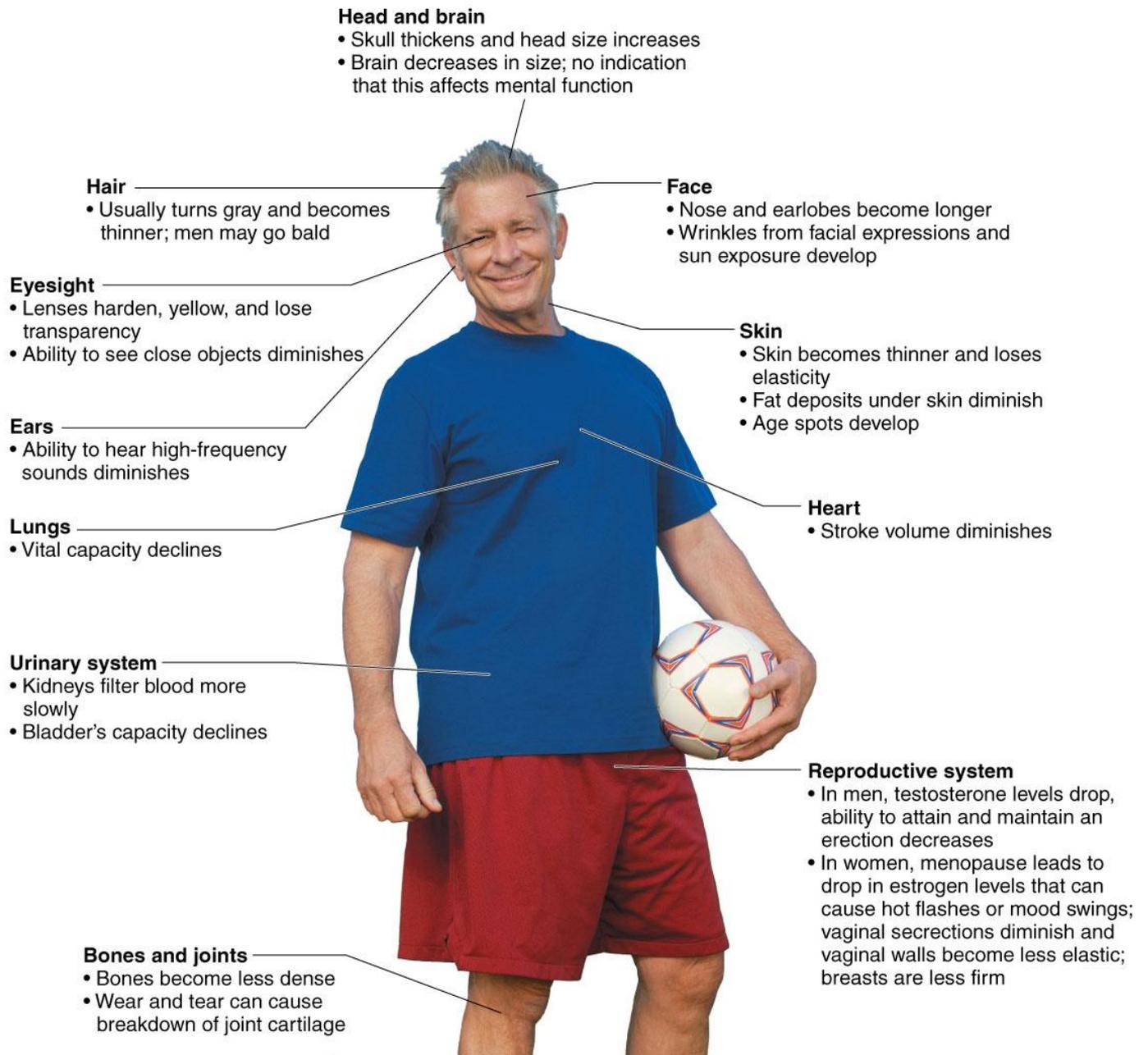


Normal Effects of Aging on the Body



	Normative Biological Changes	Non-Normative Biological Changes
VISION	Presbyopia: Reduction in ability to focus on near objects caused by loss of elasticity in the lens – occurs in the 40s and is correctable with glasses	Macular Degeneration, Glaucoma, Cataracts – these conditions may be adult onset, but are not normal aging
HEARING	Subtle changes usually begin in the 40s and progress gradually with age – hearing changes can be the result of ear wax buildup, changes to the flexibility and structure of the inner ear, and increased difficulty hearing higher pitched sounds	Tinnitus: ringing or buzzing sounds in ears, without or without hearing loss – may also be the result of certain diseases or medications; Significant hearing loss occurs as a result of damage to ear structure
SMELL	Odor identification may be less efficient likely due to environmental factors (such as smoking) and olfactory receptors not being replaced as completely as younger adults – odors may need to be more intense for older adults to identify them	Loss of smell (and likely taste) can occur as a result of upper respiratory infections, head trauma, nasal or sinus diseases. Diseases such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, and Huntington’s have also been associated with changes or loss of sense of smell.
TASTE	Noticeable decrease in sense of taste is reported around age 60-70 as taste receptors change	Dry mouth is the result of decreased saliva production often a side effect of medication use
TOUCH/SKIN	Research is very limited, but changes in touch and skin receptors is thought to take place gradually. There may be some loss of receptors requiring more stimulation to elicit a response. Think of touch and skin stimulation in terms of safety (example: how heat is perceived on the skin) AND as a way of communication (as a form of intimacy and caring response)!	

Saxon, S. V., Etten, M. J., & Perkins, E. A. (2015). *Physical change & aging: A guide for the helping professions* (6th ed). New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.