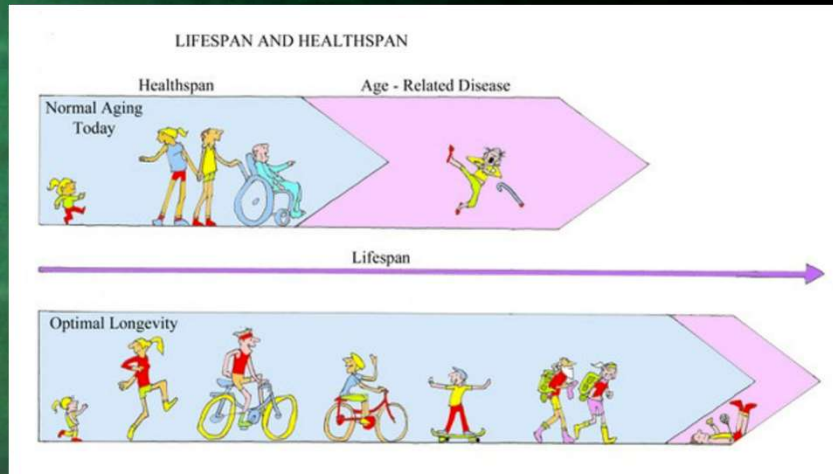
It would be great to live to 100, free of all chronic diseases, and quietly pass away in your sleep having enjoyed your retirement years filled with family, friends, activities, hobbies, all the while enjoying exceptional physical, mental, and emotional health. Of course, this is the ideal world but, the longer we live (lifespan) the greater chances are that we may be afflicted with a chronic disease years before we die (healthspan). As shown in the illustration in the slide we want to minimize the time we spend in the red, lifestyle-related diseases, to match our healthspan and lifespan as closely as possible. Although we didn't live as long in the middle ages, in comparison to today, healthspan and lifespan were closely matched. In contrast we live longer today but spend much more time with chronic diseases, therefore our healthspan is less than ideal and we spend undesirable time in the red shown in the slide above.

A great pictorial of Lifespan versus HealthSpan is by the illustrator Toni Goffe on the blog of retired medical practitioner Hugh Bethell in the UK. Hugh is an advocate of physical fitness and it's benefits - [Blog | Exercise, Fitness And Health | The Benefits of Physical Fitness \(exercisefitnessandhealth.info\)](http://exercisefitnessandhealth.info)



Optimal longevity, as shown in the lower half of the pictorial above plays out the ideal scenario; stay active and healthy your entire life, live to a ripe old age (lifespan) free of major chronic diseases (healthspan). Work in your garden in the morning, enjoy a game of golf or other hobbies with a group of friends, have a nice dinner with family then quietly pass away in your sleep that evening.

Lifestyle changes are never too late. Quitting smoking at any time in life will enhance your quality of life, while decreasing your risks of cardiovascular disease and cancer. You will never "out-exercise a bad diet." Check out the PowerPoint presentation on COVID and metabolic health to learn more ways to optimize your mitochondrial health — therefore improving your healthspan



So, we can't change our genetics or unfortunate events, but we can always improve our healthspan at most points in our lives. Quitting smoking at any time in your life will enhance your quality of life (QOL) and decrease your risks of cardiovascular disease and cancer. Cutting back on sugar, refined carbohydrates, and vegetable oils can have a powerful influence on improving metabolic health. Sadly, many people are of the belief that they can be inactive, eat an ultra-processed diet and "take a pill or supplement" to compensate — nothing could be further from the truth. Others feel they can out-exercise a bad diet, but this is another unfortunate fallacy. If you are interested in improving your metabolic health, then check out the link to COVID and metabolic health and begin your journey today. It's never too late.

## References

1. Aha! Webpage; non-profit Canadian alternative health website: [Lifespan vs Healthspan - aha!](#)
2. Juvenescence Webpage; [Healthspan vs Lifespan: Which One is More Important - Juvenescence \(juvlab.com\)](#)
3. Hansen M, Kennedy BK. Does Longer Lifespan Mean Longer Healthspan?. *Trends Cell Biol.* 2016;26(8):565-568. doi:10.1016/j.tcb.2016.05.002 [Does longer lifespan mean longer healthspan? \(nih.gov\)](#)
4. Institute for Public Health, Washington University in St. Louis. Healthspan Is More Important Than Lifespan, So Why Don't More People Know About It? [Healthspan Is More Important Than Lifespan, So Why Don't More People Know About It? | Institute for Public Health | Washington University in St. Louis \(wustl.edu\)](#)
5. Hugh Bethell, retired physician and exercise enthusiast, UK [HEALTHSPAN VERSUS LIFESPAN - Exercise, Fitness And Health \(exercisefitnessandhealth.info\)](#)

For additional information, some readers may wish to delve more deeply into healthspan and lifespan by following the references listed on the slide above.

