

Some of the most common issues facing the elderly

Thanks to new medications and surgical techniques, people are living longer. However, the body we had at 55 will be a very different body than the one we have at 75. Many issues, both genetic and environmental, affect how we age.

The most widespread condition affecting those 65 and older is coronary heart disease, followed by stroke, cancer, pneumonia and the flu. Accidents, especially falls that result in hip fractures, are also unfortunately common in the elderly.

A lot of our elders are coping with at least one of the following conditions, and many are dealing with two or more of the following:

- Heart conditions (hypertension, vascular disease, congestive heart failure, high blood pressure and coronary artery disease)
- Dementia, including Alzheimer's disease
- Depression
- Incontinence (urine and stool)
- Arthritis
- Osteoporosis
- Diabetes
- Breathing problems
- Frequent falls, which can lead to fractures
- Parkinson's disease
- Cancer
- Eye problems (cataracts, glaucoma, Macular Degeneration)

As the body changes, other things to be aware of are:

- A slowed reaction time, which is especially important when judging if a person can drive.
- Thinner skin, which can lead to breakdowns and wounds that don't heal quickly
- A weakened immune system, which can make fighting off viruses, bacteria and diseases difficult
- Diminished sense of taste or smell, especially for smokers, which can lead to diminished appetite and dehydration

The list can seem daunting. However, with proper care, elders have a life filled with joy.

For more information, go to www.agingcare.com.

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