

GETTING OLDER



Having a health check-up

You still need to look after yourself when you are older.

See your doctor for a check-up of your:

- **Heart.** The doctor might check your blood pressure and do some blood tests
- **Bones.** As you get older your bones start getting weaker. If they get too weak they can break. This is called Osteoporosis. You may have a test called a bone density. This is like an x-ray of your bones to see how strong they are. You will have to lie down on a special table and stay very still.

The doctor will take some blood and talk to you about your diet and exercise.

The doctor might talk to you about taking Calcium or Vitamin D tablets to help your bones stay strong.

GETTING OLDER

- **Blood.** The doctor will take blood to check if you have diabetes, to check your cholesterol (which is the fats in your blood) and to check that your kidneys and liver are working well. Some people might need to take medicine to help stay healthy.
- **Eyes.** Many people need glasses as they get older.
- **Hearing.** Some people find it harder to hear as they get older. You might need to wear a hearing aid to help you hear better.

Sometimes wee might leak into your underpants when you get older. This is called incontinence. This might happen more often when you laugh, sneeze or cough. It happens to some women as they get older or put on weight.

See the doctor if your wee is leaking into your pants. The doctor might do some tests. There might be medicine or exercises that will help. You might need to wear special pads in your underpants to catch the wee. These are different to period pads.

You can buy them at the chemist or the supermarket. You can also call the Continence Foundation on 1800 33 00 66 for help.

GETTING OLDER



Take care of your body

Exercise for 30 minutes a day until your heart beats faster and you feel puffed. Walking is a good activity.

If you have not exercised for a long time see your doctor first.

Sunshine helps to keep your bones and muscles strong. It is good to be in the sun but remember that you need to keep safe.

Keep safe in the sun. Always wear a hat, use sunscreen and wear a top with long sleeves. This will help stop skin cancer.

Your body makes vitamin D that helps keep your bones and muscles strong. You get this from being in the sun. Talk to your doctor about how much sunshine you need to get. Remember you need to keep safe in the sun.

GETTING OLDER

Eat a healthy diet. Eat extra calcium foods like low fat milk, yoghurt, cheese, almond nuts, fish with bones like tinned salmon.

Sleep 7 or 8 hours a night. Some older people find that they cannot stay asleep or sleep less. It might help you to go to sleep if you try something relaxing like listening to music or have a glass of warm milk. Try not to watch television in your bedroom.

Stay active. You may have more time to do fun activities. You can make more friends by joining groups like Senior Citizens. It may be hard to find the activities that are just right for you. Your family or support worker or advocate may be able to help you.

Getting used to changes

People slow down a bit as they get older. If you can't do as much as you used to you might feel sad. Staying active and seeing your family and friends can help you to stay happy. You are still an important part of the community.



You may need extra support to do things as you get older. Keep doing as much for yourself as you can as this will help you to feel independent and in charge of your life.

As you get older, your family and friends will get older too. People you love may get sick and die. These can be hard times when you feel sad and alone. Talk to your friends, advocate or doctor if you need to.

Everyone gets older and there are many services that help older people. Talk to your doctor if it is getting hard for you to do things like getting dressed, cooking or cleaning the house.

Sometimes it is hard to remember things when you get older. Forgetting things can make you feel scared, angry or sad. Your doctor may be able to help you.

GETTING OLDER

Where can you find out more		
NSW Council for Intellectual Disability Fact Sheets Easy English fact sheets on a range of health topics	 	9211 1611 or 1800 424 065 (calls outside Sydney) www.nswcid.org.au
The Continence Foundation Can help you if your wee is leaking into your pants.		1800 33 00 66

Other fact sheets in this series you may want to read

ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

MENOPAUSE

BEING HEALTHY

HEALTHY EATING

GRIEF AND LOSS