

Chasing Youth

Just how far will Baby Boomers go to hang on to their youth? Fitness products, hair transplants, Botox injections, Viagra—the self-reliant Me Generation is creating a model of midlife rejuvenation. The wealthiest generation in history, Boomers are pouring \$30 billion this year into anti-aging products, reenergizing businesses that range from food and cosmetics to pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. A report on a very public, generational obsession.

BY MICHAEL J. WEISS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TREVOR PEARSON

Dave Conrath walked into the Grooming Lounge in downtown Washington, D.C., with one thought in mind: turning back the clock. The 43-year-old commercial builder, who describes himself as “follically challenged,” received a cut that puffed up the strands of his thinning blond hair. He stretched out for a hot shave that seemed to take years off his sun-leathered skin. After a quick massage to loosen the knots in his neck, he headed to the display case for bottles of skin toner, moisturizer and shaving oil. The trip cost him \$100, but he left with a smile.

“I feel like I’m 28 again,” said Conrath, scrutinizing his reflection in the storefront window. “I work hard and feel that it’s okay to drop 100 bucks to look young. Damn it, I think I deserve it.”

Given the parade of men going into the Grooming Lounge, Conrath is hardly alone. Across the nation, Baby Boomers are doing whatever it takes to hang on to their youth. At the Grooming Lounge, opened earlier this year, Boomer men sign up for facials, pedicures, waxings and hair coloring—services once limited to female salons—in consciously masculine surroundings. There’s ESPN on the TV, Sinatra on the CD player and racks of

skin moisturizers with names like “Hangover Helper” to deflate the bags under bloodshot eyes (\$39 for a half-ounce bottle).

But according to managing director Mike Gilman, there’s more to his shop’s success than a simple closing of the gender gap in salon services. With Boomers turning 50 at the rate of seven per minute, Gilman realizes that he’s in the rejuvenation business. More than two-thirds of customers at the Grooming Lounge ask for ways to fight hair loss. Every week brings new calls for Botox, the “five-minute facelift” that erases years of wrinkles. “The taboos about trying to look young have broken down,” says Gilman, a boyish 31-year-old with spiky brown hair. “It’s not just narcissism for Boomers. They come in here because of the emphasis on looking young today. Everyone wants to be younger.”

It’s difficult to imagine what Ponce de Leon, the 16th century Spanish explorer who sought the fabled Fountain of Youth, would have made of the 21st century version of his quest. For the 78 million Americans between the ages of 38 and 56, the struggle to cling to youth has moved from a private war fought in front of the bathroom mirror to a highly public, generational obsession. At health clubs, guys in bifocals pump iron. In drugstores, empty-nest-ed moms buy skin-tightening creams

in an effort to achieve buns like J-Lo's. Sales of sexual performance-enhancing drugs like Viagra are rising like, uh, you know what. Even the pain and expense of plastic surgery is no deterrent to gravity-defying Boomers seeking lifts,

no interest in giving up the center stage they've dominated for decades. And thanks to advances in fitness products, sexual performance-enhancing drugs, skin care creams and hair color treatments, they may not have to.

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tucks, transplants and augmentations. The most popular cosmetic procedure in the nation is now Botox treatments. In 2001, Americans underwent 1.6 million injections—a whopping 2,356 percent increase over 1996.

"We're seeing an anti-aging phenomenon unlike any in history," says Ken Dychtwald, PhD, a gerontologist and president of Age Wave, a business development firm in Emeryville, Calif. "Boomers are pursuing dozens of therapies to ward off the ravages of aging. And science is pretty darn close to delivering these aspirations."

The national fixation on youth is hardly a recent phenomenon. What's different with Boomers is how passionately they refuse to concede anything to age. While previous generations entered middle age without much fuss, many Boomers appear to be trying to create a new model of adulthood, a midlife stage focused on renewal. They express

Of course, we should have seen it coming. Beginning with their '60s-era admonition to "never trust anyone over 30," Boomers have held on to each life stage as long as possible. They stayed in school longer than previous students, delayed the start of their careers, married later and took longer to have kids. With today's 45-year-olds expected to live an average seven years longer than their grandparents at the same age, they're pushing back their senior years as well. "We're the first generation in human history that realizes that we'll be living very long lives," says Dychtwald, 52. "So, many of us are asking, 'What's the rush?'"

Just how many Baby Boomers have become youth-chasers would make Hugh Hefner proud. In a survey last year for the AARP (formerly known as the American Association of Retired Persons) Irvine, Calif.-based RoperASW found that half of Boomers are depressed that they're aging, and nearly

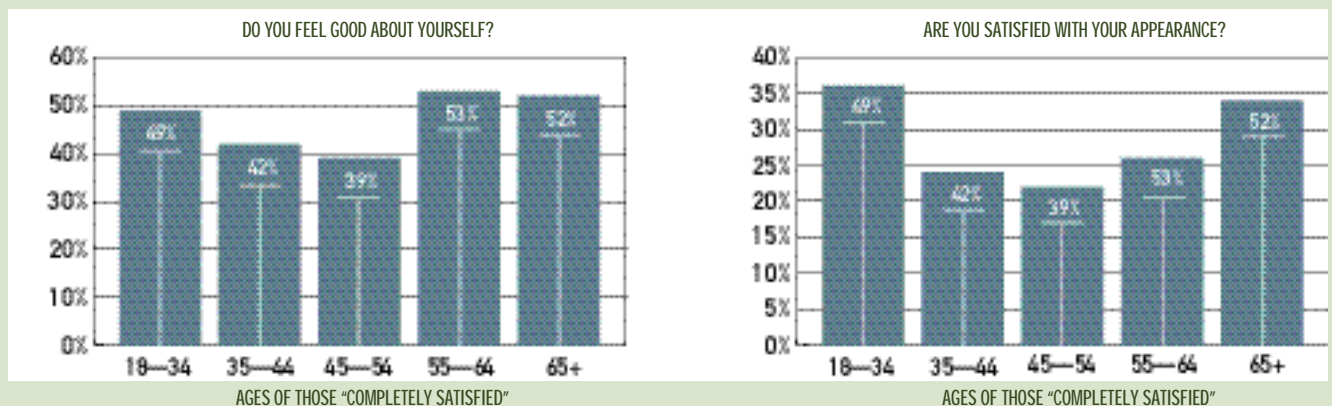
1 in 5 (18 percent) admits to actively resisting it. RoperASW reports that 35 percent of Boomer women have tried anti-aging cosmetics, and 53 percent use hair color to hide their gray locks (as do 6 percent of Boomer men). Among all Boomers, more than two-thirds engage in regular physical exercise. And 1 in 10 is contemplating the radical step of cosmetic surgery.

"What surprised us was how many Boomers wanted to do everything to stay young," says Paul Leinberger, PhD, a managing director of RoperASW. "They're not only willing to exercise more but also to use whatever drugs or technology is available. We thought that they might be a health-conscious group that didn't want to get into drugs. But with Boomers, it's whatever works. And more is better than less."

This Boomer quest for youth is evident in all ethnic groups, though its expression takes different forms. A 2001 survey of 21,452 Americans by New York City-based Simmons Market Research Bureau found that white 45- to 54-year-olds are more inclined to obsess over their bodies by joining health clubs and investing in gym equipment for their homes, likely because of relatively higher levels of income. Meanwhile, African American and Hispanic consumers maintain their vigor by buying Viagra and herbal supplements. And Asian Americans rely on antioxidants and aerobic exercise.

WHY THEY CHASE YOUTH

Self-doubt is driving Boomers to products and services designed to combat time's effects on their bodies. According to a recent RoperASW survey, half are depressed that they're no longer young, and nearly 1 in 5 are actively resisting the aging process.



Source: RoperASW survey for AARP, 2001

“Staying young is a common thread you see among Boomers of all races,” says Chris Wilson, president of Simmons. “It’s the issue that’s perhaps defined them the most of all issues.”

Today, as the wealthiest generation in history, Boomers are reenergizing businesses that range from food and cosmetics to pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. U.S. consumers will spend upward of \$30 billion on anti-aging products this year, according to the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine. Hundreds of anti-aging clinics have opened in recent years, and plastic surgery, once the domain of senior citizens, now finds half of all its patients among 35- to 50-year-olds. Even pharmaceutical companies are setting their sights on this younger market for drugs and dietary supplements. Viagra maker Pfizer recently retired politician Bob Dole as its spokesman in favor of 38-year-old baseball player Rafael Palmeiro. This year, the drug became the official sponsor of the global concert tour of Earth Wind & Fire, a Boomer favorite from the '70s.

“The generation that grew up in the '60s and turned on to drugs is still doing them, but for a different reason,” says Leinberger, 51. “Now we’re focused on our bodies and trying to look and feel good. What hasn’t changed is that the self will always be at the center of Baby Boomer lives. We’re not called the ‘Me Generation’ for nothing.”

THE NEW FITNESS REVOLUTION

They’re baaaaack. The generation that created the fitness revolution in the '70s is hitting the treadmill with a new ferocity. More than half of the 33 million Americans who go to health clubs are over 40 years old, reports SGMA International. Health clubs are now targeting what RoperASW calls “Second Chancers” and “New Me’s,” basically groups of divorced and body-conscious forty- and fiftysomethings hoping to revitalize their looks.

Still, this generation isn’t aiming to keep pace with the ghosts of its hard-bodied past. Boomers are passing up knee-pounding and muscle-grinding activities in favor of gentler, low-impact exercises. Health clubs now feature classes that sculpt muscles while reducing stress: Tai

COSMETIC PLASTIC SURGERY PATIENTS

Over the past five years, the number of Americans undergoing cosmetic plastic surgery has increased by 1,125 percent. Once dominated by senior citizens, plastic surgery has become increasingly common among Boomers ages 45 to 54.

	NUMBER OF PATIENTS		% CHANGE	% 35-50 YRS OLD
	1996	2001	1996-2001	2001
SURGICAL PROCEDURES				
Eyelid surgery	76,242	238,213	212%	35%
Liposuction	109,353	275,463	152%	45%
Breast augmentation	87,704	219,883	151%	39%
Facelift	53,435	124,531	133%	24%
Buttock lift	774	1,339	73%	54%
Tummy tuck	34,235	58,567	71%	58%
NON-SURGICAL PROCEDURES				
Botox injection	*	855,846	*	55%
Laser hair removal	*	687,721	*	39%
Microdermabrasion	21,337	1,035,769	4,754%	42%
Chemical peel	42,628	1,338,419	3,040%	38%
Collagen injection	34,091	796,526	2,236%	50%
Totals	459,799	5,632,277	1,125%	
*No data available. Source: American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 2002				

Chi with 3-pound weights, water aerobics and Pilates workouts. New forms of yoga—with names like “power yoga” and “hot yoga”—mix flexibility and cardiovascular benefits. “The human body at 50 just isn’t as supple as it was at 20,” says Mike May, communications director at SGMA. “So Boomers are learning to exercise at a lower rate of intensity. They realize that you can’t stop and smell the roses unless you can walk among them.”

This low-impact approach extends to Boomer basements, which are increasingly filled with treadmills, stationary bicycles and elliptical trainers designed to simulate activity without strain. Boomers have helped push spending on home gym equipment to \$5.9 billion in 2001, a 7 percent increase over 1999, according to the SGMA. Some are drawn to high-tech devices that do everything from monitoring heart rate and measuring body fat to offering nutritional advice. Others are going low-tech, reviving the market for old-fashioned medicine balls, elastic bands and those gigantic, vinyl “stability balls” that improve strength and flexibility without creating muscle bulges.

The sporting goods industry is finding creative ways to tap in to Boomers’ fitness fervor. Wilson now sells lighter-weight tennis rackets and golf clubs. Solomon has come out with lighter

skis. Nike and Adidas have trimmed back the weight of their shoes and clothing. “The Boomers are more interested in comfort than any other age group,” says May. “They want to enjoy the activity while they’re working out.”

Sometimes, that means taking their high-tech gear on the road. Golf camps, skiing getaways and running clubs—all are becoming more popular thanks to fitness-minded Boomers. And at the New York City Marathon, participation by runners between the ages of 40 and 54 has been rising steadily—to 40 percent of the field in 2001 from 37 percent in 1999. The Learning Annex, which operates adult education classes, reports that its biggest audience consists of empty-nesting Boomers trying to reinvent themselves through Latin dance lessons or karate sessions. “It may not be the Fountain of Youth,” says Dychtwald, “but it’s a pretty good spigot from which to drink.”

MAINSTREAMING HEALTH FOODS

Since the organic foods revolution in the 1970s, Baby Boomers have drawn a link between food and health. But these days, many products once confined to hippie co-ops are now filling mainstream supermarkets. A stroll down the aisle of any national chain illustrates how Boomers have helped turn functional foods and drinks into a \$28 billion cate-

gory called nutraceuticals. Soy milk is crowding whole milk out of the dairy case. Cereals, like General Mills' Harmony, are now enriched with antioxidants. Two years ago, Dannon introduced Actimel, a drink with bacteria cultures to help fortify the body's immune system. "Nutraceuticals are no longer a fringe idea," says Janice Jones, research director of the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), in Washington, D.C. "The line between food and drugs has been crossed."

Because of a traditional distrust of

authority figures—even doctors—Boomers have embarked on their anti-aging nutritional quest on their own. In a recent survey of 1,202 shoppers by the FMI, respondents 40- to 49-years-old scored the highest in what the FMI termed a "Self-Care Index." Among their characteristics: They actively seek health information, eat healthy foods, use herbal remedies and treat themselves before seeing a doctor. Nearly 9 in 10 have bought nutraceuticals. More than half read nutrition labels to check out the fat content of foods—a higher rate than any other age group. "The older generations believed that doctors knew best," says Jones. "The Boomers say, 'I want to take control over my life.'"

That self-reliance is particularly evident in the way Boomers treat themselves with nutritional supplements such as vitamins and minerals. Americans spend more than \$15 billion on nutritional supplements a year. When you add in weight loss supplements, the figure climbs to \$40 billion annually. In part, Boomers are seeking their own answers as a response to the medical community's traditional resistance to alternative treatments. The healing powers of vitamin C, long championed by Nobel Prize-winner Linus Pauling—and discounted by conventional doctors—have become mainstream gospel. "Now we have the research to support the product claims," says Gary Troxel, executive vice president of InterHealth Nutraceuticals, in Benicia, Calif. "With antioxidants, Boomers are starting to see proof that they can slow down the aging process."

These days, two-thirds of Americans take nutraceuticals in one form or another, says Troxel, adding that Boomers constitute the largest consumer segment. Among Boomers' current favorites: Ginkgo biloba and elderberries for mental clarity; glucosamine for weekend tennis buffs who want to keep their joints limber, and ZMA, a zinc-magnesium aspartate compound that's billed as an anabolic mineral formulation to enhance muscle strength. Such claims only bolster sales of zinc-enriched products—already popular because of the substance's purported power to fight colds and improve prostate health. Orange juice compa-

nies are about to start fortifying their products with zinc, as they do with calcium and vitamin D.

Dr. Andrew Weil, the health guru, recently capitalized on the trend by launching a Web site, DrWeil.com, which offers personalized vitamin packets geared to an individual's health needs. Using responses to an online questionnaire that delves into the customer's lifestyle, habits and genetic background, Web advisers dispatch three-a-day packets of vitamins, minerals and herbs. The cost: about \$250 a month.

The delivery systems of these vitamins and supplements are also changing to satisfy Boomers who want their Fountain of Youth in a bottle. Whereas consumers used to swallow nutritional supplements as pills and powders, they now prefer to do so in fitness waters and juices. SoBe Beverages, Reebok Fitness Waters and Aquafina Essentials—all pack minerals, electrolytes and vitamins that can be gulped on the run. Other companies are hard at work developing nutraceutical cookies, candy bars and chewing gum. McNeil Consumer Products recently purchased Viactiv, a chewy calcium supplement that tastes like candy.

And industry analysts predict the future will bring even more fortified foods and drinks, and a greater emphasis on zestier flavors. "It used to be that vitamin supplements had to taste bad," says Jim Wisner, an expert on natural and organic health and beauty care, in Libertyville, Ill. "Now they come in New Age beverages and taste like candy. The goal is to provide a sensory enjoyment with some health benefit."

BETTER LIVING THROUGH BIOCHEMISTRY

When Boomers can't diet away the effects of aging, they don't hesitate to reach for cosmetic products and treatments. The \$1.5 billion hair color industry has been steadily growing since the mid-1980s, when the first Boomers turned 40. More and more, Boomer men are buying home dye kits and showing up at women's hair salons for color treatment, often driven by a midlife crisis. "We start to see guys right before a high school reunion or just after a family reunion when someone teased them about going

THE COST OF STAYING YOUNG

A Baby Boomer's estimated spending for a year's worth of youth-enhancing products and services.

PRODUCT/SERVICE	ALL*
TOTAL ANNUAL SPENDING	
Men	\$26,420
Women	\$29,220
FIRMER BODY	
Health club membership	\$360
Treadmill	\$1,000
Stairmaster climber	\$1,250
Bosu Balance Trainer fitness ball	\$130
COSMETIC SURGERY	
Botox (three-times-a-year injections)	\$1,200
Liposuction (stomach)	\$3,000
Eyelift	\$2,000**
Photoderm facelift (two treatments)	\$750**
YOUNGER-LOOKING SKIN	
Anti-wrinkle serum	\$480**
Sunscreen	\$360
HAIR COLORING	
Professional coloring (once a month)	\$1,000
HAIR GROWTH	
Propecia (daily)	\$720***
Rogaine for Women (daily)	\$290**
MORE ENERGY/STRENGTH	
Human growth hormone injections	\$12,000
Customized daily vitamins	\$3,000
Performance candy bars (daily)	\$450
Fitness drinks (daily)	\$450
SEXUAL PERFORMANCE	
Viagra (twice a week)	\$1,500

*Costs are average estimates **Women only ***Men only
Source: American Demographics

gray,” says Maureen Buckley-O’Hara, product manager for Clairol Professional, the hair care company’s beauty salon division, in Stamford, Conn. “Some will come in if they’re competing for a job with younger folks at work.”

In the ’90s, a youthful look became a business accessory. Today it’s a necessity. On the job, Boomers complain of crashing into a “silver ceiling.” Between 1999 and 2000, age-discrimination complaints filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission rose to 16,000 from 14,000. In recent focus groups, Clairol showed before-and-after photos of a man who’d had his hair colored, and then asked participants to describe the man.

“Consistently, the guy without the gray was viewed as more successful, smarter and more athletic,” recalls Buckley-O’Hara. With colored hair, she says, Boomers feel more prepared for a society that finds many of them broadening their careers and continuing to date, all the while competing with men and women far younger. “Fifty is the new thirty,” declares Buckley-O’Hara. “We’re more active and in tune with our bodies, so that age is no longer a number but a mind-set.”

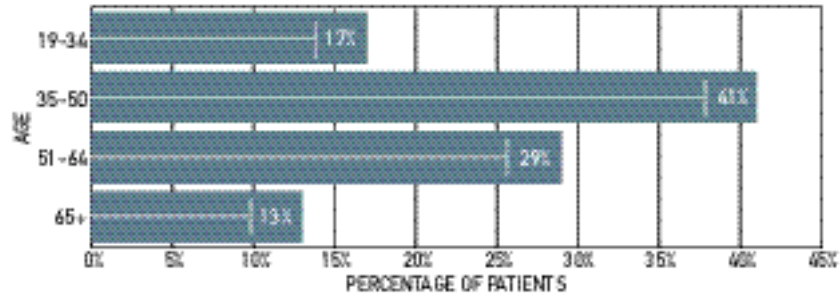
“FIFTY IS THE NEW THIRTY. WE’RE MORE ACTIVE AND IN TUNE WITH OUR BODIES, SO THAT AGE IS NO LONGER A NUMBER BUT A MIND-SET.”

The cosmetics industry follows the same approach, introducing new products that fall into the “age specialist” category. In the past five years, sales of anti-aging beauty products have jumped 24 percent, to \$374 million, according to NPDBeautyTrends, a consulting firm based in Port Washington, N.Y. Many in the beauty business now mix lipstick, foundations and moisturizers with anti-aging ingredients—such as gloss designed to protect lips from ultraviolet rays. Nivea’s Visage brand features CoEnzyme Q10, an antioxidant, in a number of its anti-wrinkle skin creams. Neutrogena’s Visibly Firm products contain copper and peptides to bring suppleness to sagging skin.

“The products are more clinical,” says Timra Carlson, vice president of NPDBeautyTrends. “And consumers are

BOTOXED BOOMERS

Botox is the most popular cosmetic procedure in the nation, in large part thanks to Boomers who want to erase years of wrinkles.



Source: American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, 2000

demanding them because wellness has become a lifestyle.” Drug chains like Walgreen’s and Eckerd now receive so many new “down aging” products that they’ve started conducting training sessions to help staffers explain all the product benefits to customers.

At the same time, Boomers more determined to improve their looks are turning to surgery. The number of cosmetic plastic surgery patients increased 11 times over the past five years, to 5.6 million, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). The

and *The New Yorker* (men will get their own campaign in 2003). In some communities, dermatologists host Tupperware-like Botox parties, performing procedures in a bedroom while prospective patients nibble on the cheese tray elsewhere in the house. “Botox can be administered during a lunch break, and there is virtually no recovery time needed,” says Tom Albright, Allergan’s senior director of marketing at Botox Cosmetic. “Baby Boomers want the best that life has to offer, and they don’t want to wait for it.”

For some, that philosophy extends to more invasive cosmetic surgery procedures. In 2001, 125,000 Americans had facelifts; 275,000 underwent liposuction to remove midriff bulge and 220,000 went in for breast enhancements. While women still undergo most of the procedures, men now account for 14 percent of all cosmetic surgeries, according to the ASPS. And Boomers are having the procedures performed at younger and younger ages. “Twenty years ago, the average age of a facelift patient was 60 years old. Now it’s 50,” says Dr. Edward Luce, the ASPS president and chief of plastic surgery at University Hospitals of Cleveland.

Fueling this trend is an increasing acceptance of surgical intervention in the name of youth, says Luce, a plastic surgeon for 27 years. “Americans used to have a Calvinistic view that you should be satisfied with your appearance,” he continues. “Messing with your appearance was like messing with God. But Boomers believe in rejuvenating cosmetic surgeries. They feel younger than they look.” In fact, Luce fears that procedures like Botox may become too

wildly popular Botox is literally changing the face of Baby Boomers, its biggest fans. The fact that the procedure involves having toxic botulism injected into your face hasn’t stopped Boomers from flocking to their dermatologists for the \$300 to \$1,000 procedure. And the results are astonishing, according to proponents, shaving years off the faces of worried-looking wives and transforming laid-off tech executives into, well, seemingly less-stressed tech execs.

Because the effect lasts only about four months, repeat injections have provided a steady revenue stream for Allergan, Botox’s Irvine, Calif.-based manufacturer. Within a few years, some analysts predict the company may record \$1 billion in Botox sales—up from \$310 million last year. A \$50 million ad campaign this year targets the female readers of *People*, *Vogue*

popular, encouraging people to get injections without a medical consultation or warnings about side effects. "We worry that it could become available at the corner drugstore," says Luce.

Despite the growing popularity of the procedures, many Boomers are still loath to discuss their rejuvenation efforts. When TV host Greta Van Susteren underwent an eye tuck and forehead squeeze before moving to a new post at the Fox News Channel, fellow journalists blasted her for having the procedures. In a RoperASW

survey last year, 65 percent of respondents said they thought cosmetic surgery was an indulgence for those who are rich, insecure or vain. "Boomers have always believed that they answer to a higher calling," says Roper's Leinberger.

That doesn't mean they won't seek better living through pharmaceuticals. In the three weeks following Viagra's introduction in 1998, 94 percent of all new prescriptions written in the U.S. were for the little blue pill—a fact hardly ignored by the pharmaceutical industry. This year,

drug companies are investigating nearly 200 new compounds aimed at tackling the symptoms of aging. Already, they've introduced treatments for everything from wrinkles and baldness to the prevention of strokes and heart attacks. Today's Boomers can take Pfizer's Lipitor to reduce cholesterol, Pharmacia's Celebrex to reduce arthritis pain, Merck's Propecia and Pharmacia's Rogaine to increase hair growth. Last year, Eli Lilly came out with an osteoporosis medication that went beyond prior treatments that slowed the rate of bone loss to actually help bones regain lost mass.

The collective impact of these drugs cannot be underestimated. "We're seeing many pharmaceuticals that can extend life," says William Haseltine, CEO of Human Genome Sciences (HGS), a biotech company in Rockville, Md. Haseltine, whose company is at the forefront of the effort to develop gene-based drugs to stimulate disease-fighting antibodies, believes that medical breakthroughs will allow Boomers to live healthy lives into their 90s—while their grandchildren may live to 120.

"As body parts wear out, we'll be able to fix or replace them," Haseltine declares. Among the 460 research studies being conducted at HGS, geneticists have already begun research to clone bone, cartilage and the bladder. "With stem-cell research, we'll one day be able to replace our aging muscles with younger muscles and our own nerves with younger nerves. And Boomers will be the first beneficiaries of these advances."

Some Boomers aren't waiting for future breakthroughs. At a cost of about \$1,000 a month, some among America's wealthy set have begun getting injections of human growth hormone to help them feel younger. The endocrinology treatments are unproven and potentially hazardous, but that hasn't slowed their popularity. Synthetic growth hormones are now produced by major drug companies like Lilly, Upjohn and Genentech. In the short term, users report more muscle tone, less fat, increased strength and a greater sex drive. In the long term, no one knows the impact.

Dr. Robert Goldman, the chairman of the board of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, worries that self-treating Boomers could cause them-

FOR THOSE WHO THINK YOUNG

All Boomers want to stay young, but different ethnic groups try to accomplish that goal in different ways. Whites tend to work out and pop a lot of vitamins, blacks and Hispanics try to maintain their vigor by purchasing Viagra and herbal supplements, and Asian Americans are inclined to antioxidants and aerobic exercise. Interestingly, all groups wish they exercised more.

	ALL AMERICANS	WHITES	AFRICAN-AMERICANS	HISPANICS	OTHER*
% AGES 45 TO 54	18.1%	15.4%	2.0%	2.0%	0.6%
INDEX OF CONSUMPTION COMPARED TO BOOMER ETHNIC GROUPS**					
ACTIVITIES					
Dieting	111	115	101	76	52
Attend education courses	103	100	128	97	85
Belong to health club	97	104	60	89	43
Aerobic exercise	88	91	55	116	115
Stationary/outdoor rowing	77	90	0	73	5
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS					
Lipitor	127	134	97	132	54
Viagra	126	123	166	136	78
Vioxx	125	130	97	64	84
Zocor	99	106	60	21	52
Propecia	38	44	0	***	0
VITAMINS/MINERALS					
Herbal Supplements	134	134	156	108	57
Antioxidants	125	124	108	103	224
Viactiv	123	102	311	86	0
Vitamin E	121	125	84	82	133
Vitamin C	113	119	76	120	82
Vitamin D	100	102	94	37	59
ATTITUDES					
I am an optimist	114	113	128	104	79
I should exercise more than I do	113	113	116	139	115
I feel very alone in the world	107	109	116	228	39
I am very happy with my life	95	98	73	117	115
I do weekly sports/exercise	94	98	56	98	115
I like to just enjoy life	94	90	115	124	122
I try not to worry about the future	88	86	107	76	72
I spend what I have to look younger	88	59	293	58	147
I enjoy life, don't worry about the future	80	76	110	128	60
Little I can do to change my life	76	78	59	108	87

* Other includes Asian Americans **An index of 100 is the national average. ***No data available

Source: Simmons Market Research Bureau, 2001

selves real harm. Nine years ago, he and a dozen sports medicine doctors formed the academy to promote anti-aging treatments and to learn more about the long-term effects. The group now has 10,000 members—80 percent are physicians—and there are hundreds of anti-aging clinics dotting the country. The chief patients: Boomers.

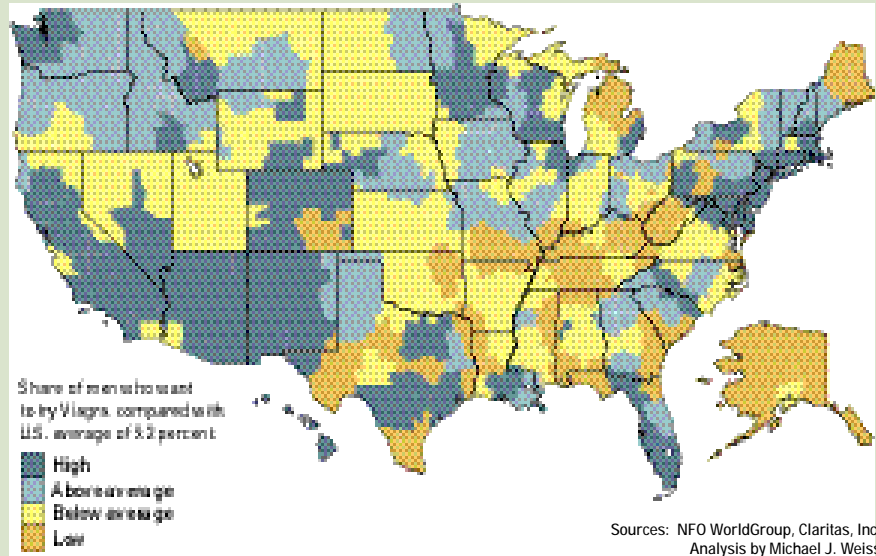
“They’re the most motivated patient population in history,” says Goldman, from his office in Chicago. “They have the financial power and desire to intervene in the aging process.” As researchers continue investigating drugs and hormones to satisfy this cohort’s search for youth, some analysts find it difficult to contain their optimism. In his book *Age Power* (Tarcher/Putnam, 1999), Dychtwald writes that medicine will soon realize the age-old fantasy of endless youth. “I’m convinced that within a decade, Boomers will get up in the morning and have a smoothie that will be fueled by a hormone symphony that will cause their bodies to be young again,” he says. “That’s right around the corner.”

YOUTH-IN-A-BOTTLE MARKETING

For all the hopefulness of age experts, products targeted to youth-oriented Boomers don’t sell themselves. Indeed, those wishing to market to this group must walk a fine line, observes Erlina Hendarwan, a consumer markets analyst for Datamonitor, a business intelligence firm in New York City. “You don’t want to portray them too old because they don’t want to hear it,” she says. “But you don’t want your images

MEN WHO WANT TO TRY VIAGRA

About 1 in 10 American men want to try Viagra, according to an NFO survey, but that audience isn’t composed entirely of retired seniors. The nation’s top Viagra markets include many big-city metros with a high concentration of Baby Boomers who grew up in an era of sex and drugs—and view Viagra as a kind of “love pill.” Not long ago, Pfizer began featuring 38-year-old baseball player Rafael Palmeiro as a spokesman.



to imitate them. They just don’t want to give up their youth.”

John Nielson, vice president of Colle & McVoy’s CODE50 division, has identified two problems with trying to market to this group. First, the staffers at many ad agencies are too young to relate to fiftysomething consumers. Second, the targets themselves are admittedly hard to pin down. “Boomers still haven’t figured out who they are,” says Nielson, an 18-year advertising veteran. “Their 50s are a decade of enormous change, where many empty-nest, divorce and cope with

because they’re still interested in the same things as they were at that age. But their ambition has subsided, so they can now appreciate the things they really love—whether it’s their children or hobbies.”

Among the companies he thinks are doing a good job at targeting Boomers: Clairol, using the tag line “A Beauty All Your Own,” and Victoria’s Secret with its “At Last, I’m Comfortable” theme. “It’s a beautiful double entendre about a product and this new place that Boomers inhabit,” says Nielson, 45. In fact, some attitudinal surveys show that older Americans, ages 55 to 64, are more likely to be satisfied with themselves and their looks. So if Boomers can hang on a few more years, they may no longer feel the angst of midlife. Being older means never having to say that you wish you were younger.

“What we’ve learned is that later in life, people start to become more introspective,” Nielson says. “But before we look inside, we go crazy on the outside. Eventually we come to grips with that.” ■

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“BOOMERS ARE THE MOST MOTIVATED PATIENT POPULATION IN HISTORY. THEY HAVE THE FINANCIAL POWER AND DESIRE TO INTERVENE IN THE AGING PROCESS.”

to appear too young because you alienate them.” Some marketers take an aspirational approach, believing that if they target younger consumers, they’ll pull in youth-wannabes at the same time. For instance, two-thirds of Boomers buy sports drinks, though most ads are geared to the skateboard set. “Boomers want to have as much energy as their youngsters,” says Hendarwan. “It’s not

menopause, the death of a spouse and grandparenthood. There’s a lot of head-spinning going around.”

In focus groups, Nielson often asks respondents for their chronological age, then asks them what age they really feel. Many 55-year-olds report feeling as they did in their late 30s or early 40s. “There seems to be a sweet spot in their 30s for those 55 years old,” he says. “They say it’s