

# How to stay young and age gracefully

## THE SCIENCE OF STAYING YOUNG

By John E. Morley and Sheri R. Colberg  
McGraw Hill/254 pages/  
\$45.48 with GST



If you know someone moaning about old age and knocking on Death's door, get them a copy of this book.

Penned by Dr Morley, co-director of Saint Louis University's Center for Aging Successfully and a geriatric medicine specialist, along with exercise physiologist Colberg, it lays out the tiny lifestyle dos and don'ts that will help you age gracefully (or more comfortably, at least).

While the book states categorically that it will not help you live longer, it does provide you with the confidence to make informed choices about living better.

There are chapters covering nutrition, exercise, cancer and thinning bones. A comprehensive section on hormonal therapy debunks some myths, and ends with the reminder to only take medicine that helps specific symptoms.

Dr Morley also advocates SPA (Spontaneous Physical Activity), such as fidgeting in your office chair and walking the stairs as often as you can. A bunch of balance exercises, while deceptively simple (stand on a cushion, grab a towel with your toes, etc), can help older folk remain steady on their feet.

Besides the scientific bits, the book also remembers the practical day-to-day things like lighting walkways and getting rid of throw rugs to prevent trips and falls.

A SLUMS (St Louis Mental Status) test is included in an appendix – handy for when you think your brain might be failing you.

The book ends off on a political rallying cry, with the authors urging readers to inundate policy-makers to pass legislation increasing funding into research and care for the older population.

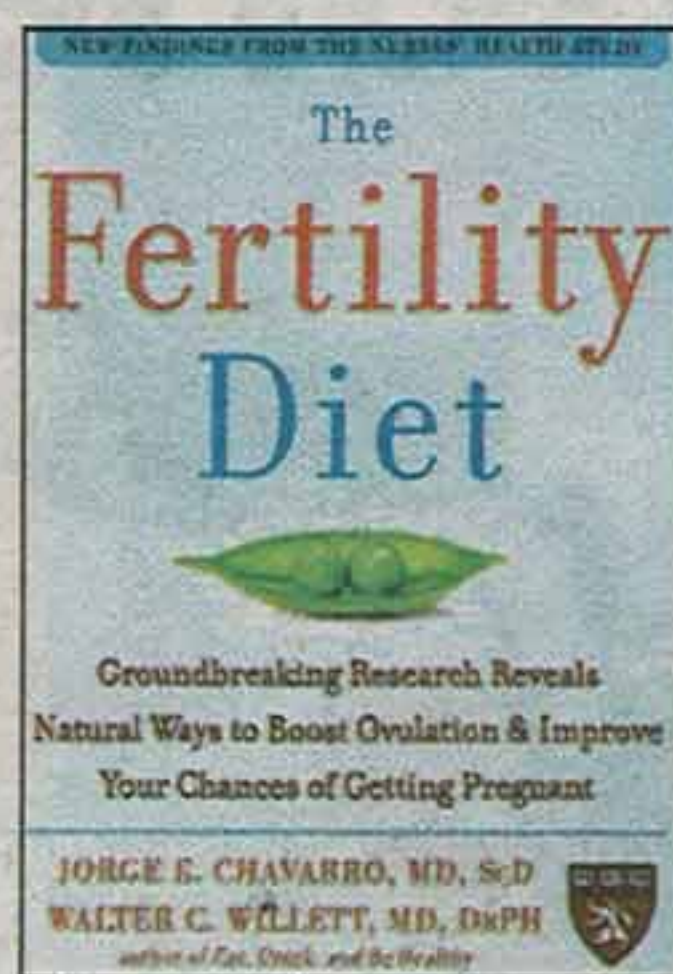
It's good advice, really: By being proactive about their futures, the elderly will be empowered to enjoy their golden years. And that is something more precious than anything science has to offer.

– CLARA CHOW

# Want to get pregnant? Try this fertility diet

## THE FERTILITY DIET

By Jorge E. Chavarro, Walter C. Willett and Patrick J. Skerrett  
McGraw Hill/  
277 pages/  
\$45.48 with GST



Written by doctors at the Harvard School of Public Health, this book set newspapers and magazines like Newsweek abuzz. Based on the idea that tweaking your diet might help you get pregnant naturally, it dangles tantalising premises. "Could having the occasional small bowl of ice cream lead to a midnight craving for pickles?" asked the inside book flap, referring to the common tell-tale sign of pregnancy.

Other intriguing advice follow, many of which conform to conventional wisdom. Avoid trans fat; eat more vegetable protein, like beans and nuts, as opposed to animal protein from, say, red meat; give sugary sodas a wide berth. Overweight women could lose around 7.5 per cent of their current weight to increase their fertility chances.

The research is drawn from the Nurses' Health Study, a survey of more than 120,000 married, female nurses' eating and exercising habits started in 1976, and then modified in 1989 with another 116,000 younger recipients.

As a New York Times' article pointed out, the research findings are drawn from observing a relatively small number of women who were trying to get pregnant over an eight-year period. Another drawback to the research method lies in how the participants answer questionnaires on their eating habits once every two years – a time interval during which many things could have fallen through the gap.

Much of what is spelt out in this fertility manual will sound familiar to anyone on top of a healthy lifestyle. Unfortunately, much of it is also couched in an overly-detailed academic (translation: snooze-worthy) drone. (It does, amusingly, give you tips on how to avoid flatulence, when switching to a diet higher in beans.)

The authors wisely stress that their recommendations do not guarantee the patter of little feet in the near future for all couples – but will help prevent infertility and set the stage for a healthy pregnancy.

In other words, this read is best for hopeful parent-wannabes, who are open to trying everything at least once, and want to go into it fortified with knowledge.

– CLARA CHOW