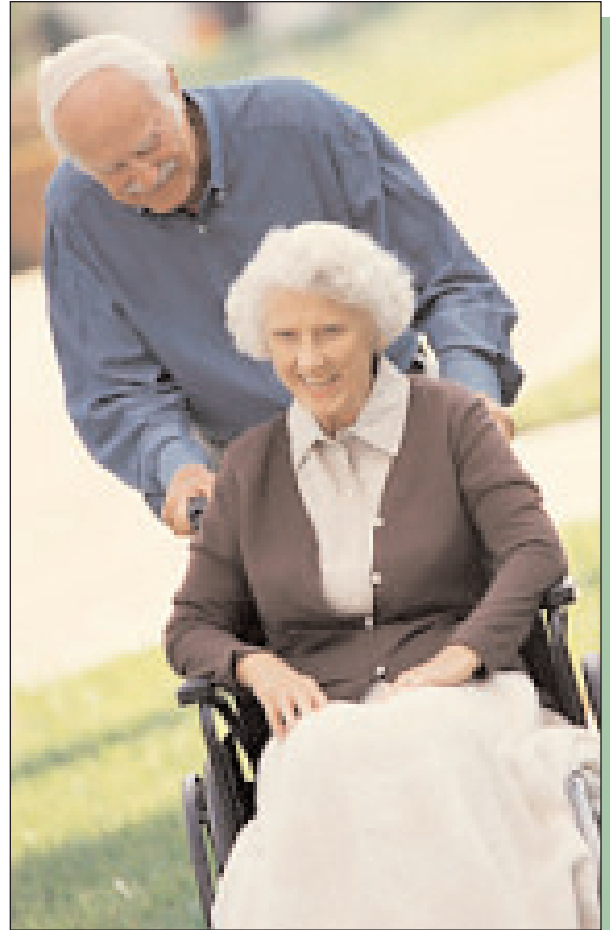


# Nourishing Your Aging Parents and Yourself

by Edward Bauman, M.Ed., Ph.D.

*When I get older, losing my hair  
Many years from now  
Will you still be sending me a valentine?  
Birthday greetings, bottle of wine?  
If I stay out till quarter to three  
Will you lock the door?  
Will you still need me?  
Will you still feed me?  
When I'm sixty-four?*



Paul McCartney (The Beatles) was 25 years old when he wrote this song. Today, he is, 64, and in seemingly excellent health. Each of us is aging, day-by-day, some healthfully, some not so well. Baby boomers are finding their children grown and taking care of mom and dad their latest responsibility. Aging parents can require much the same level of care as young children. To help families meet the task nutritionally, I wrote a new verse to the tune of the Beatles song above. Try singing along with me.

*Now that you're older  
Eating your flax  
Keeps you regular  
You can have a smoothie nearly every day  
With green powder, berries and whey  
Forget the coffee, it's time for tea  
You'll be feeling free  
Yes, I still need you and I will feed you  
When your 84*



My definition of nutrition is the care and feeding of an organism. As adult children, it's time for us to show up for our parents who nursed us along as infants and did what they could to provide for us setting the stage for us to grow into the people we are today. Now, the roles they are a changing. We need to care for them.





### What To Do With Aging Parents

- ▶ Accept the aging process
- ▶ Identify needs: theirs and yours
- ▶ Inventory what you have to give
- ▶ Appreciate the role reversal
- ▶ Build a support network
- ▶ Mend fences
- ▶ Honor your commitments
- ▶ Make sure they are optimally nourished

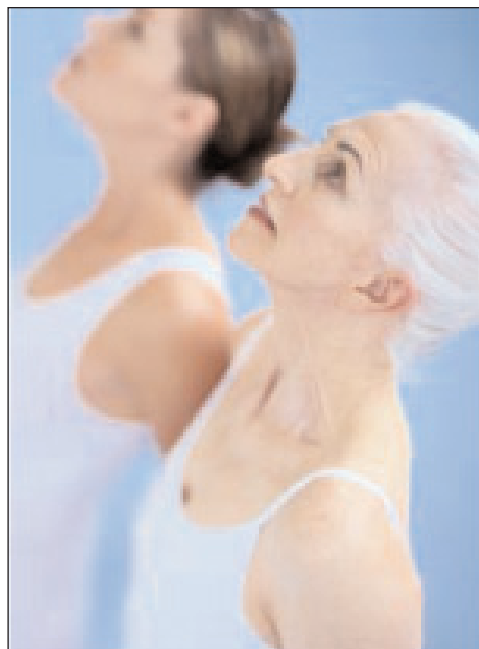
Let's use an 84-year-old male parent, (let's call him "Pop") as an example. Clearly, he is not as sharp as he was in his youth or middle age. We see fading senses, loss of coordination, cognitive decline and signs of dementia, extreme fatigue, depression, increasing resistance and rigidity, diminished social contacts, fear of life and death and a tragic loss of self-esteem. Metabolically, pop has diminished appetite, digestion, absorption, muscle mass, bone density, endocrine output, immune capability and cellular energy production. Along with this, pop has numerous complaints, medications, pain, insomnia, frailty, doctor visits, crisis episodes, financial worries and irrationality. How can an adult child manage all of this and not be overwhelmed in the process? It certainly is not easy for anyone.

### Lifestyles For Healthy Aging

If a parent is in his 80's, then the child is likely to be in his or her 50's, give or take a few years. At this point in the child's life, it is high time to jump start a daily, proactive, healthy living program that includes being

- ▶ Physically active
- ▶ Mentally active
- ▶ Emotionally active
- ▶ Spiritually active
- ▶ Socially active
- ▶ Nutritionally active

Health is not a spectator sport. Far too many people expect western medicine to manage their chronic, degenerative health conditions with medication and surgery. To their dismay, they find it is largely up to them to regain their vitality and well-being that

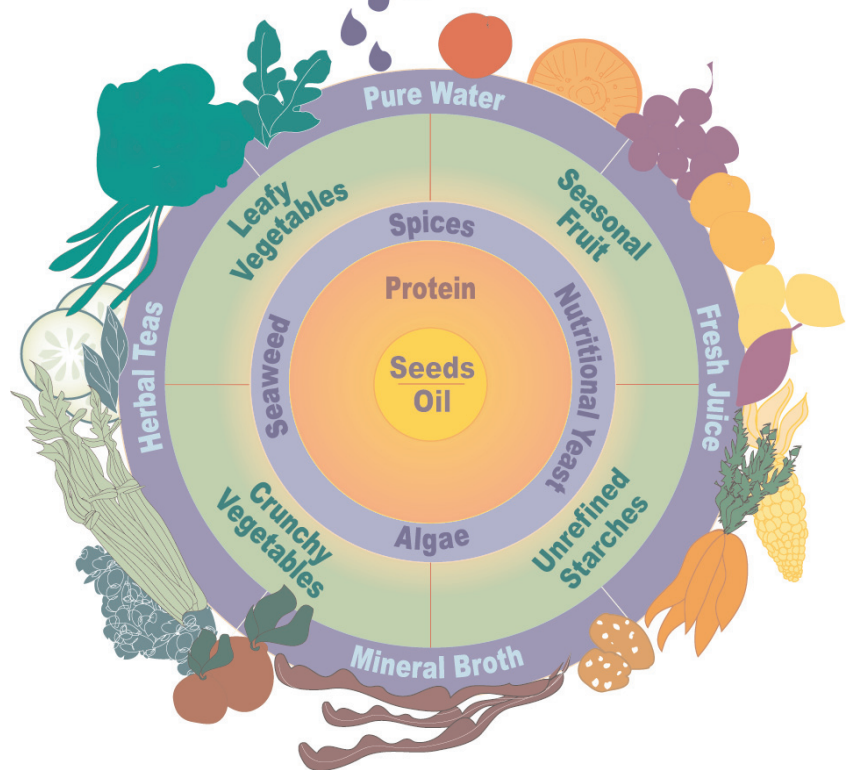


has been compromised by injury, illness, treatment and time. This is true for both the adult child and aging parent. Nutrition is the first key to recovery and rejuvenation. A lifetime of eating poor to mediocre foods has contributed to the incidence of apathy, low energy and a passive approach to personal healing as well as setting the table for disease to manifest.

### Eating For Health™

The *Eating For Health™* model (Bauman, 2006) provides a map of what to eat on a daily basis to provide optimal nutrition. As aging parents become ill, they rarely have the opportunity to eat fresh, local, seasonal, organic foods that are prepared to accommodate their needs for foods that are easy to chew and swallow. *Bauman College: Holistic Nutrition and Culinary Arts* program trains natural chefs to work with families with aging parents to prepare appropriate meals in the home or brought into care facilities to not only control illnesses such as diabetes or cancer, but to cater to the ethnicity and pleasure of the clients by preparing the food with love and presenting it with respect and beauty. All too often, our parents die of mal-nutrition and a lack of love before they succumb to pneumonia, heart or kidney failure.

## Eating 4 Health



### Nutritional Supplements

It is vital for the family to work with a clinical nutritionist and medical provider to properly assess metabolic and nutritional needs. Research is replete with citations of corrective nutrition to slow the onset and progression of loss of brain and body function. A breakfast smoothie (refer to the song above), consisting of whey, flax, green powder and berries, can also include yogurt, coconut, fish oil, l-glutamine, acidophilus, and Vitamin C. This is far more nourishing than a can of *Ensure®* prescribed by doctors to protect against a mal-nutrition.



## Nourishing Your Aging Parents and Yourself



Other corrective nutrients can diminish pain, suffering, depression and cognitive decline. These may include:

- ▶ Digestive enzymes
- ▶ Antioxidants
- ▶ Zinc
- ▶ Magnesium
- ▶ Calcium
- ▶ Chromium
- ▶ Selenium
- ▶ Lipoic acid
- ▶ Coenzyme Q-10

*GlyceroPhosphoCholine* (GPC) has been used to build cell membranes and improve mental performance of patients afflicted from stroke or brain injury. Drug-drug and drug-nutrient interactions need to be closely monitored for obvious reasons.

## Conclusion

It's high time we shifted away from neglecting and over-medicating our elders, shunting them off to nursing homes with limited care and poor quality food. Our parents are our link with the past and preview to how we might be as we age. It's never too late to show up for our parents to advocate for them to receive the best of natural and conventional care. When we commit to nourishing our aging parents, we will notice a profound shift in caring for our self and our extended family. Blessings and love to all.

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*Edward Bauman, M.Ed., Ph.D., is the director of Bauman College: Holistic Nutrition and Culinary Arts ([www.baumancollege.org](http://www.baumancollege.org)), with classroom and distance learning programs, Bauman Clinic ([www.baumanclinic.com](http://www.baumanclinic.com)) and the Vitality Fasting Retreats. Ed has been teaching nutrition and holistic health in the Bay Area for the past 30 years. Join him for a healthy dose of wisdom and nutritional guidance at his free lectures in the Bay Area each month.*

