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## KSWB

### Community is living longer without usual health problems

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LOMA LINDA, Calif. - People living well into their hundreds and without the usual health problems can be found in a community just up the road from San Diego.

Loma Linda, California is one of five areas in the world known as Blue Zones, where people live extraordinarily long and active lives.

"I've got my blessed mother who is 98 and still cooking," said Loma Linda resident Pamela Scott.

The other four so-called Blue Zones are in Okinawa, Greece, Italy, and Costa Rica. The Seventh Day Adventists in Loma Linda lead the nation in life expectancy. Women there live about nine years longer than the average American. Men live about 11 years longer.

Loma Linda also has the highest concentration of Seventh Day Adventists in the world.

"The most important thing is there's a concentration of people there who all subscribe to the same good health habits," said Dan Buettner, author of the book, *The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from people who lived the longest*. "Most Adventists in Loma Linda, their immediate network are other Adventists and we know that health habits are as contagious as catching a cold."

Seventh Day Adventists promote a plant based diet. The hospital and Loma Linda University serve only [vegetarian](#) meals.

"I must say I have no aches or pains of any kind and I have no deficits, and I'm very seldom sick," said 97½-year-old cardiac surgeon Ellsworth Wareham, who up until two years ago, was still working in the operating room.

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Dr. Larry Beeson has been studying longevity at Loma Linda University since 1973. He said many researchers believe 25 percent of longevity is [genetics](#), the other 75 percent is lifestyle.

“You don't drink. You don't smoke,” said 82-year-old James Anderson while exercising at the Drayson Center pool.

Senior exercise classes are usually booked at Loma Lind University. There is a senior triathlon each year.

“It doesn't matter how old they are, I'm training them like athletes,” said spin class instructor Rachael Wilson.

Loma Linda Adventists also have a strong sense of purpose and community, frequently hanging out with each other.

“(We have) a positive attitude,” said Christine Oliveras. “Everyone is like family.”

Loma Linda Adventists also recognize the Sabbath stopping everything work related from sun down on Friday to sun down on Saturday.

“That 24 hours is carved out to de-stress with their religion,” said Buettner. “It's carved out time for their family and carved out time for their social network. All three things add to life expectancy.”

Buettner said the rest of the country can learn from Loma Linda. The bottom line he said is to eat a plant based diet and consider your friends.

“They provide an example of something the rest of us can aspire to, a whole ten years largely free of disease,” said Buettner. “We can do it.”

The Loma Linda Adventists are part of an ongoing nationwide study on longevity.

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