

## Extending human life: What are the age limits?

How long do you want to live – to 85, 90, 100 or beyond? More important than how long we live is the state of our health in old age.

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[S]cientists in the United States believe drugs could be on the horizon that delay the diseases of old age and increase the healthy years of life. But could such treatments also mean we live longer?

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Prof Gordon Lithgow of the Buck Institute for Research on Aging runs a lab that studies how to lengthen life in microscopic worms and in human cell cultures.

He told me: “Ageing is really plastic in simple lab organisms – we can increase lifespan by 500%.

“In more complex animals like the mouse we’ve been able to increase lifespan by 20-30% but we don’t know what’s possible in humans.”

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Of course, we should not expect medicine to solve all our health problems but try to meet science halfway. There are things we can already do to increase our chances of a healthy old age. Near the top of any to-do list is exercise – if it were a drug it would be a blockbuster medicine.

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Keeping the mind active is vital: this can build “cognitive reserve” and reduce the chances of developing dementia. A balanced diet will also help. There is no guaranteed formula for a healthy old age but follow that advice and you too might become a superager.

**Read full, original post:** [How long could we live?](#)