Living Longer, Googling Smarter

Around the world, people are living longer than ever before. In 1950, the average life expectancy was about 46 years; today it is more than 73. Experts say this improvement comes mainly from better hygiene, vaccines, cleaner water and easier access to hospitals. Lifestyle also matters. Researchers who study communities with many people over 100, such as parts of Japan and Italy, have found common habits: eating mostly fresh vegetables, walking every day, sleeping well and keeping close friendships. However, living longer also means more people worry about their health. Today, millions of us turn to the internet before we visit a doctor. A quick search can give you hundreds of explanations for a simple headache in seconds. Some websites are written by qualified doctors and hospitals, and they offer reliable, up-to-date advice. Others, unfortunately, are created by companies that want to sell a product, and they exaggerate the benefits of so-called miracle remedies. Doctors warn that searching for symptoms online can cause unnecessary anxiety. Patients sometimes become convinced that they have a rare illness when they really only have a common cold. In addition, advice that suits one person may be dangerous for another, because every body is different. So how can you use the internet safely? Experts suggest checking who wrote the page, looking for the date of publication and comparing at least two trusted sources. Most importantly, never stop taking prescribed medicine without talking to your doctor first. The internet can be a helpful starting point, but it should never replace a real medical examination.

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Questions

1. What was the average life expectancy in 1950?

A) about 46 years

B) about 73 years

C) over 100 years

2. Which of these is **NOT** mentioned as a reason for longer lives?

A) vaccines

B) cleaner water

C) new fitness machines

3. Which habit do people in communities with many 100-year-olds share?

A) taking daily vitamins

B) living alone

C) sleeping well

4. Why do some websites exaggerate the benefits of remedies?

A) They want to sell something.

B) They are written by doctors.

C) They are very old.

5. Why can searching symptoms online be a problem?

A) It costs too much money.

B) People may believe they have a rare illness.

C) Doctors refuse to answer.

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6. Why can advice that works for one person be dangerous for another?

A) Websites change every day.

B) Medicines are always expensive.

C) Every body is different.

7. The word **exaggerate** (paragraph 2) means:

A) make something seem bigger or better than it is

B) describe something exactly

C) forget something important

8. What is the main message of the text?

A) People should never use the internet for health.

B) Living longer is more important than being healthy.

C) The internet can help with health, but you must be careful and still see a doctor.

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