

Healthy Aging Tips - 2025 Update

Here are some practical health tips for older adults in Canada, designed to prevent potential health issues before they become serious.

Index

1. Take full advantage of the new Canada Dental Care Plan
2. Learn how to monitor your blood pressure accurately
3. Stay aware of your cholesterol levels
4. Keep adequately hydrated - you need more liquid than you think
5. Ensure you are getting enough Calcium & Vitamin D to prevent early bone loss
6. Incorporate strength and balance exercises into your daily physical activities
7. Improve your computer skills; they are essential for living independently
8. Related links and videos

Tip 1: Take advantage of the Canada Dental Care Plan (CDCP)

Tip: If you have been avoiding the dentist for financial reasons, apply for the Canada Dental Care Plan and resume regular dental appointments.

Why?: The Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) assists those without private insurance and a household income under \$90,000. Over one million Canadians

have accessed this program, receiving an average of \$730 for oral health care services.

Health Impacts: More than half of Canadians aged 65 to 79 have moderate to severe periodontitis, a chronic disease characterized by the gums pulling away from the teeth. This condition can lead to the formation of infected pockets that may break down bones and connective tissues. Additionally, evidence suggests a link between cardiovascular disease and poor oral health. Fortunately, periodontal disease is both preventable and treatable with regular dental care. To learn more about the Canada Dental Care Plan, click on the link below.

NICE Information Tools:

- [Canada Dental Care Plan \(CDCP\)](#)
- [Periodontal Disease and Older Adults](#)

Tip 2: Learn how to monitor your blood pressure accurately

Tip: Buy an affordable home blood pressure monitor and learn how to measure your blood pressure accurately.

Why?: Measuring blood pressure can be tricky, so it's essential to follow the instructions closely for accurate results. You should take multiple readings and average them, as blood pressure can vary due to time of day, meals, drinks, activity, posture, and stress. It is difficult for health professionals to get an accurate measurement in a 15-minute visit, so help them and bring in your test results.

Health Impacts: Approximately two-thirds of older adults in Canada are diagnosed with hypertension, also known as high blood pressure. This condition occurs when the force of blood against the walls of the arteries is consistently elevated. High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke, as well as a significant risk factor for heart disease. The good news is that hypertension is

treatable through affordable medications and healthy lifestyle choices, including a balanced diet, regular exercise, and effective stress management. To learn more about measuring your blood pressure at home, click on the link below.

NICE Information Tools:

- [Hypertension \(high blood pressure\)](#)
- [Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors](#)

Tip 3: Stay aware of your cholesterol levels

Tip: Ask your healthcare professional to schedule a cholesterol test if you:

- are male and over 40 years of age
- are female and over 50 years of age and/or post-menopausal
- have heart disease, diabetes or hypertension (high blood pressure)
- have a waist circumference greater than 37 inches for men and 31.5 inches for women
- smoke or have smoked within the last year
- have erectile dysfunction
- have a family history of heart disease or stroke.

source: <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/heart-disease/risk-and-prevention/condition-risk-factors/managing-cholesterol>

Why?: Recent studies emphasize the importance of proactively treating high cholesterol in older adults.

Health Impacts: High cholesterol can cause plaque to accumulate in the walls of arteries, leading to their narrowing and hardening. This condition can restrict blood flow to the heart and brain, increasing the risk of heart attacks and strokes. The good news is that high cholesterol is treatable with affordable medications and healthy lifestyle habits.

NICE Information Tool:

- [Cholesterol and Older Adults](#)

Tip 4: Adequate hydration is more important than you think

Tip: Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids! The U.S. National Academy of Medicine recommends that men aged 51 and older aim for about 13 cups of fluids daily, while women in the same age group should aim for about 9 cups. This total includes all sources of liquids, such as drinking water, food, and other beverages. However, it's best to talk to your doctor to determine how much water you should drink daily.

Why?: As we age, changes in body composition lead to reduced water content in our bodies. Many people drink less water, which can lead to chronic dehydration. Medications like diuretics can disrupt water balance, and concerns about incontinence may cause some older adults to limit their intake. Additionally, the feeling of thirst often decreases with age.

Health Impacts: A recent National Institutes of Health study indicates that adults not adequately hydrated may age more rapidly. They also face an increased risk of chronic diseases, including lung disease, heart failure, diabetes, and stroke, and are more likely to have a shorter lifespan compared to those who maintain proper hydration.

NICE Information Tools:

- [Dehydration in Older Adults](#)
- [Diet and Nutrition](#)

Tip 5: Ensure you are getting enough Calcium & Vitamin D to prevent early bone loss

Tip: Review your diet with your Health Professional and ensure you are getting enough Calcium and Vitamin D to prevent early bone loss and Osteoporosis.

Why?: When the body does not get enough calcium from food, it starts pulling calcium from the bones, weakening bone health. Vitamin D plays a crucial role in maintaining bone strength by improving calcium absorption. You can increase your calcium and vitamin D intake by making dietary changes and taking supplements.

Health Reasons: Osteoporosis is a disease that weakens bones, making them thinner and less dense. Older Adults with Osteoporosis have a significantly higher risk of fractures. The most common frailty fractures associated with Osteoporosis are in the hip, spine, wrist, and shoulder. Our bones are continuously renewed through a natural process where new bone cells replace old ones. However, as we age, this process becomes less efficient, leading to a gradual loss of bone tissue. Over one-third of those aged 65+ are living with diagnosed osteoarthritis.

NICE Information Tools:

- [Osteoporosis in Older Adults](#)
- [Falls among Older Adults](#)
- [Frailty Syndrome](#)

Tip 6: Incorporate strength and balance exercises into your daily physical activities

Tip: Find and enroll in a local fitness class designed for older adults that includes strength and balance training.

Why?: In Canada, falls are among the leading causes of injury and death for older adults. However, you don't have to become a victim of slips and falls. Exercising can enhance your balance and strength, allowing you to stand tall and feel more confident when walking.

Health Benefits: A single session of moderate to vigorous physical activity offers immediate health benefits and helps prevent chronic diseases when done regularly. Immediate health benefits include improved sleep quality and reduced anxiety and blood pressure. Long-term health benefits include reduced risks of dementia, depression, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, eight cancers (bladder, breast, colon, endometrium, esophagus, kidney, lung, and stomach), Osteoporosis, and fragility falls. Emerging research suggests physical activity helps boost immune function.

NICE Information Tools:

- [Exercises for Older Adults](#)
- [Falls among Older Adults](#)
- [Frailty Syndrome](#)
- [Osteoporosis](#)

Tip 7: Improve your computer skills; they are essential for living independently

Tip: Choose your preferred device (smartphone, tablet, notebook, or desktop) and work on enhancing your computer skills.

Why?: It's easier to concentrate on one device and utilize it as your primary tool for information and communication. Each device is unique and comes with its learning curve. However, all devices can be made more accessible for older adults. Investing time in customizing features such as text size and other accessibility options can make devices more user-friendly. Computer skills are increasingly

vital for older adults, as they assist in staying connected, informed, and independent.

Benefits:

- Email and text messaging facilitate staying connected with friends and family.
- Internet searches simplify the process of finding and accessing community services.
- Computer skills enable older adults to maintain their independence and autonomy. It is easier to Age in Place if you can access community services over the internet.
- Basic computer literacy can help older adults avoid internet scams and fraud.
- Using computers and playing computer games can enhance cognitive function, memory retention, and overall mental well-being.
- Suppose you select a smartphone as your device. In that case, many apps are designed specifically for older adults, including health and safety monitors.
- Attending a local computer training course is a great way to get out and meet people.

NICE Information Tools:

- [Internet Scams Targeting Older Adults](#)
- [iPhone Tips for Older Adults](#)

Sources:

Healthy Aging Tips for the Older Adults in Your Life

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving/healthy-aging-tips-older-adults-your-life>

Aging and chronic diseases: A profile of Canadian seniors

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases->

You should not rely on information tools for medical, financial or legal advice. It provides general information only. NICE is not responsible for any use of the information other than for general educational/informational purposes and no claim can be made against NICE or any of its personnel for any such use.

Last Updated: January 18, 2025

NICE - National Initiative for Care of the Elderly
www.nicenet.ca