



IGA
Institute of Geriatrics
and Active Ageing

TIME TO CARE... PRACTICAL TIPS





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TIME TO CARE... PRACTICAL TIPS

“There are only four kinds of people in the world:
those who have been caregivers,
those who currently are caregivers,
those who will be caregivers,
and those who will need caregivers.”

---Rosalynn Carter---

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COMMON HEALTH CONDITIONS

IN OLDER PERSONS

Dementia •

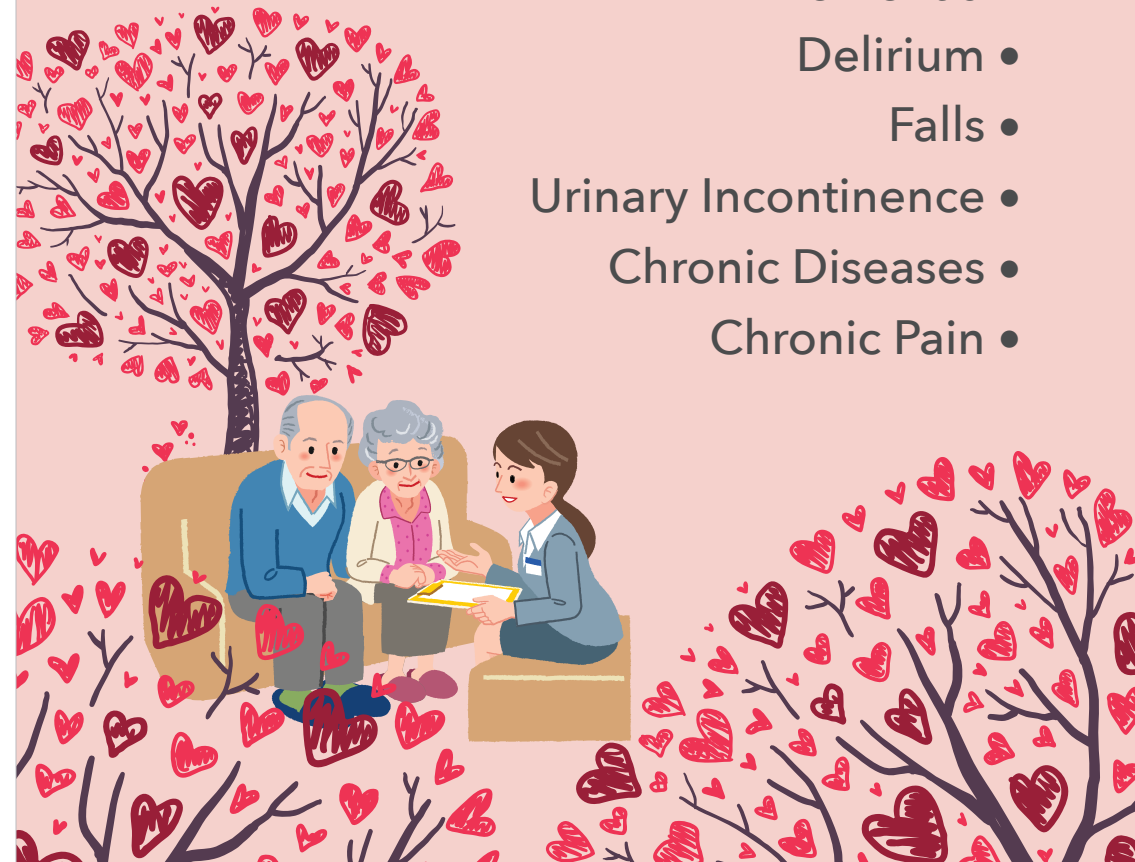
Delirium •

Falls •

Urinary Incontinence •

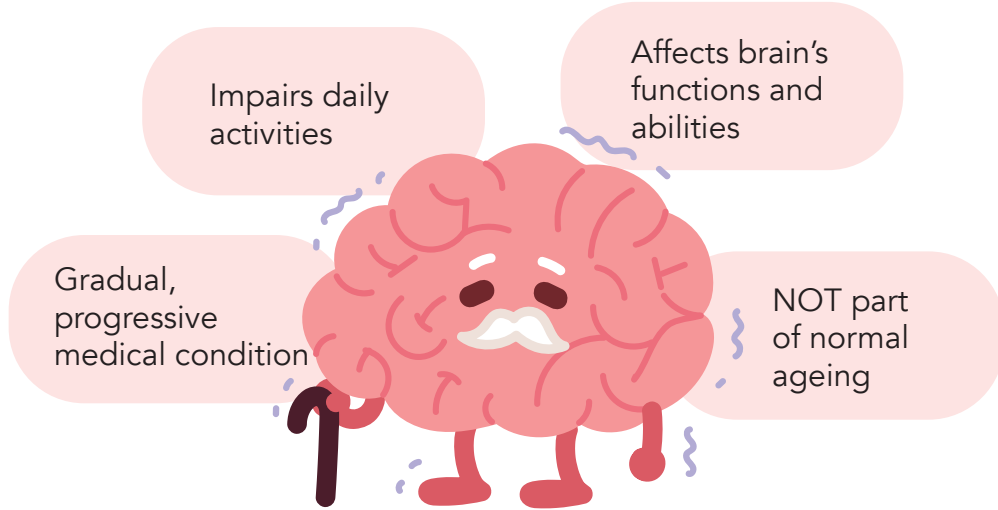
Chronic Diseases •

Chronic Pain •

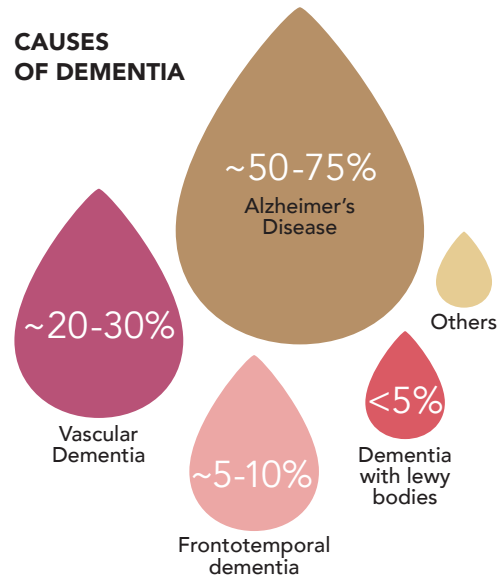


DEMENTIA

What is dementia?



CAUSES OF DEMENTIA



DEMENTIA
a general term for decline in brain's abilities

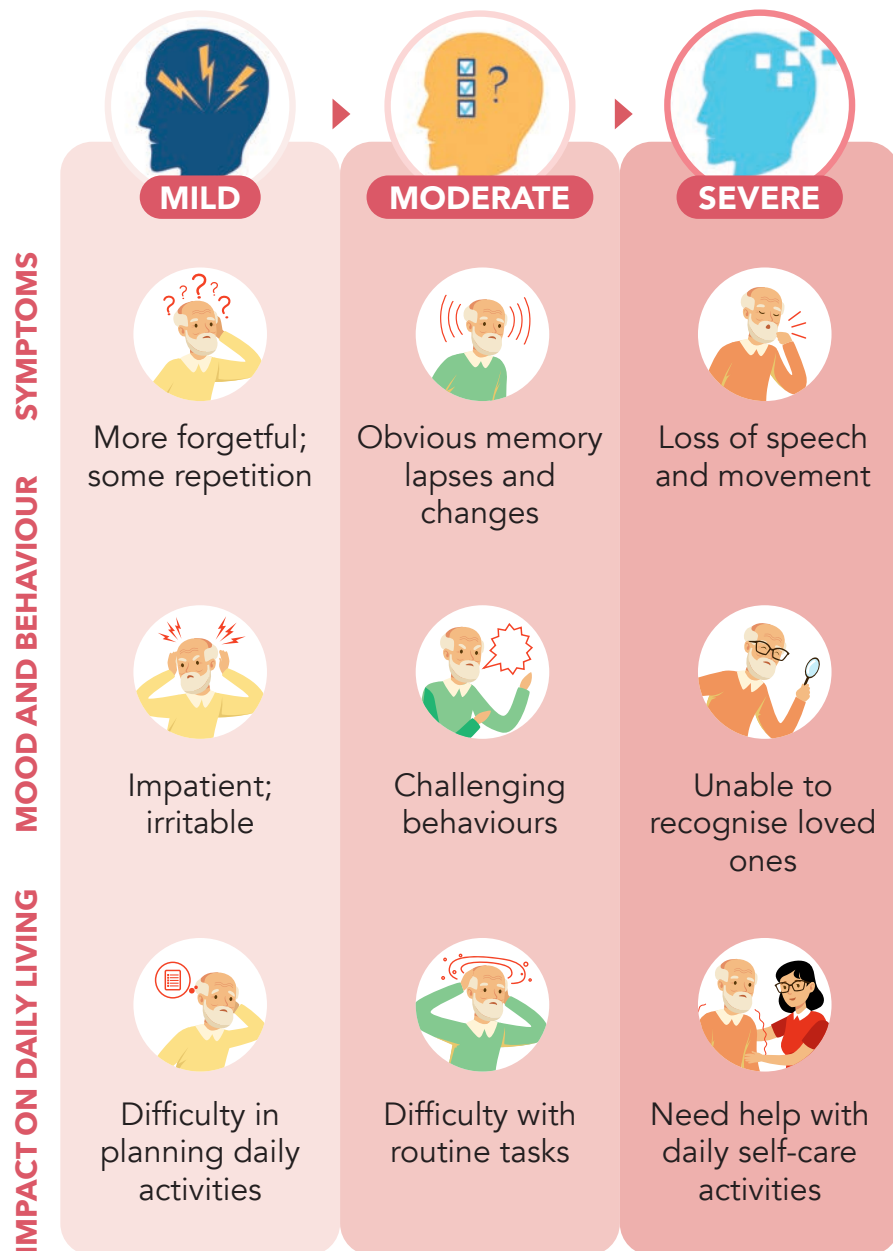
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DEMENTIA AND ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE:
most common cause of dementia

What are the signs of dementia?



What are the stages of dementia?



How can caregivers help?

If you suspect your loved one is having symptoms of dementia:

- Consult the General Practitioner (GP) or Family Doctor for an initial assessment
- Get referral to a memory clinic if needed
- Build up your knowledge of dementia



If your loved one has been diagnosed with dementia:

- Include your loved one in the discussions with the healthcare team
- Ask your loved one for opinions on future care, when he/she is able to make own decisions
- Discuss matters such as appointing a proxy decision-maker (refer page 30)



HELPING YOUR LOVED ONE WITH DEMENTIA COPE WITH FORGETFULNESS



Provide constant reminders of the surrounding reality



Sign up for the CARA Dementia Membership Programme (formerly known as "Safe Return Card") if your loved one gets lost frequently



Be sensitive; reassure and validate your loved one's concerns



Create and keep to a regular daily routine



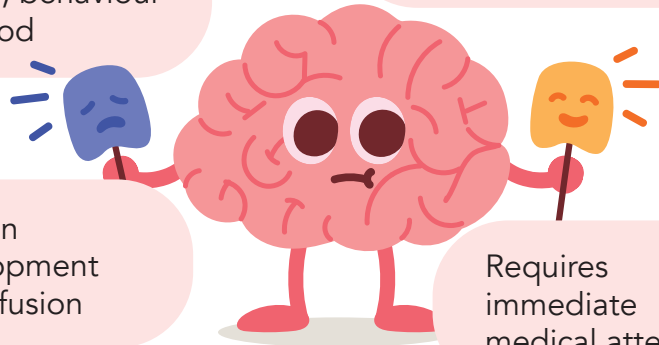
Break tasks into easier steps; focus on successes

DELIRIUM

What is delirium?

Dramatic changes in thinking, behaviour and mood

Usually caused by underlying illness or reaction to medications



Sudden development of confusion

Requires immediate medical attention

What are the symptoms of delirium?



Changing level of consciousness

Difficulty in focusing

Incoherent speech

Paranoia

Confusion over the time of day

Hallucination e.g. imaginary voices or seeing things

Inability to recognise familiar people

Inability to manage regular routines e.g. bathing or toileting

Disruptions in sleep and appetite



QUICK TIPS

How can caregivers help?

If you suspect your loved one is having symptoms of delirium:

- Seek prompt medical attention
- Bring your loved one to the Accident & Emergency (A&E) department if necessary
- Take note of your loved one's symptoms, functioning and memory before the confusion
- Bring along your loved one's identification card and all medications

If you observe sudden changes in your loved one's consciousness, behaviour or thinking during hospitalisation:

- Inform the medical team

SUPPORTING YOUR LOVED ONE WITH DELIRIUM



Stay with your loved one, especially in times of severe confusion



Speak slowly in short, simple sentences and in a calm, reassuring tone



Provide regular orienting information — inform who you are, current time and date, explain the need to be in hospital



Bring along visual or hearing aids



Bring familiar objects from home (e.g. photographs) for more comfort and less anxiety in an unfamiliar hospital environment



Encourage and assist your loved one with eating and drinking to maintain adequate nutrition and hydration



Provide suitable mental stimulation e.g. reading or playing familiar music



Ensure your loved one gets adequate rest. A back massage, warm drink and relaxing music can help promote good sleep.

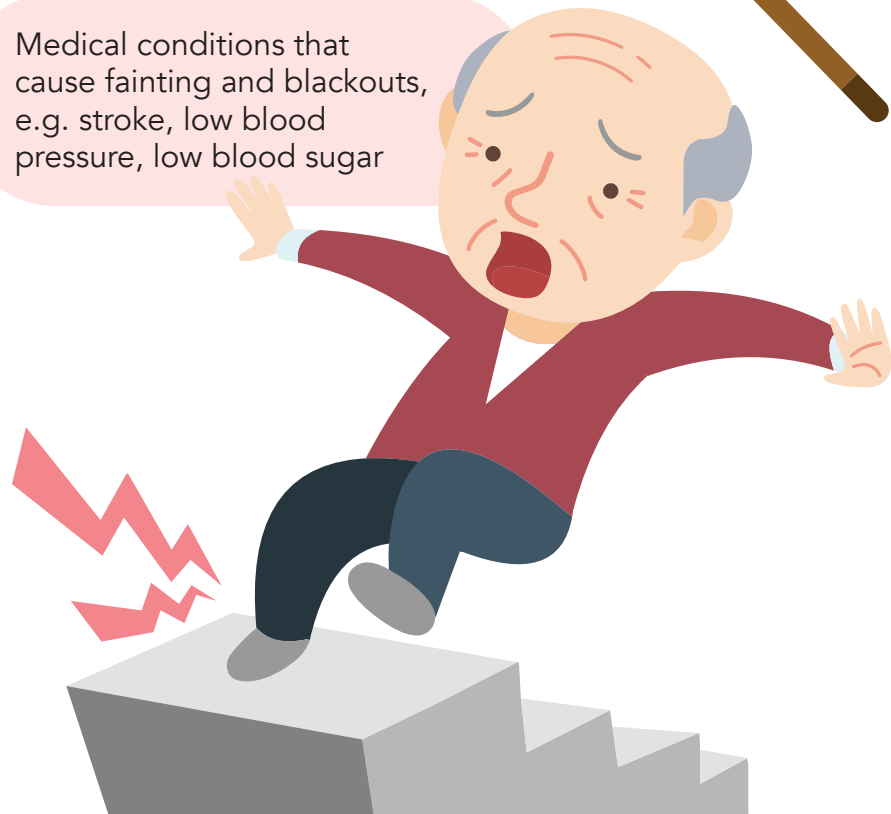
FALLS

What causes falls?

Normal changes to the body due to ageing, e.g. poorer eyesight, weaker muscles, poorer balance

Medical conditions that affect strength, balance and walking, e.g. stroke, Parkinson's disease, arthritis

Medical conditions that cause fainting and blackouts, e.g. stroke, low blood pressure, low blood sugar



How can falls be prevented?

Most falls are usually due to the interaction between the older person and the environment.

Falls can be prevented by **increasing the older person's perceptual awareness and modifying the environment where possible.**



QUICK TIPS

LOWERING THE RISK OF FALLS IN YOUR LOVED ONE



Scan the environment to avoid obstacles



Concentrate when walking; avoid multi-tasking and do not rush



Use the lift instead of the escalator



Sit nearer to the bus or train exits for easier alighting



Stand to alight only when the bus or train has come to a complete stop



Wear visual or hearing aids at all times



Wear covered, non-slip shoes



Use walking aids if required

What can caregivers do to prevent your loved ones from falling?

- Bring your loved one for annual eye checks, and ensure his/her spectacles are clean and clear
- Encourage the wearing of non-slip shoes
- Modify the home to create a safer environment
- Create an emergency plan in case of a fall, e.g. programme emergency numbers into your loved one's phone or install a personal alarm with response trigger at home



What home modifications can caregivers consider?

- 1 Rearrange the furniture to allow adequate space for movement
- 2 Remove clutter and trailing wires to prevent trips
- 3 Secure loose rugs
- 4 Ensure floor surfaces are dry and not slippery
- 5 Store commonly used items at places that are easy to reach
- 6 Use bright lightings in rooms
- 7 Highlight kerbs and raised levels
- 8 Ensure appropriate height of furnitures (your loved one's knees should bend at around 90 degrees with feet flat on the ground when seated)
- 9 Install handrails, grab bars and/or place a sturdy chair in toilets



URINARY INCONTINENCE

What is urinary incontinence?

Involuntary leakage of urine

Decrease in bladder capacity and increase in unstable bladder contractions due to ageing, causing frequent urination and urgency

Different types of urinary incontinence require different treatments

What are the symptoms of urinary incontinence?

- Urine leakage during activities e.g. sneezing, coughing or exercising
- Urine leakage without warning or during sleep
- Sudden strong urge to pass urine
- Inability to reach a bathroom in time

How can caregivers help?

If you think your loved one may have urinary incontinence, you can:

- Provide assurance that incontinence is not an inevitable consequence of ageing
- Seek medical advice early to treat and manage incontinence effectively
- Help your loved one overcome fear and shame



QUICK TIPS

GOOD HABITS TO HELP YOUR LOVED ONE MAINTAIN A HEALTHY BLADDER

Keep clean



- Wash genital area with soap and water
- Use moisturising creams and barrier ointments to protect the skin
- Avoid applying talcum powder

Empty bladder completely



- Attempt to empty the bladder completely with every bathroom trip
- Avoid instances where your loved one visits the bathroom "just in case"

Drink sufficient fluids



- Drink at least 1.5 litres (6-8 glasses) of fluids a day, unless otherwise advised by the doctor
- Limit consumption of alcohol and caffeinated drinks which can worsen urinary incontinence

Ensure adequate fibre intake and regular bowel movements

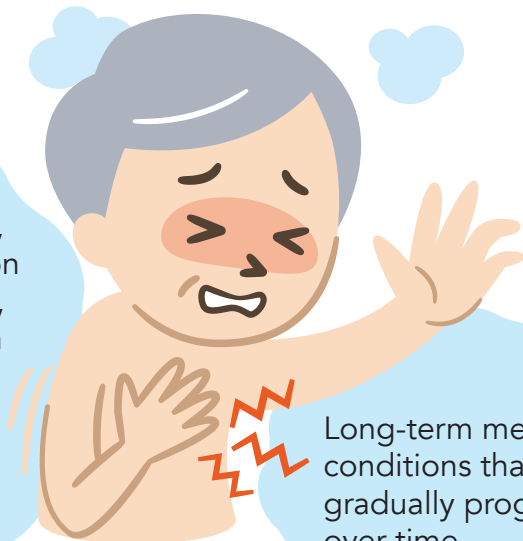


- Serve two servings of fruits and vegetables daily
- Encourage regular exercise

CHRONIC DISEASES

What are chronic diseases?

Common examples include heart disease, diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), hyperlipidaemia (high blood cholesterol), stroke, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)



Long-term medical conditions that can gradually progress over time

What causes chronic diseases?

A majority of chronic diseases are due to poor lifestyle choices.

Unhealthy diet

Smoking

Lack of physical activity

Excessive alcohol use



How can caregivers help?

If your loved one has an existing chronic disease, you can:

- Learn more about the disease and medications. Visit the TTSH Health Library for more information and resources.
- Help manage and control the condition so that complications can be prevented or delayed
- Encourage a healthier lifestyle



QUICK TIPS

HELPING YOUR LOVED ONE MANAGE CHRONIC DISEASES THROUGH A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE



Go for regular health screenings and vaccinations, at least once a year



Avoid excessive consumption of alcohol



Aim to achieve 150 minutes of physical activity every week



Avoid smoking and inhaling secondhand smoke



Choose a healthier, balanced diet low in trans fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt



Manage stress that may arise from medical conditions, relationships or financial issues



Know your loved one's medications, such as dosage and frequency, expiry dates and side effects



Stay updated on new information and developments of the chronic disease

CHRONIC PAIN

What is chronic pain?

Pain that is ongoing and persists beyond 3 months

Common causes of chronic pain in older persons include arthritis, degenerative spine disease, cancer and chronic diseases e.g. diabetes and stroke

What are the effects of chronic pain?

Reduced mobility

Increased risk of falls

Depression and anxiety

Reduced activities or social isolation

Poor sleep

Lower quality of life

How can caregivers help?

If your loved one has chronic pain, you can:

- Acknowledge the pain and accompanying emotions
- Consult a doctor for diagnosis and pain management
- Ensure compliance with treatments



HELPING YOUR LOVED ONE MANAGE CHRONIC PAIN



Understand your loved one's condition



Accompany your loved one to medical appointments



Ask the doctor what to look out for



Keep notes of symptoms to share with the doctor



Know the medications and potential side effects



Remind your loved one to take medications



Listen to and acknowledge your loved one's concerns



Use techniques such as distraction, relaxation or exercise

CARING FOR OLDER PERSONS

Nutrition ●

Physical Exercise ●

Cognitive Well-being ●

Psychological Well-being ●

Social Well-being ●

Practical Paperwork for Older Persons ●



NUTRITION

An older person's ability to absorb nutrients becomes less efficient with age. Thus, a regular and well-balanced diet is important for good health.

What constitutes good nutrition for older persons?

- 1 Sufficient consumption of energy and protein

High energy food sources include unsaturated margarine and oils e.g. sunflower, canola and sesame oil, full cream dairy products and nuts

High protein food sources include meat, poultry, fish, milk and milk products, eggs and tofu

Ensure a healthy, balanced diet using 'My Healthy Plate'

- 2 Eat a variety of food from each food group
- 3 Eat all food in moderation



Source: Health Promotion Board


QUICK TIPS
STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE YOUR LOVED ONE'S APPETITE AND FOOD INTAKE


Offer a variety of food



Cater to your loved one's food preferences and eating habits



Consider chewing and swallowing abilities



Fortify food to increase energy and protein intake, e.g. add sesame oil and egg to porridge



Keep a supply of nutritious, ready-to-eat snacks



Serve more food when appetite is best



Serve bite-sized finger food e.g. hard-boiled egg or local cakes



Make the eating environment enjoyable



Introduce food with strong flavours e.g. spices, to stimulate the taste buds and senses



PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Exercise helps to lower the risk of developing chronic diseases, prevent falls, improve mood, sleep quality and cognitive health.


QUICK TIPS
HELPING YOUR LOVED ONE EXERCISE AT HOME


Consult a doctor or physiotherapist, if your loved one has not exercised for a long time



Wear comfortable clothes and flat-soled fitting shoes



Drink sufficient water before, during and after exercising



Perform warm-up and cool-down stretches before and after each session



Stop the exercise and seek medical help if your loved one experiences any symptoms e.g.

What types of exercises can older persons do?

There are different types of exercises, which serve different purposes. Aim to move around 30 minutes on most days.

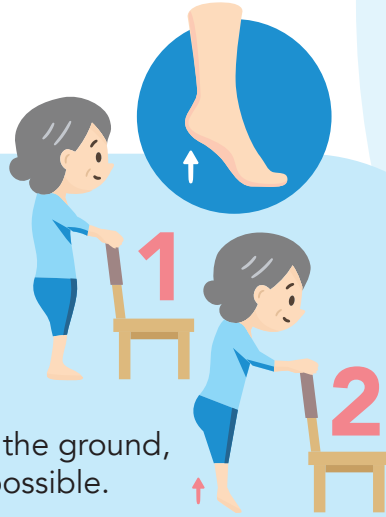
- Aerobic exercises to increase fitness e.g. brisk walking, jogging, swimming, cycling
 - Resistance exercises to build strength and muscle e.g. weight lifting, resistance bands
 - Balance exercises to improve balance and stability e.g. heel-to-toe walking, walking backwards
 - Flexibility exercises to improve flexibility and stretches muscles e.g. hamstring stretch, shoulder rolls
- Pain or discomfort in the chest, neck, shoulder, or arm
 - Excessive breathlessness
 - Dizziness or nausea
 - Profuse sweating
 - Muscle cramps

Exercise & Stay Active at Home

To get started, try these simple strengthening exercises for the lower limbs.

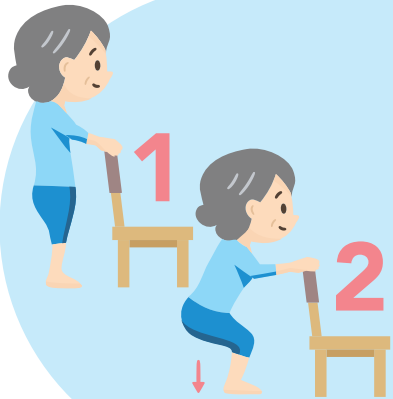
DOUBLE LEG HEEL RAISES (STANDING)

- 1 Stand straight with your feet shoulder-width apart. Hold onto a stable support.
- 2 Keep the balls of your feet on the ground, and lift your heels as high as possible.



DOUBLE LEG SQUAT (SUPPORTED)

- 1 Hold onto a stable support. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- 2 Lower yourself down into a squat. Ensure your knees do not go beyond your toes.
- 3 Maintain an upright posture and keep your knees and toes pointing forward throughout the movement.



For each exercise:

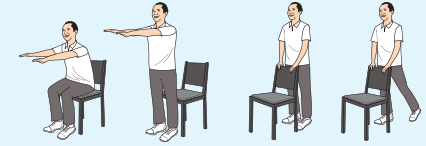
- Hold position for 5 to 10 seconds;
- Perform 1 set of 10 to 12 times and complete 2 to 3 sets a day, or as tolerated.

Warm-Up



1. Stationary March with Arm Swing/Seated March

Strength Exercises



2. Sit to Stand

3. Standing Hip Extension

Balance Exercises



4. Side Leg Raise

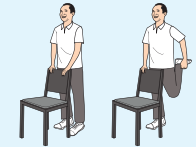
5. Single Leg Stand

Flexibility Exercise



6. Triceps Stretch

Cool Down

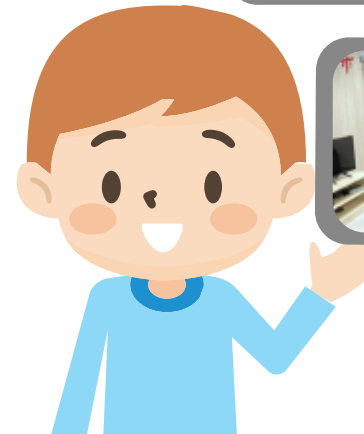


7. Standing Quadriceps Stretch

For a complete workout, you can also refer to '7 Easy Exercises to An Active Lifestyle' created by the Health Promotion Board (HPB). Scan the QR code for more details and videos of the exercises in all 4 languages.



You can also find short workout videos to keep active at home on the TTSH CarersXPhysios website. Scan the QR code for more information.



COGNITIVE WELL-BEING

Cognitive well-being is a person's ability to think clearly, learn and remember.

Older persons may experience decline in some cognitive functions such as processing speed, memory and problem solving.

A healthy cognition enables the older person to maintain function and independence, and enjoy activities/experiences with loved ones.



QUICK TIPS

STRATEGIES TO HELP MAINTAIN COGNITIVE HEALTH IN YOUR LOVED ONE



Include food rich in antioxidants e.g. dark-coloured fruits and vegetables, and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids e.g. salmon, tuna and sardines



Engage in brain stimulating activities e.g. reading, knitting, playing mahjong



Aim for 150 minutes of physical activity a week



Maintain social network and activities



Manage chronic diseases well



Avoid excessive intake of alcohol and smoking



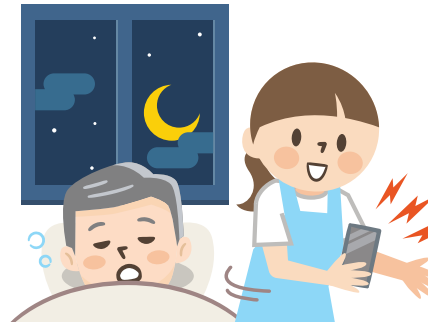
Sleep 6-8 hours every night



Helping your loved one achieve good sleep

MIND

- Practise relaxation or deep breathing
- Do not bring problems to bed
- Sleep only when sleepy
- Have a bedtime routine



ENVIRONMENT

- Make your loved one's bedroom comfortable
- Limit screen time before bed
- Do not watch the clock
- Use the bed only for sleeping

BODY

- Exercise regularly to improve sleep
- Avoid taking in excessive liquid in the evening
- Avoid caffeine intake in the late afternoon and at night
- Maintain a regular sleep schedule

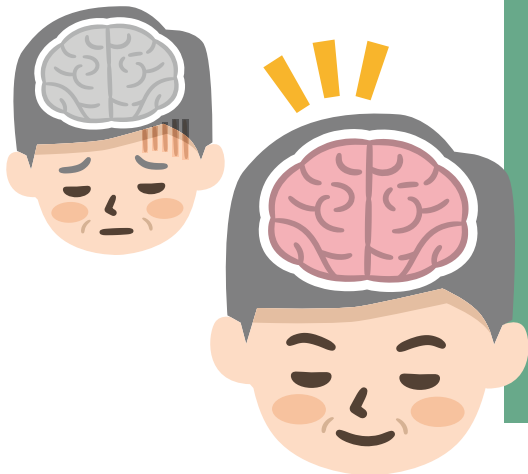


PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Psychological well-being is a person's emotional health and overall functioning.

For older persons, this means how happy and satisfied they are with their life. With age, older persons may experience negative emotions due to life events such as:

- Loss of social support e.g. empty nest syndrome
- Demise of family members or friends
- Health deterioration
- Loss of income or status



QUICK TIPS

STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUR LOVED ONE REMAIN EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY



Plan activities that make your loved one happy e.g. singing or dancing



Help your loved one feel good with a sense of achievement e.g. gardening or painting



Encourage your loved one to maintain relationships and social connections



Encourage your loved one to try new activities and be open to making new friends



Plan early for future finances

SOCIAL WELL-BEING

People are social beings. It is important for older persons to remain connected with the people around them.

Good social network and support is highly beneficial to help maintain independence and fulfil basic social needs.



QUICK TIPS

STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUR LOVED ONE REMAIN SOCIALLY ACTIVE



Encourage your loved one to maintain social network and support



Create opportunities for meaningful activities and interaction



Eat together and have conversations



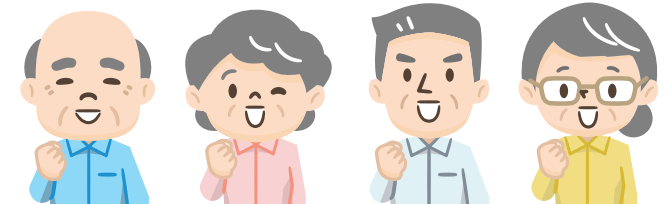
Find new hobbies e.g. gardening, brisk walking



Consider community activities e.g. interest groups, courses



Consider volunteering



PRACTICAL PAPERWORK FOR OLDER PERSONS

This chapter briefly introduces practical paperwork for older persons that caregivers can consider.

	WHAT IS IT?	BENEFITS	MIN. AGE	WHO CAN APPLY?	HOW TO APPLY?
Advance Care Planning (ACP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process of communication between your loved one, family members and healthcare team Understand your loved one's preferences and wishes regarding future care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces the stress of family members Increases care satisfaction Strengthens relationships between your loved one, family members and healthcare team 	Regardless of age	Anyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit https://www.aic.sg/care-services/advance-care-planning ACP discussions may need to be facilitated by a trained healthcare professional, available in most public hospitals
Advance Medical Directive (AMD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal document Your loved one indicates not wanting artificial means of prolonging life, in the event that there is clearly no hope of a cure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives your loved one a peace of mind Acknowledged by the state, and respected by family members and healthcare team Reduces the stress of family members in the event your loved one becomes terminally ill and unconscious 	21 years and above	Anyone who satisfies the age requirement and possesses mental capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.moh.gov.sg/policies-and-legislation/advance-medical-directive Obtain an AMD form online, or from medical clinics, polyclinics and hospitals
Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal document Your loved one appoints a trusted person to make decisions according to preferences and wishes, in the event of loss of mental capacity in future Broad areas of personal welfare, and property and affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protects interests of your loved one Allows your loved one to indicate personal choice of trusted proxy Provides certainty and peace of mind to your loved one and family members 	21 years and above	Anyone who satisfies the age requirement and possesses mental capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.msf.gov.sg/opg/Pages/The-LPA-The-Lasting-Power-of-Attorney.aspx LPA Form 1 application fee is waived for Singapore citizens till 31 Mar 2023
Will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal document Specific instructions for the administration and distribution of your loved one's assets to selected beneficiaries after death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows your loved one to indicate preferences and wishes of distribution Minimises unnecessary disputes and misunderstanding 	21 years and above	Anyone who satisfies the age requirement and possesses mental capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your loved one may consult and engage a lawyer to draft a will, to ensure its validity after death Will may be registered with the Singapore Academy of Law (https://wills.sal.sg/)



CARING FOR YOURSELF

- Caring for Yourself
- Resources for Caregivers



CARING FOR YOURSELF

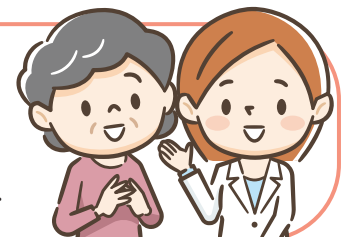
Caring for your loved one can be very demanding and stressful. It is important to **take care of yourself first**, before you care for your loved one.



Signs of caregiver stress



If you experience any of the above, do not ignore it. Talk to someone or seek help from a social worker, counsellor or healthcare professional.



Strategies to manage caregiver stress



ACCEPT HELP FROM OTHERS

Prepare a list of areas that require help, e.g. take your loved one for a walk, shop for groceries or cook a meal. Do not feel guilty asking for help.



FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN PROVIDE

No one is a perfect caregiver. It is normal to feel guilty sometimes. Remember you are doing your best.

SET REALISTIC GOALS

Prioritise and break tasks into smaller ones



STAY UPDATED

Find out about community resources e.g. respite care or day care services, and caregiver classes from the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) and National Council of Social Service (NCSS)

PLAN YOUR FINANCES

Consider financial assistance schemes or talk to a social worker



JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

Get encouragement and advice from other caregivers and make new friends



MAINTAIN SOCIAL SUPPORT

Stay emotionally connected with family and friends, and set aside time to socialise



SEEK PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

Consult your healthcare professional or counsellor if you feel overwhelmed

RECHARGE FOR RESILIENCE, NOT FOR RECOVERY



QUICK TIPS

SELF-CARE TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS



Take care of your own health



Be kind to yourself



Know your limits



Take deliberate breaks to recharge



Do the things you enjoy



Find joy in daily activities



Remain socially connected



Talk to others about your feelings

RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

NAME	CONTACT	ADDRESS	NOTES
GENERAL RESOURCES / HELPLINES			
Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)	HOTLINE : 1800 650 6060 WEBSITE : https://www.aic.sg/	Visit https://www.aic.sg/about-us/aic-link for AIC Link Locations	Provides information and advice on care services and assistance schemes for caregivers and their loved ones
Dementia Helpline (Dementia Singapore – formerly Alzheimer’s Disease Association)	HOTLINE : 6377 0700 WEBSITE : https://dementia.org.sg/	20 Bendemeer Road, #01-02 BS Bendemeer Centre, Singapore 339914	Offers a range of services for caregivers and their loved ones living with dementia
Family Service Centres (FSCs)	WEBSITE : https://www.msf.gov.sg/policies/Strong-and-Stable-Families/Supporting-Families/Pages/Family-Service-Centres.aspx	Multiple locations available, please refer to website for more details	Provides assistance to families in need
Health Promotion Board (HPB)	TEL : 6435 3500 WEBSITE : https://www.hpb.gov.sg/	3 Second Hospital Avenue, Singapore 168937	Provides and promotes health information and campaigns in Singapore
Ministry of Health	TEL : 6325 9220 WEBSITE : https://www.moh.gov.sg/cost-financing/healthcare-schemes-subsidies	16 College Road, Singapore 169854	Provides information on all healthcare financing schemes and subsidies in Singapore
ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVE (AMD)			
Ministry of Health (MOH)	TEL : 6325 9220 WEBSITE : https://www.moh.gov.sg/policies-and-legislation/advance-medical-directive	16 College Road, Singapore 169854	Legal document for not wanting any extraordinary life-sustaining treatment used to prolong life
LASTING POWER OF ATTORNEY (LPA)			
Office of the Public Guardian (OPG)	TEL : 1800 226 6222 WEBSITE : https://www.msf.gov.sg/opg/Pages/The-LPA-The-Lasting-Power-of-Attorney.aspx	The Office of the Public Guardian, 20 Lengkok Bahru, #04-02, Singapore 159053	Legal document to appoint trusted person(s) to make decisions on behalf if mental capacity is lost



CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Dementia Singapore (Support in English, Mandarin and Malay)

TEL : 6377 0700
WEBSITE : <https://dementia.org.sg/>

Caregiver Support Centre
20 Bendemeer Road,
#01-02 BS Bendemeer Centre,
Singapore 339914

Provides support and respite opportunity for caregivers in a relaxed and safe environment

New Horizon Centre (Jurong Point)
1 Jurong West Central 2, #04-04,
Jurong Point Shopping Centre,
Singapore 648886

New Horizon Centre (Toa Payoh)
Block 157 Toa Payoh Lorong 1, #01-1195,
Singapore 310157

Family of Wisdom (Tiong Bahru)
298 Tiong Bahru Road,
#10-05 Central Plaza,
Singapore 168730

Caregivers Alliance Limited

HELPLINE : 6460 4400
WEBSITE : <https://www.cal.org.sg/>

491-B River Valley Road, #04-04,
Valley Point Office Tower,
Singapore 248373

Provides caregivers of persons with mental health issues with support and services, training programmes and self-care enablement

Caregiving Welfare Association

TEL : 6466 7957 / 7996
WEBSITE : <https://www.cwa.org.sg/>

3 Ghim Moh Road, #01-294,
Singapore 270003

Provides caregiver support and counselling, services and programmes; offers Caregivers' Sanctuary @ NUH

TOUCH Caregivers Support

TEL : 6804 6555
WEBSITE : www.touch.org.sg/caregivers

Blk 444, Ang Mo Kio Avenue 10,
#01-1603,
Singapore 560444

Provides a range of services to assist caregivers in coping with the various challenges of caregiving

CENTRE-BASED RESPITE CARE

Caregivers can consider taking a break from caregiving to practise self-care, with respite care options.

There are different options depending on your loved one's condition and the duration of respite.

For more information, visit <https://www.aic.sg/caregiving/Pages/Caring%20For%20Myself/getting-respite.aspx>



Day Respite (includes list of service providers)

For more information, visit <https://www.aic.sg/care-services/Pages/Care%20at%20Centre/day-care.aspx>



Go Respite Pilot (includes list of service providers)

Go Respite allows caregivers to pre-enrol for respite with their preferred care provider, such that access to respite care is faster when it is needed.

For more information, visit <https://www.aic.sg/caregiving/go-respite-pilot>



NOTES





IGA
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and Active Ageing

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