

Orange County

In-Home Supportive Services



Public Authority

**PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESSFUL PROVIDERS**




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## COMMON ILLNESSES AMONG OLDER ADULTS

*Working hand in hand with the community to serve IHSS Consumers so they may remain safe and independent in their own home.*



*It is estimated that by 2050 the older adult population will be double of the older adult population in 2010.*

More than one in four Americans have multiple concurrent chronic conditions (MCC).

The prevalence of MCC among individuals increases with age and is substantial among older adults.

Multiple chronic conditions can contribute to frailty and disability; conversely, most older persons who are frail or disabled have MCC.

# Common Illnesses Among Older Adults

- Arthritis
  - Osteoarthritis,
  - Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Balance Disorder
- Bell's Palsy (facial paralysis)
- Cancer
- Cataracts
- Colds
- Congestive Heart Failure
- Conjunctivitis
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder
- Corneal Abrasion
- Coronary Artery Disease

- Dehydration
- Depression
- Dementia
  - Alzheimer's
  - Memory Loss
- Diabetes
- Emphysema
- Eye diseases
  - Cataracts
  - Glaucoma
  - Macular Degeneration
- Failure to thrive
- Falls and Mobility Problems
  - Hip Dislocation / Fractures

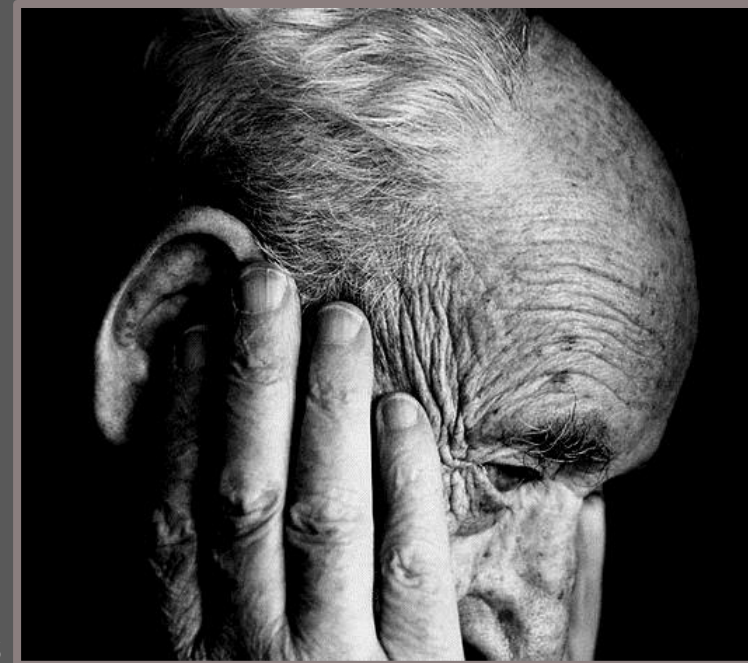
- Flu
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Heart
  - Disease, Attacks, Failure
- Hearing Loss
- High blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Osteoporosis
- Parkinson's Disease
- Pneumonia
- Spinal Stenosis
- Stroke
- Urinary Incontinence
- Vertebral Fracture

# The 6 Most Commonly Diagnosed Illnesses Among Older Adults



# Alzheimer's

- The most common form of Dementia.
- Dementia is a brain disorder in which both personality and thinking abilities deteriorate and get worse over time.
- Individuals with Alzheimer's
  - Lose touch with reality
  - Become forgetful and confused, impacting their previous daily living and activities
  - Can behave differently and in unpredictable ways



# Alzheimer's: Common Behaviors



**Aggression:** Verbal (shouting, name calling) or physical (hitting, pushing)

**Anxiety/Agitation:** They can become upset for any of many reasons. It's important to identify the "triggers".

- Surroundings
- Time of day
- What just occurred? Any possible sudden changes?
- Possible sources of pain, hunger, need for sleep

**Confusion:** They may not recognize familiar people (including family), places or common items (toothbrush, forks, pens, etc.).

**Repetition:** They may say or do something over and over again, possibly looking for comfort, security and familiarity.

**Suspicion:** Memory loss and confusion may cause the individual to perceive things differently. They can become suspicious of individuals around them and blame them of inappropriate behavior such as theft and infidelity.

**Wander & Get lost:** They may try to go home when in actuality they are already there. They may attempt to recreate a familiar routine, such as going to school or work.

**Sleep Disturbance:** They may have problems sleeping or experience changes in their sleep schedules.

# Alzheimer's: Caregiver's Role & Responsibility

**It is important  
to understand  
that their  
behavior is a  
form of  
communication,  
NOT rebellion.**

- Remain flexible, patient and calm
- Explore pain as a trigger
- Respond to the emotion, not the behavior
- **Do not** argue or try to convince them of anything
- Use memory aids
- Acknowledge their requests and respond to them
- Look for the reasons behind each behavior
- Consult a physician to identify any causes related to medications or illness
- **Do not take the behavior personally**
- Share your experiences with others



# Arthritis

**Complexity of musculoskeletal disorders of over 100 different diseases.**



The two most common forms of Arthritis that impact older adults include:

## Osteoarthritis

- The most common form of Arthritis.
- Progressive and degenerative
- Characterized by the breakdown of joint cartilage, causing:
  - Bones to rub against each other
  - Causes stiffness, pain and loss of joint movement

## Rheumatoid Arthritis

- An autoimmune disease in which the body immune system *mistakenly* attacks the joints
- The abnormal immune response causes inflammation of the membranes lining the joints that can damage joints and organs

# Arthritis: Caregiver's Role & Responsibility

## **Promote simple, positive life changes such as diet, fitness and outlook.**

- Medication Management: Assist the Consumer adhere to the medication regimen as prescribed
  - Ensure the medication containers can be easily opened
- Promote gentle exercise in the evening to reduce stiffness in the morning:
  - Frequently adjust their position, periodically tilt their neck from side to side, bend and stretch legs
- Walkers and canes must be properly fitted and have the grips adjusted to meet the Consumer's need
- Shoes should be comfortable and flat, with good arch support
- Remove loose area rugs and ensure carpets are free of wrinkles, tears, and worn/torn spots
- Use non-skid, no-wax floor cleaners for bare floors
- Remove clutter from walkways, staircases, and any area the Consumer may walk by to prevent falling
- Place regularly used items at an accessible level – typically between hips and eyes

# Cancer

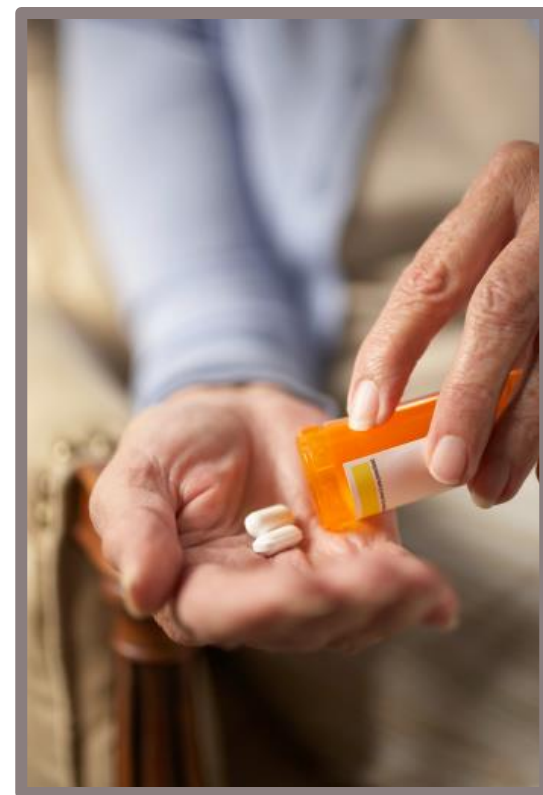
According to Becker of the American Cancer Society, the “[...] senior population [...] makes up the largest portion of newly diagnosed cancer patients as well as the largest group of survivors.”

Cancer is the general name of more than 100 diseases.

- Although there are many kinds of cancer, all cancers start because abnormal cells grow out of control.
- Growing out of control and invading other tissues are what makes a cell a cancer cell.
  - The process of spreading is called metastasis.
  - Cells that grow but cannot invade organs are called benign tumors.

*Statistic:* 1/2 of all men and 1/3 of all women in the U.S. will develop cancer during their lifetime

*Important:* The earlier a cancer is detected and treated, the greater are the chances of living for many years.



For help, information, or support call 1/800-227-2345 at anytime, day or night  
or visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

# Cancer: Caregiver's Role & Responsibility

**Anxiety, fear, uncertainty, anger, and sadness are feelings commonly experienced by the patients *and* their families.**

- Medication Management: Assist the Consumer adhere to the medication regimen as prescribed
- Poor Appetite is common:
  - Encourage 6 to 8 small, frequent meals and snacks each day
  - Offer starchy foods: bread, pasta, or potatoes; high-protein foods, such as fish, chicken, meats, turkey, eggs, cheeses, milk, tofu, nuts, peanut butter, yogurt, peas, and beans
  - Offer fruit smoothies, milkshakes, or liquid meals
  - Keep cool liquids within the consumer's reach and encourage drinks between meals
- Create a pleasant setting: soft music, conversation and other distractions
- Encourage deep breathing and relaxation exercises several times a day
  - Close your eyes, breathe deeply, focus on each body part, and relax it, starting with your toes and working up to the head. When you're relaxed, imagine yourself in a pleasant place, such as a breezy beach or a sunny meadow.
- Notify the family or Authorized Representative if you detect deterioration in physical or emotional health
- Call the doctor if:
  - The Consumer has trouble breathing
  - Is sweating or flushed, with a fast or pounding heart beat
  - Is feeling very restless

For In-depth information on emotional distress, call 1-800/227-2345 and ask for a copy of Distress in People with Cancer, or read it on [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

# Diabetes



**Type 1:** Usually diagnosed in children and young adults – previously known as juvenile diabetes

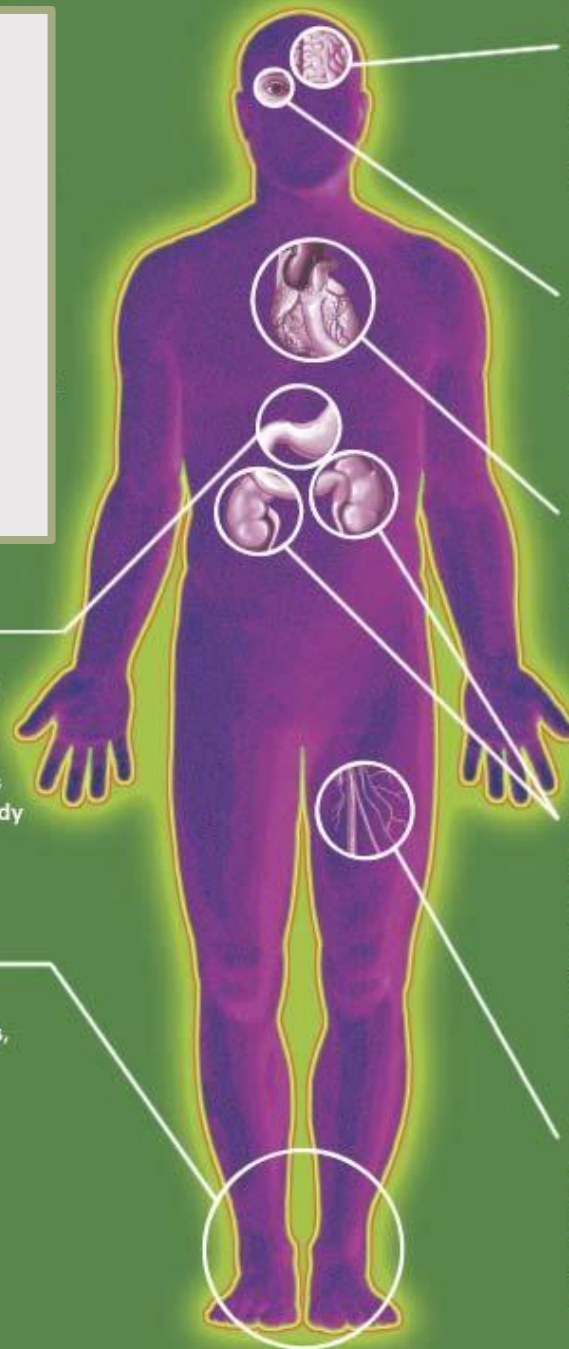
**Type 2:** The most common form of diabetes.

- Occurs when your pancreas cannot make enough insulin to maintain blood glucose (sugar) levels normal
- Diabetes occurs when glucose levels rise higher than normal
- Factors that contribute to the development of Type 2 Diabetes



# Diabetes:

Complications and serious health problems increase with diabetes.



## *brain*

Insulin resistance (the cause of type 2 diabetes) is linked to an increased build-up of plaque in arteries, which can keep blood from flowing to the brain, causing stroke.

## *eyes*

High blood glucose and high blood pressure can damage tiny blood vessels in the eyes (retinopathy).

## *heart*

High blood pressure and insulin resistance together double the risk for heart disease.

## *stomach*

Carrying extra fat around the middle (an "apple-shaped" body) can increase the risk of heart disease. Being very overweight can also make it hard for the cells to respond to insulin, and the body reacts by releasing more insulin.

## *kidneys*

High blood pressure (which damages small blood vessels), and high blood glucose make the kidneys work too hard, and they become too weak to clean waste from the blood. The kidney damage, in turn, can cause blood pressure to rise higher.

## *feet*

High blood glucose can damage nerves, leading to pain, weakness, and numbness in hands and feet (peripheral neuropathy).

## *veins*

Too much "bad" cholesterol can clog blood vessels with plaque and insulin resistance can weaken them. Together, these can raise blood pressure to dangerous levels.



# Diabetes

## Common Symptoms

- Frequent urination
- Feeling very thirsty
- Feeling very hungry even though the person has eaten
- Feeling extreme fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Cuts and bruises that are slow to heal
- Tingling, pain, or numbness in the hands and/or feet

## Diabetes can be controlled by

- Maintaining a meal plan
- Being active
- Monitoring blood glucose levels
- Taking medication and/or insulin if necessary



# Diabetes: Caregiver's Role & Responsibility

- Medication Management: Assist the Consumer adhere to the medication regimen as prescribed.
- Monitor and assist (if necessary) for routine blood glucose level checks
- Assist the Consumer with Diabetic meal planning: People with diabetes have to take extra care to make sure that their food is balanced with insulin and oral medications (if prescribed), and exercise.
  - The Consumer's doctor and/or dietician can help create a meal plan
  - A healthy diet that helps reduce the risk of complications include:
    - Vegetables
    - Whole grains
    - Fruits
    - Non-fat dairy products
    - Beans
    - Lean meats
    - Poultry
    - Fish
- Encourage physical activity as tolerated and ordered by the Consumer's physician

For more detailed information on  
Diabetes call 1-800/DIABETES  
(800-342-2383)

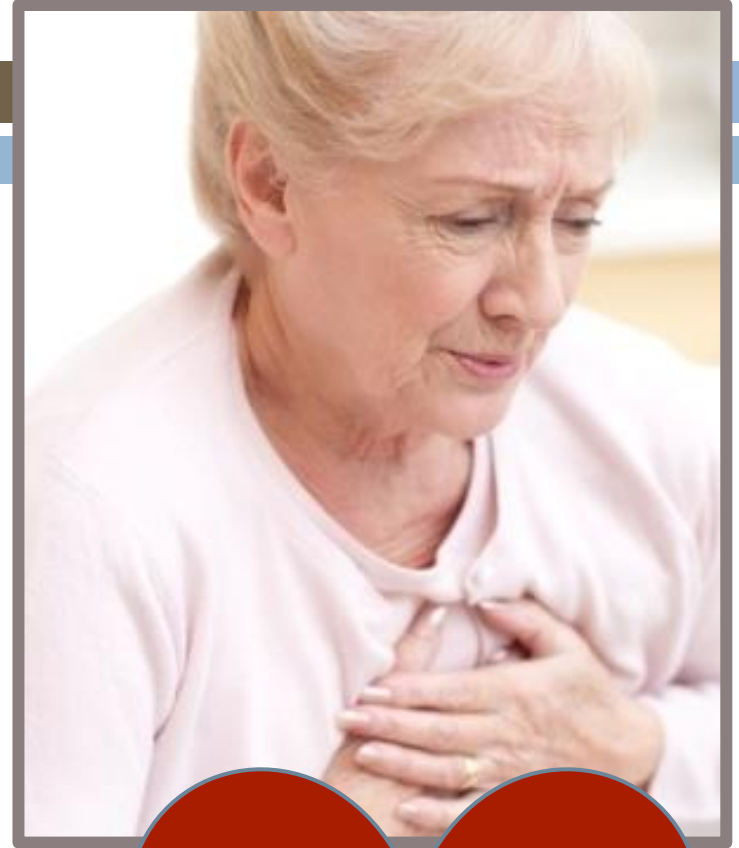
Or  
log on to  
<http://www.diabetes.org/>



# Heart Failure

**Heart failure**, a form of cardiovascular disease, is the result of a weak heart that does not pump blood out of the heart and into the organs as effectively as it should. This is a serious condition that typically cannot be cured, but can be managed with medication and a change in lifestyle.

A **heart attack** occurs when the heart muscle is deprived of oxygen, causing the heart muscle to die. This is most commonly caused by a clot in the blood vessels.



**Please call 911 if the Consumer is experiencing any emergency**

February is  
Heart Health  
Awareness  
Month

# Heart Failure

## Warning Signs of Heart Failure:

- Shortness of breath
- Persistent coughing or wheezing
- Swelling due to excess fluid build up in body tissue
- Tiredness, fatigue
- Nausea, lack of appetite
- Confusion, impaired thinking
- increased heart rate
  - Heart palpitation – like the heart is racing/throbbing

## Warning Signs of a Heart Attack:

- Chest discomfort
  - Lasts more than a few minutes
  - Discomfort in the center of the chest that goes away and comes back
- Pain/discomfort in
  - One or both arms
  - Neck
  - Back
  - Jaw
  - stomach
- Shortness of breath with or without chest pain
- Cold sweat
- Nausea
- lightheadedness

For more detailed information on  
Heart Failure and Heart Attacks

[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartFailure/WarningSignsforHeartFailure/Warning-Signs-of-Heart-Failure\\_UCM\\_002045\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartFailure/WarningSignsforHeartFailure/Warning-Signs-of-Heart-Failure_UCM_002045_Article.jsp)

# Heart Failure: Caregiver's Role & Responsibility

- Medication Management: Assist the Consumer adhere to the medication regimen as prescribed.
- Assist with developing a heart-healthy diet and implementation of lifestyle changes as directed by their physician or dietician
  - Limit Caffeine
  - Avoid Alcohol
  - Quit smoking
- Help monitor weight: gain or loss
  - Notify the physician if 3+ pounds are gained in one day, 5+ in one week, or whatever amount the physician instructed to report
- Encourage physical activity as directed by the physician
- Help the Consumer monitor their blood pressure by charting their blood pressure readings
- Track daily fluid intake, if applicable due to fluid retention
- Encourage elevation of their feet for a few minutes every few hours
- Help them manage stress by encouraging 15 to 20 minute breaks
  - Sit quietly, breath deeply and visualize a peaceful scene

# Parkinson's Disease (PD)

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative brain disorder that a person can have for twenty or more years before it is diagnosed. This is a slow progressing condition.

TODAY  
IS WORLD'S  
PARKINSON  
DAY  
NAAVA ZURIEL

## Emotional Response to Parkinson's Disease

- **Denial**
- **Discouragement**
  - “Why me?”
  - Look for someone or something to blame
- **Role Conflict** – due to confusion and shift of responsibilities and change in abilities of the individual
- **Identity Change:** In this stage, people realize that life has changed and become willing to seek out others with the same condition for education and encouragement and to take on the work of achieving their optimal level of independence.
- **Adaptation:** the individual assumes an active role in his/her healthcare

# Parkinson's Disease

## Main Motor Symptoms

- Shaking/tremor at rest
- Slow movement
- Stiffness/rigidity of the arms, legs or trunk
- Trouble with balance and falls

## Secondary Symptoms

- Small, cramped handwriting
- Reduced arm swing on the affected side
- Slight foot drag on affected side creating a shuffled walk
- “Freezing” - a term used to describe the phenomenon of being “stuck in place” when attempting to walk.
- Loss of facial expression due to rigidity of facial muscles
- Low voice volume or muffled speech
- Tendency to fall backwards
- Decrease ability in automatic reflexes such as blinking and swallowing

## Other Non-Motor Symptoms

- Mood
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Irritability
- Cognitive Changes
  - Attention
  - Visuo-spatial problems
  - Memory Problems
  - Personality Changes
  - Psychosis/Hallucinations
- Lightheaded and Low Blood Pressure Upon Standing
- Excessive Sweating (especially hands and feet)
- Sleep Disturbances
- Urinary Urgency & Constipation
- Loss of Sense of Smell
- Pain
- Dandruff or oily skin

# Parkinson's Disease: Caregiver's Role & Responsibility

“It takes skill and patience to know when to assist with a task, and when to simply allow the person more time to do the task independently [...] it also takes time and ongoing education”

- Medication Management: Assist the Consumer adhere to the medication regimen as prescribed
- Assist with developing a healthy diet with plenty of water
  - Important for keeping bones strong to reduce the likelihood fractures
  - Water intake is important because constipation is common with PD
- Ensure bathroom has professionally installed handrails
- Ensure non-slip mats are placed in bathtubs or shower stalls
- Ensure that bar soap is not used because it leaves a slippery film on the floor
  - Use soap containers with pumps
- Remain patient and do not force the Consumer to move IF he/she is experiencing a “freezing” episode
  - The beginning and end of “freezing” episodes is unpredictable
- Be aware that in addition to motor decline, PD can cause cognitive changes
  - Reduced attention: difficulty with complex tasks
  - Reduced speed of mental processing: delayed response to verbal/behavioral stimuli
  - Memory deficits: difficulty with common tasks such as making coffee, balancing checkbooks
  - Language: slower thinking and difficulty with word-finding, especially if under pressure or stress
  - Visual-perceptual skills: the mind and eye do not see something as it actually exists
    - Difficulty measuring distance and depth perception

# Important Reminder

It's important to remember that in addition to the effects of an illness, disease, and/or medications, the individual may be experiencing psychological and emotional effects due to their condition.

We must remember to be compassionate and not take their behavior personally.



# Resources



## Alzheimer's Association

- ❑ <http://www.alz.org/>

## American Cancer Society

- ❑ <http://www.cancer.org/>

## American Diabetes Association

- ❑ <http://www.diabetes.org/>

## American Heart Association

- ❑ <http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>

## Arthritis Foundation

- ❑ <http://www.arthritis.org/>

## National Parkinson Foundation

- ❑ <http://www.parkinson.org/parkinson-s-disease.aspx>





**Thank you for attending**

**Any Questions ?**