



Healthy Aging Fact Sheet

Falls

- According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than one-third of adults ages 65 years and older experience a fall severe enough to require medical attention each year.
- Among older adults, falls are the number one cause of fractures, hospital admissions for trauma, loss of independence, and injury deaths.
- Every 18 seconds, someone 65 years and older falls.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health

- approximately 12.2 percent of adults 50 or older reported binge alcohol use and 3.2 percent reported heavy alcohol use,¹ approximately 7.2 percent of adults 65 or older reported binge alcohol use and 1.8 percent reported heavy alcohol use.
- In addition, an estimated 1.8 percent of adults aged 50 or older (1.4 million persons) had used an illicit drug in the past month. Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug (1.1%), followed by prescription-type drugs used nonmedically (0.7%) and cocaine (0.2%).
- One in four older adults has a significant mental disorder. Among the most common mental health problems in older persons are depression, anxiety disorders, and dementia.
- The majority of older adults with substance abuse or mental health problems do not receive the treatment they need. An emerging evidence base supports the efficacy of a variety of pharmacological and psychotherapeutic interventions for substance abuse problems and major psychiatric disorders in older persons. Current prevention services for this population are extremely limited from both a substance abuse and a mental health perspective.

Chronic Disease

- A chronic disease is defined by the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics as one that persists for more than 3 months. These diseases cannot be prevented by vaccines, nor do they just go away.
- Approximately 80% of older adults have at least one chronic disease, and 50% have at least two.
- Depression affects 7 million older Americans and many do not receive treatment. This can lead to an increase in complications from conditions like heart disease.
- **Diabetes** affects 12.2 million Americans age 60 and older, amounting to 23.1% of the older population. An additional 57 million Americans over the age of 20 have pre-diabetes, which increases risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. In a 2007 CDC

Prevention Program for people at high risk for developing diabetes, lifestyle intervention reduced developing diabetes by 71% among those 60 years or older.

- **Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD)** is the most common type of peripheral vascular disease. About 8 million Americans have peripheral arterial disease, which includes about 20% of adults age 65 and older. Having PAD increases risk of stroke and heart attack four to five times.
- **Hypertension** is very common among adults, but it is easily detected and usually controllable. Americans over age 55 have a 90% risk of developing hypertension, and women are more likely to develop it than men. Half of women age 60 and above, and 77% of women over 75 experience high blood pressure. While the rate of hypertension among men is lower than women, it is still significant. At 75 years and older, 64% of men have high blood pressure.

NCOA's Role

Through a partnership that includes the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA), NCOA, and the Atlantic Philanthropies, Stanford's **Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP)** has helped more than 10,000 diverse older adults better manage their chronic conditions.

NCOA is also promoting the use of **Healthy IDEAS** (Identifying Depression, Empowering Activities for Seniors), developed at Baylor College of Medicine's Huffington Center on Aging with Care for Elders in Houston. This program, which screens older clients for depression and educates them about the symptoms, is now available in 10 states.

Connect the Dots: Diabetes and Your Heart: How Medicare Helps is an NCOA program sponsored by Novartis Pharmaceuticals. The program helps low-income seniors understand the risk factors for Diabetes and Hypertension, and teaches them how to use Medicare's prevention and screening benefits.

Beginning in 2009, NCOA will be producing another health education program on **Peripheral Arterial Disease**. The program, sponsored by the P.A.D. Coalition, will be taken to senior centers across the country to help raise awareness of Peripheral Arterial Disease and its risks.

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The National Council on Aging is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NCOA is a national voice for older Americans – especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged – and the community organizations that serve them. It brings together nonprofit organizations, businesses and government to develop creative solutions that improve the lives of all older adults. NCOA works with thousands of organizations across the country to help seniors find jobs and benefits, improve their health, live independently and remain active in their communities. For more information, visit www.ncoa.org.