

AGE WELL

Your Guide to Senior Health and Wellness

KENDAL[®] *at Home*

Together, transforming the experience of aging.[®]



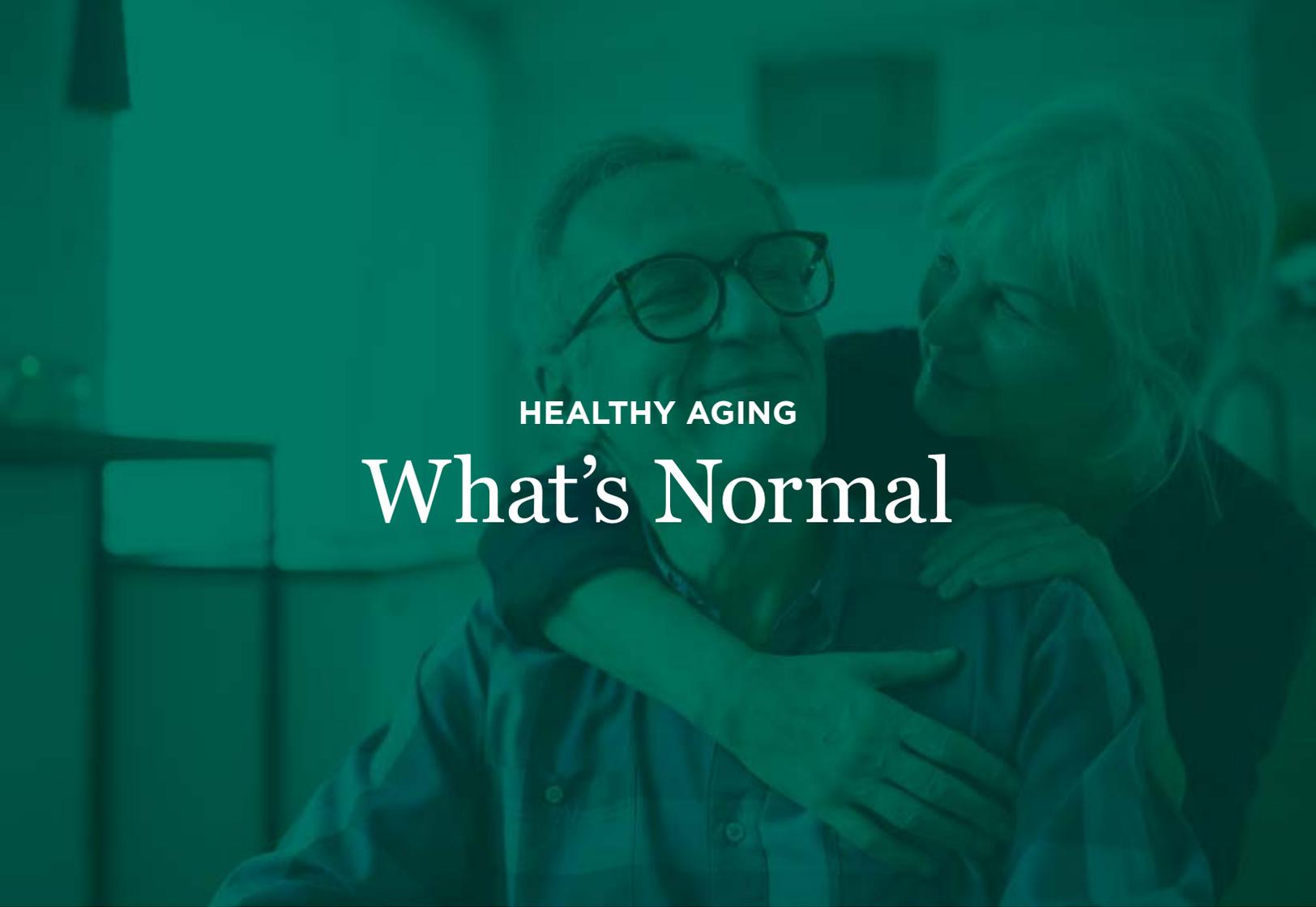
By 2060, nearly a quarter of the population in the United States will be 65 and older.

[HealthyPeople.gov](https://www.healthypeople.gov)

Advancements in medicine, as well as improved awareness of healthy habits and medical conditions, have resulted in longer life spans. Throughout your life, your body has done a lot for you, but as you'll, age you'll likely notice changes with how your body and brain function.

Some of these changes are part of the aging process, while others could signal something that needs medical attention.

Your independence is influenced by your health, and this guide will help you decipher the normal parts of the aging process and how to stay healthy.



HEALTHY AGING

What's Normal

You might expect to develop a few wrinkles or some gray hair along your aging journey. Stiff muscles and joints may even make an appearance. But aging can affect more than your appearance and flexibility. It can also affect your heart, brain, sexuality and even your teeth and mouth.

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The Most Common Changes During the Aging Process





HEART CHANGES

Your heart keeps your body running, and as you age, it [has to work harder to pump blood](#) through your arteries and blood vessels. This is because [your blood vessels and arteries can stiffen with age](#). As a result, your heart rate won't change, but you might notice it doesn't beat as quickly during activities as it used to. These changes can increase your risk for high blood pressure or other cardiovascular diseases.



WEAKENING BONES

Your [bones can become more susceptible to fracture with age](#) because they shrink in size and density. You might also notice your muscles losing strength or flexibility. All these changes can increase your risk of falls and may affect your balance.



BRAIN CHANGES

After age 40, [the weight of your brain declines by 5 percent](#) per decade. You may also experience changes in cognition or memory, such as forgetting names, but remembering them later or forgetting where you placed your car keys.



CHANGES IN SEXUAL PERFORMANCE OR LIBIDO

You may experience changes in your sexual desire and/or performance. Chronic conditions such as arthritis may make having sex more difficult or painful. Women may experience vaginal dryness, and men may have trouble getting and maintaining an erection. [Sexually transmitted diseases are also on the rise among older adults](#), so use protection if you have a new partner.



ORAL HEALTH CHANGES

You might notice your gums receding with age. If you take certain medications — like those for high blood pressure, allergies, asthma or certain antidepressants — you may [experience dry mouth](#). If you experience either of these issues, you could be more vulnerable to decay and infection.



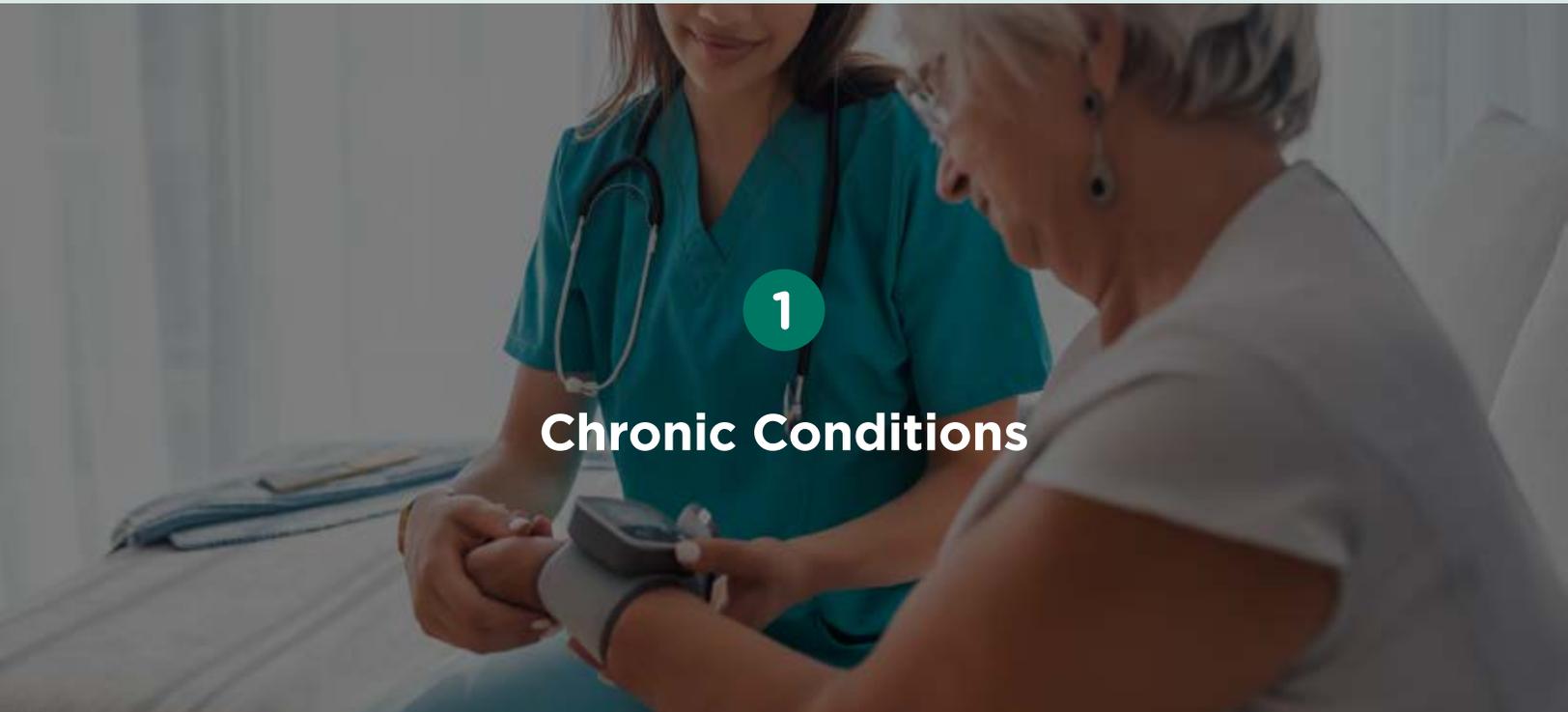
4 COMMON Health Issues

As you've just read, your body goes through a lot as you age. Despite your efforts to remain healthy, you might find yourself confronted with one of these health issues many older adults experience:

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4 Common Health Issues





1 Chronic Conditions

According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), [80 percent of older adults have at least one chronic medical condition](#), and 77 percent have two. Common chronic conditions include:

- Diabetes
- Stroke
- Breathing issues such as emphysema or bronchitis
- Cancer
- Heart disease
- Alzheimer's disease

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's Healthy People 2020 initiative notes physical activity is a good way to help prevent the development of chronic conditions. However, [less than 60 percent of older adults are physically active](#) or engage in strength training.

Physical Activities to Try

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends being as physically active as you are able. Before beginning any new physical activity, check with your doctor.

The WHO recommends:

- Participating in 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity per week or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic physical activity per week.
- Performing aerobic activities for 10-minute durations
- Focusing on muscle-strengthening activities for major muscle groups at least twice a week.

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Hiking
- Gardening
- Cycling
- Household chores
- Sports



2

Cognitive and Mental Health

Alzheimer's disease, a form of dementia, is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States. In fact, according to the Alzheimer's Association, [1 in 3 older adults dies with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia](#).

Cognitive health focuses on the loss of cognitive functions such as memory, thinking skills, problem-solving and more. The causes and symptoms of dementia can vary depending on the part of the brain affected, according to the [National Institutes of Health](#). The development of some chronic conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes can increase your risk of developing dementia.

Mental health, on the other hand, focuses on [mental disorders like depression, anxiety, or conditions like bipolar disorder](#) or obsessive compulsive disorder. Risk factors for depression and anxiety can include:

- Increased stress
- The loss of a loved one
- Dealing with a chronic disease
- Brain chemistry
- A personal history

Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Developing Dementia

EXERCISE

This can help [increase oxygen and blood flow to the brain](#), according to the Alzheimer's Association.

EAT A HEALTHY DIET

A diet that includes limiting sugar and saturated fats and eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, fish and whole grains.

AVOID HEAD TRAUMA

Always wear a seat belt, [fall-proof your home](#) and wear a helmet for recreational activities when necessary.



Signs of Depression

Depression symptoms may appear differently in older adults. Keep an eye out for:

- Feeling tired
- Trouble sleeping
- Irritability
- Confusion or problems with attention
- Feeling sad or empty
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Thoughts of harming yourself or others
- Aches, pains or digestive problems without a clear cause



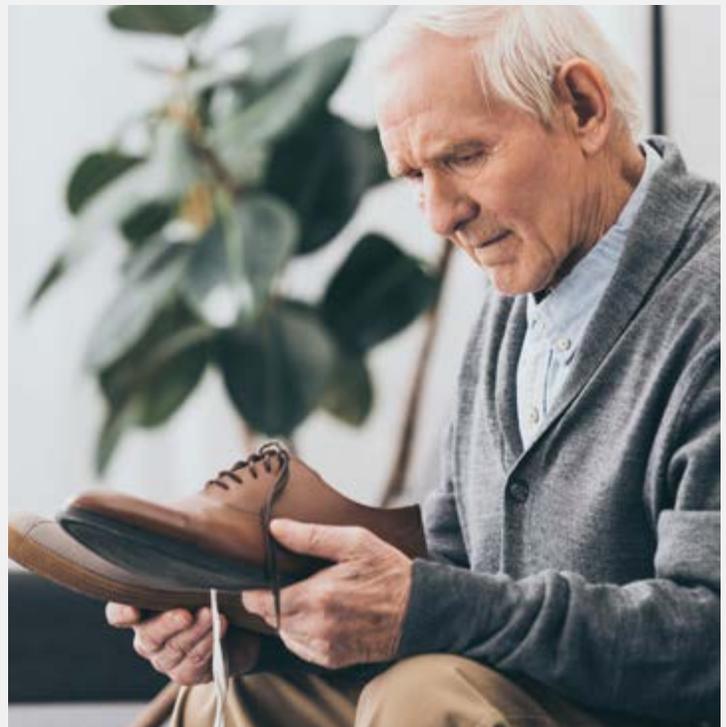
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Physical Injury

[Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for complications from a fall](#), NCOA estimates.

Easy Ways to Prevent Falls

- Be aware of medication side effects as some may cause dizziness
- Keep up your level of physical activity. Not very active? Talk with your doctor about increasing your activity
- [Wear the right shoes](#)
- Remove hazards from your home such as stacked newspapers, and secure loose rugs
- Ensure your home and entryways are properly lit





4

Sensory Impairments

One in 6 older adults have impaired vision, and [1 in 4 have impaired hearing](#), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Researchers think roughly [74 million Americans will have hearing challenges](#) by 2060. High blood pressure, stroke, diabetes and trauma to your eardrum can also [impact your ability to hear](#).

Changes in vision and vision loss can be affected by glaucoma, cataracts or macular degeneration.

Protect Your Vision and Hearing

Getting regular eye exams and hearing tests will keep you abreast of any changes. Eating a balanced diet with plenty of dark leafy greens, healthy fats and fish can help protect your vision. Maintaining a healthy weight and keeping diabetes under control can also help.

Protect your hearing by:

- Avoiding prolonged exposure to loud noises. If you're using headphones, don't turn the volume past 50%
- Keeping foreign objects out of your ear, including cotton swabs or other devices you might use to remove ear wax
- Keeping chronic conditions under control
- Visiting your doctor when you notice any changes





DON'T FORGET ABOUT

Nutrition

Proper nutrition plays a vital role in healthy aging. It helps ensure you're getting the vitamins and minerals you need and helps you maintain a healthy weight. But as you age, your risk of developing poor eating habits rises due to changes in taste or smell, your ability to cook, oral health problems and more.

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Nutrition Recommendations



While your energy needs might decrease with age, your need for certain vitamins and minerals — like calcium, vitamins D, B12 and B6 — actually increases after age 50.

The American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends:



Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables — especially dark green vegetables like kale or broccoli, and orange vegetables like carrots or sweet potatoes.



Including more fish, beans and peas as sources of protein.



Eating at least three servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy per day.



Eating more healthy fats like polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fats.

**While your body will change as you age,
your independence and health don't have to.**

Eat a healthy diet, engage in physical activity, get regular checkups and talk to your doctor about any changes or symptoms that concern you, and you can protect your health and wellness for decades to come.

