



de • fin • ing health • y ag • ing



• by pat lam



Pat Lam is vice principal at Lam School of Advanced Esthetics in Scarborough, Ontario, Canada. A CIDESCO diplomate, she also has received board certification as an anti-aging health practitioner from the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine. Lam has been an educator in the health and beauty field for the past 25 years, and her interest in health and physical fitness stems from her work both as an educator and as a therapist in her clinics.

So you want to get into the business of healthy aging? You need to have a solid knowledge base to become involved in this exciting aspect of wellness. Do you really know about this market? Is healthy aging a myth or reality? What knowledge and skills are required? Do you need special products or supplies? What are the protocols to implement such a program into an existing skin care practice?

Healthy aging, also known as anti-aging, is a real science that has been documented over time by some of the world's top researchers, scientists and physicians. Strides in medicine, nutrition and sanitation have led to humans living longer with reduced mortality. In fact, anti-aging scientists predict that average life expectancy in the millennium to be 100–130 years.¹ *Longer and healthier* is a popular motto and philosophy that underlies the healthy aging market. The idea is not only to extend life, but to make it healthier. As members of society, we desire to live more independently, have more energy and be more productive in our later years.

Healthy aging defined

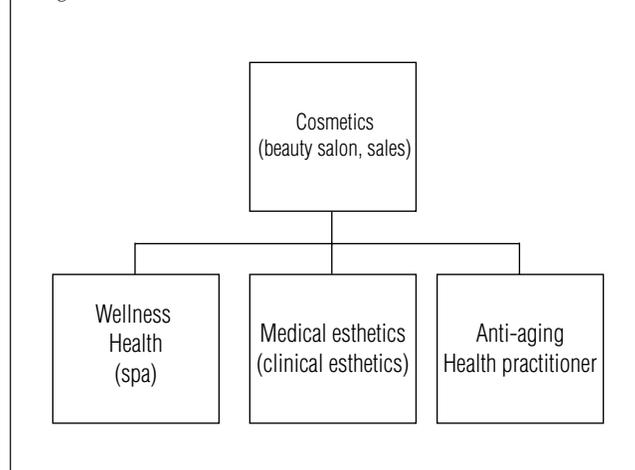
Anti-aging medicine is a medical specialty that incorporates three components: *detection, prevention and intervention*. The goals of anti-aging medicine are to *prevent, delay and reverse* the deleterious effects of age-related diseases through detection, prevention and intervention. Medical scientists predict that most leading causes of death will be eradicated within the next decade due to new medical technologies. Several prescreening devices are available for early detection of most symptoms and therapies, and intervention can be used to control or successfully treat conditions. For instance, blood tests show the onset of several medical problems such as hypertension, high homocystine, serum cholesterol and blood sugar levels; mammograms can indicate breast cancer; PSI levels, prostate cancer; bone density screens, osteoporosis; and even mole cancer devices check for melanoma—skin cancer.

While intervention always has been a focus for estheticians, skin care treatments using different peeling modalities, creams and active ingredients in the form of serums, vials and ampoules have been used primarily to help rejuvenate the outer layers of the skin and body. A more holistic approach to skin care has emerged and early detection and prevention of premature skin aging is becoming more important for the aging baby boomers who are better educated and possess more disposable income than their predecessors. Baby boomers also comprise at least half of most spa clientele, and are an important piece of the healthy aging market; they are actively seeking alternative therapies that optimize their health and longevity. Therefore, more powerful treatments are needed to rejuvenate aging skin. Treatments for the skin and body must incorporate a more holistic approach; that is, from the inside, out.

The esthetician's role

The role of estheticians is changing to a more health-oriented role, but you can stay solely in mainstream esthetics—facials, manicures and waxing, if you desire. On the other hand, the healthy aging market falls within the emerging

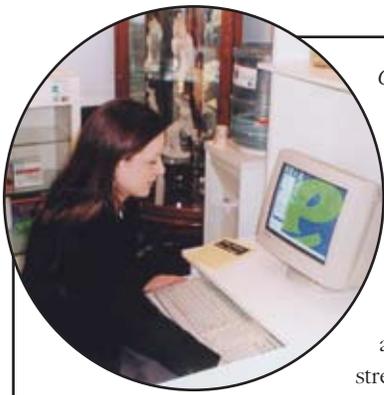
Figure 1. The Health Model of Esthetics.



trend of medical spas, which tends to attract those estheticians who always have been more health than beauty oriented. The healthy aging market allows them to incorporate wellness or medical esthetics into the business. The proposed **Health Model of Esthetics** (see **Figure 1**) illustrates the different levels of esthetics and how they relate to healthy aging. Estheticians who choose to incorporate healthy aging, can do so through referrals, education and treatment.

- 1. Detection and referral.** As a skin care professional, you should be knowledgeable enough in the areas of skin and health diseases to be able to refer clients to a physician who specializes in that area of medicine. By detecting probable diseases, you can prevent further damage to the health of individuals and their skin. Remember that many internal problems the body is having are reflected by the skin.
- 2. Preventive education.** A healthier aging population will reduce and defer steep medical costs in the later years of clients. For example, home care advice to prevent skin cancer for those with a family history of skin cancer include efficient use of broad-spectrum sunscreen and advanced technologies of mole cancer detection systems to save lives, while nutrition advice on healthy foods can reduce a multitude of internal disorders.
- 3. Interventive treatment.** Providing clients healthy aging treatments for a more youthful, healthier, toned skin and body will help clients intervene on any impending disease or condition. Treatments can be medical, esthetic or both, depending on whether the esthetician is working in a medical spa, salon or clinic. Advanced technological systems for more powerful anti-aging effects include skin resurfacing modalities such as laser skin resurfacing or medical microdermabrasion and various chemical exfoliations. Active ingredients that have powerful regenerating effects include live cell therapy, enzymatic products such as coenzyme Q10, and topical antioxidants such as vitamin A and C. Unique devices are available to remove minor skin growths that proliferate in aging as well, including skin tags, telangiectasia or broken capillaries, cholesterol deposits, fibromas or skin lumps,

Skin care professionals should obtain specialized training before offering any new services. In addition, clients should contact their physician before taking any internal supplements.



Comprehensive questionnaires gather data to calculate clients' real ages, depending on their general health, and can identify healthy aging needs.

and hyperpigmentation.

You can add healthy aging to your menu through a variety of fitness, nutrition, stress reduction therapies and hormone replacement therapy ser-

vices.

Fitness. Many spas already have added the fitness component to their repertoire of services. The first step is to hire an expert—a personal trainer—to organize and manage fitness services at your spa. This can be a shared profit and will greatly enhance services for clients. Fitness activities will help them gain muscular strength, bone mass and flexibility, and improve their overall body composition, leading to a more youthful mind and body. Best of all, it helps to improve their mental spirit, energy and self-esteem.

Nutrition and supplements. Sales of dietary supplements rose to more than \$17.1 billion last year and can become potential market in the esthetic field.² By performing healthy aging services on your clients, it is natural for you to make recommendations for dietary supplements.

Anti-aging scientists believe that the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) levels for nutrition are inadequate if the goal is to prevent heart diseases, cancer, memory loss and other age-related diseases. However, healthy aging supplements are more potent and achieve levels above RDA, to fortify and strengthen the immune system and to protect and prevent against symptoms of age-related diseases. Remember that supplements *augment* but do not replace a healthy diet, particularly in cases of illness or medication. Ensure that the client's diet is healthy and balanced. In detecting poor lifestyle habits, you can make recommendations to prevent or, in some cases, reverse the condition of a disease in the same way that you recommend skin care products to correct the condition of clients' skin and body. Surveys show that a majority of the public already uses supplements without any professional guidance. The esthetician who is performing healthy aging treatments is poised to sell dietary supplements. However, it is critical that you know the relationship between the leading causes of age-related diseases and certain dietary supplements, herbs and homeopathic substances. In particular, become familiar with terms such as **nutraceuticals**, substances that have been accepted by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to hold claims for protective effects against diseases. These supplements include ginkgo biloba, antioxidants such as vitamins A, C and E, and now, genistein in soy protein (see **Dietary Supplements**).

Knowing the available supplements well and how they help to strengthen and protect the body from disease is critical to your success as an anti-aging health practitioner. For example, what is the relationship of the glycemic index to diabetes and how is it used in the context of exercise? Refer your client to a qualified health care practitioner if medical conditions are involved.

Proper nutrition helps fight free radicals—the most plausible cause of aging. Free radicals are unpaired electrons in molecules produced during normal oxidative processes in tissues. In youth, the body normally can produce sufficient antioxidants to counteract them, but when excess free radicals are produced through environmental influences, they place high stress on the immune system. This results in a cascading effect of these highly reactive free radical molecules, which attack the cell membrane and mitochondria. This leads to premature skin aging, including deep wrinkles, lines, hypertension and, eventually, cell death.

Antioxidants such as beta-carotene, vitamins C and E, and selenium must be included in the daily diet or through supplements to neutralize the effects of free radicals. (*Editor's note:* For more information on nutrition and dietary supplements, see "Nutritional Therapy: The Inside Story" by David H. Rahm, MD, in the October 2000 of *Skin Inc.* magazine.)

Lifestyle management. One preventive method of education is to share with clients recommendations for home care and advice on modifying lifestyle habits for better prevention and interaction of their primary wellness concerns. This includes exercise, nutrition and stress management strategies to cope with modern overstressed lives. A personal history of the client can reveal, to some extent, the folly of lifestyle habits that lead to premature aging of the skin and body. Some of these environmental influences include excessive smoking, alcohol and sun exposure, medication, high stress, poor dietary habits and lack of exercise.

Longevity is attributed to 30% genetics and 70% environmental.³ Studies of twins in the *Annals of Plastic Surgery* clearly indicate that in the nature vs. nurture controversy, nurture dominates. Researchers concluded that poor lifestyle habits affected some twins who otherwise led similar lives. The twin with poor lifestyle habits had deeper wrinkles, sagging skin and was in poorer health than the other twin. Results suggest that lifestyles can be modified to delay or preventing negative aging symptoms.

Stress probably is the most common lifestyle epidemic. It comes in many forms, including chemical pesticides, heavy metals and air pollution; emotions; and physical trauma such as violence, accidents, malnutrition, infections, diseases and even wearing high heels over a long time. Simple home care advice to avoid these stresses—such as watching comedies instead of violent movies—can help. You also can promote mind and body awareness by offering different stress therapy treatments such as massage, hydrotherapy, ayurvedic therapy, aromatherapy and other holistic therapies including yoga and mediation. In addition, teach clients some stress management strategies for long-



Share with clients recommendations for home care and advice on modifying lifestyle habits to encourage healthy aging.

Certification Boards for Anti-aging

American Board of Anti-Aging Health Practitioners (ABAHP)

American Academy of Anti-aging Medicine
2415 North Greenview, Chicago, IL 60614
773-528-4333, fax 773-528-5390
exam@worldhealth.net | www.worldhealth.net

Academy of Anti-aging Estheticians

eAntiAging Inc.
17758 Rowland Street
City of Industry, CA 91748
877-912-9918 or 626-912-9918
info@eantiaging.com | www.eantiaging.com

term effects.

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Working with an anti-aging physician to offer HRT will allow you to offer expanded medical services. The physician can conduct blood tests to check the biomarkers of aging such as low hormonal levels, and offer advanced treatment such as estrogen replacement therapy (ERT), which already has been established as an anti-aging treatment for women. Growth hormone also is one of anti-aging researchers' most important hormones for healthy aging right now. Fortunately for you, manufacturers have developed growth hormone in the form of dietary

supplements called **secretagogues**, precursors that can be sold by any health care professional, including estheticians, because traditional injectable hormones are expensive.

*(Editor's note: For more information on Growth Hormone Therapy, see "Human Growth Hormone Therapy: Its Effect on the Reversal and Prevention of Aging" by David Howard, MD, in the January 2000 issue of *Skin Inc.* magazine.)*

The essentials

Read as much as possible about healthy aging and its four main components: nutrition and dietary supplements, exercise, hormone replacement therapy and lifestyle management. Study the body systems, particularly endocrinology. Because 70% of aging effects are attributed to environmental influences, you also should understand how and what clients can do to change the environment to offset the effects of aging. Take courses in all areas of healthy aging, and become certified. Two certification boards are available: American Academy of Anti-aging Medicine (A4M), which attracts medical practitioners and research scientists, and the Academy of Anti-aging Estheticians (see **Certification Boards for Anti-aging**).

Supplies

Research and locate suppliers by attending healthy aging conventions. Check suppliers who have available clinical studies to support their products. Because—like any other profession—there are charlatans in the healthy aging market, find out the standardized percentage of active ingredients that each product contains, and ensure they carry liability for their products. If possible, visit their factories to see if their manufacturing companies are checked regularly by health authorities.

Marketing

If you don't advertise healthy aging services, people will not know about them. Set up a small section in your reception area specializing in healthy aging. Place literature about aging diseases, nutrition and health care on a desk or table. Place any colorful or notable pictures that depict your healthy aging services. List these services in your spa brochures and advertisements, and on your Web site. You might even want to consider offering a healthy aging test, involving a number of multiple-choice questions about personal and health history. The eAntiAging Test, found at www.eantiaging.com, and the RealAge comprehensive questionnaire, available at www.realage.com, gather the data necessary to calculate a client's real age, depending on the client's general health, lifestyle and attention to safety issues, medical history, nutrition, physical activities, stress and social support, and medications.

In the end, a person's biological age can be much older or younger than the chronological age, depending on healthy aging characteristics. This test can be an "eye opener" for many who think they are healthy, and makes them psychologically aware of any deficiencies in both nutrition and other lifestyle matters, placing them in a position where they are willing to try changing their lifestyle.

It also is imperative that you form alliances with other health care professionals to set up referral networks. Include anti-aging physicians and alternative practitioners such as

Dietary Supplements

Age-related diseases	Common dietary supplements
Alzhiemers	Ginseng, ginkgo biloba to improve brain function, and vitamin B
Arthritis	Glucosamine to reduce joint inflammation
Breast cancer	Soy protein (phytoestrogens)
Diabetes	Chromium picolinate to regulate blood sugar levels
Heart diseases	Fish oils—Omega-3 fatty acids, coenzyme Q10, fiber such as oatbran, evening primrose oil, borage, soy protein and antioxidant vitamins A, C and E
Insomnia	St. John's wort
Prostate cancer	Saw palmetto
Osteoporosis	Calcium, magnesium and zinc

chiropractors, naturopaths, nutritionists, massage therapists and fitness professionals, and you will increase your clientele and offer an expanded service by referring them to specialists when necessary. This network will enhance your professional image and help you gain respect and credibility from clients.

Help contribute

As an esthetician, you need to contribute toward clients' skin appearance, as well as their health, so that they keep coming back to you as healthier and happier clients. Their beautiful skin will be even more so appreciated when physically healthy as well. Good luck and happy healthy aging. ■

References

- ¹ Klatz R and Goldman R, *Stopping the Clock*, Bantam Books (1997)
- ² Klatz R et al, *Board of Anti-Aging Medicine Journal*, www.worldhealthnet.com
- ³ Sulindro, M, "The Five Proven Secrets to Longevity," *eAntiAging.com, Journal*, 2000

Home care products and supplements can complement a spa's healthy aging services.

