



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 7, 2018

Wanna' Live to 100? Eat Bacon and Chocolate, Smoke, and Drink Booze

Virginia Pair Witherington turned 105 on Monday, and credits her longevity to taking care of herself — in her case, this includes eating a large amount of chocolate. To be precise, *Macon's Telegraph* [writes](#) that “Witherington has previously credited her long life to living well and eating a lot of chocolate. She also loves Whopper Juniors and pizza,” according to close friend Mary Ussery. Well, I think Burger King just found its next marketing push.



Whether or not Georgia resident Witherington is one in a million to her friends — and she surely looks good enough to be — she's certainly one in 6,000. That's the ratio of people who [live to be 100](#). So Witherington is rare, indeed. But her centenarian diet? Well, maybe not so much.

America's oldest World War II veteran and the oldest man in America, Richard Overton, has Witherington beat — not just in age but also lifestyle. Overton recently turned 112 and has been smoking since he was 18. “I smoke at least 12 Tampa Sweet cigars a day” (there's another marketing push), Overton [told](#) the *Wall Street Journal* in 2015.

In addition, he consumes daily “multiple cups of coffee and Dr. Pepper.... He also eats waffles, pancakes, cinnamon rolls, and other sweet foods,” *Business Insider* [related](#) last month. The kicker? “I feel fine every day,” Overton said in early May. “No pain and no aches.” He does say, however, that the key to his longevity is “staying out of trouble.” Good advice.

Cigars, though, you don't inhale. Then there's the woman who did. “I've been smoking for more than 80 years, all day long, every day. That's a whole lot of cigarettes,” said Helen Faith Keane Reichert of Westport and New York City, who died in 2011 at age 109. Moreover, [reported](#) *Westport Now* at the time, “Throughout her life, Reichert vigorously promoted a rigid recipe for success: chocolate truffles, hamburgers, Budweiser beer, cigarettes and New York nightlife. Strictly forbidden were vegetables, exercising, getting up early and complaining.” Perhaps that's why she didn't live as long as Richard.

Reichert's brother, Irving Kahn, had much in common with his sister. He also died at 109, in 2015, and, as his son, Thomas Kahn, related, he “preferred cheeseburgers to salad and ate lots of meat. And he smoked until he was about 50,” [reported](#) the *Express*.

Then there's:

- Barrett Nichols, who died in 2010 at age 108. He smoked six or seven cigars a day “for 40 years. Before that, he smoked a pipe, and before that, he smoked cigarettes,” [reported](#) the *Herald-Tribune* in 2006.
- Agnes Fenton, who was one in 10 million — that's the ratio of people who live to be 110. The New Jersey resident died last year at 112, after [having imbibed](#) three beers and a shot of scotch every day for nigh on 70 years.



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- Brooklynite Susie Mushatt, once billed as the world's oldest living person, who [died in 2016](#) at the age of 116. She attributed her longevity to, in part, eating bacon daily.
- Texan Pearl Cantrell, who passed away in 2014 just a month shy of her 106th birthday, but not before sharing her secret to a long life: "I love bacon. I eat it every day," she [told NBC affiliate KRBC](#). Obviously not run by dummies, meat company Oscar Mayer didn't need me to identify the marketing opportunity. It sent the "Wienermobile" to her house in 2014 to deliver pounds of free bacon, as the video below captured.

We can add to this [studies showing](#) that slightly overweight (not obese) people live longer. This runs counter to the gym-addict obsession with achieving vein-displaying leanness and the research indicating that mice given an extreme low-calorie diet live considerably longer than their plumped-out brethren.

(Ever-entertaining radio host Michael Savage, who boasts a Ph.D. in nutritional ethno-medicine, commented on this years ago and quipped that while the fat, food-engorged mouse might have died young, he "died a happy mouse." Also not mentioned was whether they buttressed the corpulent critter's health with bacon.)

So should you mainline the nitrates and nitrates, nicotine, alcohol, sweets, and saturated fats, and gain 15 pounds? Well, first consider what all the above people really have in common: great genetics.

For example, siblings Reichert and Kahn aren't alone: Their brother, Peter, lived to 103, while their sister, Leonore, reached the age of 101. It's safe to say these individuals are "Churchills," people with rock-solid constitutions allowing them to take a lickin' and keep on tickin'. The quoted term, of course, originated with WWII-era British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who drank, smoked, and ate rich foods and still lived to be 90.

Then again, you may also want to consider Acciaroli, an anomalous Italian village where more than one in 10 people live to 100 (versus the aforementioned norm, one in 6,000). It's so unusual that scientists have studied the residents, finding they "tend to eat locally caught fish, home-reared rabbits and chickens as well as olive oil and home-grown vegetables and fruit," [reported](#) the *Independent* in 2016. They also walk a lot and eat copious amounts of rosemary.

Of course, being a small, perhaps relatively cloistered place, these people could also share genes related to longevity.

At the end of the day, common sense should prevail: "Everything in moderation." And the aforementioned beer-and-scotch-loving Agnes Fenton had the best advice of all. The Lord "'gave me a long life and a good life, and I have nothing to complain about,'" [related](#) NorthJersey.com. "'You've got to have God in your life. Without God, you've got nothing.'"

Now pardon me while I throw away the veggies and have my bacon cheeseburger lunch washed down with scotch, chocolate truffle dessert, and the third stogie of the day.

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