

A guide to Common chronic conditions among seniors



Understanding Chronic Diseases



Around 90% of Canadian seniors have at least one chronic condition, while 37% suffer from two or more chronic diseases. Most chronic diseases significantly impact both the mental and physical health and the quality of life of affected individuals.

Understanding a chronic condition is the first step towards coming to terms with living with and caring for it. Caring for chronic diseases can be an arduous task - many seniors rely on professional home care to help maintain their independence and quality of life within the comfort and familiarity of their own homes.

In this brochure, we provide overviews of various common chronic diseases and tips on caring for them.

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GET AFFORDABLE HIGH-QUALITY LIVE-IN CARE

We help you find and manage carefully screened and experienced professional live-in caregivers for your loved ones.

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WWW.CONSIDRACARE.COM

WHY USE US ?

- Affordable with no upfront costs or commitments
- Fully vetted caregivers
- Families choose who to hire
- Trial period
- Backup care
- Monthly check-ins to review and update the care plan
- Ongoing caregiver training
- We do payroll, taxes and WSIB
- State-of-the-art platform to guide caregivers and keep you connected with them



Incontinence

What is it?

Incontinence is the involuntary leakage of urine or bowel movements.

More than 20% of Canadian seniors suffer from incontinence



Individuals with incontinence are **50% more likely to experience loneliness**



Early warning signs

- Urine leakage whilst coughing
- Frequent urination
- Inability to hold urine/stool in
- Restless nights spent waking up to pass urine/stool
- Sudden urges to urinate/pass stool
- Sudden bedwetting or loss of urinary control

Impact on quality of life

Incontinence can become a very bothersome and embarrassing problem for those affected. Often, it negatively impacts the mood. If the condition continues to progress without adequate care, those affected may experience feelings of isolation, dependency and rejection.

Top caregiver do's

- Become knowledgeable of the condition and understand how it can affect an individual
- Introduce the use of incontinence products and good toilet habits
- Help loved one exercise, promote weight reduction/healthier lifestyle and switch to a healthy high-fibre diet
- Be patient, prepared and provide genuine emotional support

Top caregiver don'ts

- Do not underestimate the problem or ignore the signs of incontinence in your loved one
- Remain patient - do not direct any negative feelings towards a loved one

Arthritis

What is it?

Arthritis is a condition characterized by the pain, tenderness and inflammation of one or more joints in the body. Common symptoms include reduced motion and joint pain and stiffness. Symptoms of arthritis typically arise between the age of 30 and 50 years.



Arthritis is the most common chronic health condition in Canada - **it affects roughly 6 million Canadians.**



Early warning signs

- Pain and stiffness in joints, especially in the morning
- Inflammation/swelling in and around joints
- Pain that increases with inactivity and decreases with activity
- In some cases, fever and night sweats

Impact on quality of life

Arthritis often transforms the lives of affected individuals as it can impede day-day activities. For example, persons with arthritis may find tasks such as cooking and gardening become a challenge as the disease progresses. Arthritis can also have adverse effects on mental health - typically manifesting as anxiety and or depression.

Top caregiver do's

- Become knowledgeable of the specific type of arthritis affecting the individual and understand its effects on the body
- Provide positive encouragement and reassurance
- Offer help whenever it is needed - whether it be physical or emotional aid

Top caregiver don'ts

- Respect boundaries - do not force loved ones into doing physical activity they are not comfortable with
- Do not rush daily routines or the completion of an activity; patience is key

Diabetes

What is it?

Diabetes is a metabolic disease characterized by either the lack of insulin or the inability of the body to properly make use of the insulin it does produce, resulting in increased blood sugar.

In Canada, roughly **29% of the population** is either pre-diabetic or diabetic.



Early warning signs

- Feelings of extreme hunger and or thirst
- Frequent urination
- Blurry vision
- Numbness and tingling of the hands and feet
- Increased dryness of skin - typically accompanied by an increase in itchiness

Impact on quality of life

Like other chronic conditions, diabetes can transform the lives of affected individuals. Diabetics often feel overwhelmed by the never-ending demands of diabetes care, such as the constant monitoring of both glucose levels and food intake. Diabetes symptoms such as fatigue may also impede the ability to carry out everyday tasks.

Top caregiver do's

- Become knowledgeable of the specific type of diabetes affecting the individual and understand its effects on the body
- Provide genuine and empathetic support - try to avoid nagging
- Encourage the pursuit of a healthier lifestyle and diet
- Be observant to symptoms of blood sugar drops and learn to recognize signs of a problem

Top caregiver don'ts

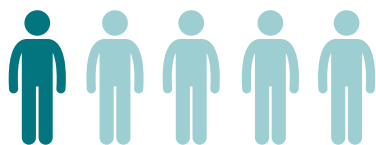
- Don't play doctor and don't give orders - instead make helpful suggestions or recommendations
- Avoid eating sugary/fast foods when care-taking - try to participate in healthy choices
- Don't place any blame on or judge the affected individual
- Don't ignore signs of blood sugar drops

Parkinson's Disease

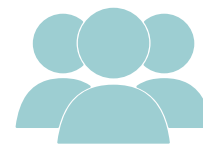
What is it?

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a chronic, progressive, degenerative disease that affects the nervous system. It is typically characterized by reduced motor function and cognitive ability.

Parkinson's disease affects **1 in every 500 people** in Canada



Approximately **6,600 new cases** are diagnosed in Canada each year



Early warning signs

- A slight tremor in fingers, thumbs, hands and or chin
- Trouble sleeping and increased fatigue
- Trouble moving or walking, oftentimes accompanied by stiffness or rigidity in movement
- Cramped/smaller handwriting and or other handwriting changes
- Rigid, stern facial expression - referred to as "masking"

Top caregiver do's

- Educate yourself - learn everything you can about Parkinson's and recognize how it manifests in the affected individual
- Be attentive to expressed symptoms and take note of any worsening symptoms
- Volunteer your help whenever needed, even when it comes to simpler tasks
- Take preventative measures for falls and other accidents

Impact on quality of life

Parkinson's progressively impedes motor and cognitive function - it is extremely challenging to live with and can greatly decrease the quality of life. Aside from typical symptoms, such as tremors and fatigue, affected individuals can also experience a decline in mental health.

Top caregiver don'ts

- Don't discount mental health issues - if you notice any signs of depression and anxiety, engage in discussions with both the affected individual and their doctor
- Don't efface the affected individual's independence - although it is important to volunteer your help, be mindful and invest in tools that can give some sense of independence back to your loved one

Alzheimer's Disease

What is it?

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. It is characterized by the progressive and irreversible loss of brain function affecting memory, thinking and cognitive function.

The number of seniors in Canada with Alzheimer's disease is **expected to rise 68% over the next 20 years**



68%

Early warning signs

- Memory loss and difficulty remembering recent events
- Sudden changes in mood and personality (typically becoming more fearful and experiencing more anxiety)
- New difficulties with words in speaking and or writing
- Confusion with time or place
- New challenges in planning and solving problems

Top caregiver do's

- Help with short-term memory loss - try using prompts or reminders to help loved ones recall words, names, etc.
- Establish a daily routine to nurture a sense of structure and comfortability in the affected individual's life
- Offer assistance in daily tasks such as bathing. preparing meals and exercise
- Speak slowly and clearly

Impact on quality of life

Alzheimer's disease substantially alters the lives of those affected. In earlier stages, they will experience troubles with everyday tasks - in later stages, people lose the ability to communicate and can no longer recognize family. This condition takes away one's ability to function independently and live a "normal" life.

Top caregiver don'ts

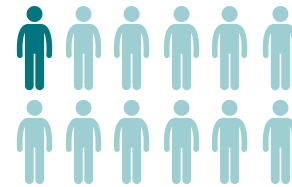
- Ask questions that challenge short-term or long-term memory - don't point out the loved one's memory difficulties
- Avoid using lots of pronouns (it, he), instead use nouns when talking (the tree, Sam) and be very specific when communicating
- Don't use patronizing language - maintain respect

Coronary Artery Disease

What is it?

Coronary artery disease (CAD), the most common type of heart disease, is a condition where plaque progressively builds up in arteries and restricts adequate blood flow to the heart muscles. This can lead to serious health problems, including heart attacks.

An estimated **1 in 12 Canadian adults age 20 and over** live with diagnosed heart disease



Early warning signs

- Increased chest tightness, pressure and or discomfort
- Sudden bouts of chest pain
- Numbness, pain, tingling and or weakness in arms/legs
- Pain in the neck, jaw, throat, upper abdomen and back
- Feelings of weakness, dizziness and fatigue
- Heart palpitations, irregular heartbeats

Top caregiver do's

- Encourage the pursuit of a healthier lifestyle; try to offer assistance in cooking low-fat meals or even participating in the exercise alongside affected individual
- Be attentive to any worsening symptoms - do not hesitate to contact a doctor or visit the emergency room
- Assist whenever necessary; this can be in the form of physical or emotional support

Impact on quality of life

CAD, like any other heart disease, can affect various aspects of one's life. An affected individual may find that they have to completely transform their lifestyle to manage their condition, such as making significant alterations to their diet. Problems such as depression and anxiety may also arise from a CAD diagnosis.

Top caregiver don'ts

- Avoid smoking and or engaging in unhealthy lifestyle habits around the affected individual - this may be discouraging at times
- Try not to bear all of the loved one's responsibilities - it is always important to offer help, but encouraging independence whenever possible holds great importance as well

Stroke

What is it?

A stroke is a condition in which a blood vessel that carries oxygen to the brain is either blocked by a clot or ruptured, leading to the damage and death of both brain cells and or brain tissue.

Strokes predominantly affect the older population, with about **10% of adults aged 65 years and older** having experienced a stroke



10%

Warning signs

- Sudden numbness in the legs, arms or face, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, difficulty speaking and or understanding speech
- Sudden vision loss in one or both eyes
- Use the F.A.S.T acronym to remember stroke signs: F = facial drooping, A = arm weaknesses, S = speech difficulty, T = time to call 911 (if any of these symptoms are present)

Top caregiver do's

- Educate yourself - understand how stroke has affected your loved one, and actively learn more about the support systems in place for stroke survivors
- Consider safety (ex. modifying the home layout if the stroke has affected mobility/balance)
- Be mindful of the loved one's moods and behaviours - remain patient, and offer cordial support

Impact on quality of life

Strokes are subjective as they can affect individuals in differing ways. Some stroke survivors may experience a partial paralysis of the body; many experience impediments in speech. Regardless of the specific, the aftermath of a stroke can be detrimental and can often greatly impact one's life in both the short and long term.

Top caregiver don'ts

- Don't ignore falls - although they are relatively common in stroke survivors; note those more serious and take appropriate action (ex. visiting urgent care)
- Don't shy away from reaching out if in need of additional help or guidance in your care-taking. Providing care to stroke survivors can be confusing at times. Make use of accessible resources

Cancer

What is it?

Cancer is a disease in which certain, abnormal cells begin to divide uncontrollably, invading nearby tissues and spreading to other parts of the body. There are more than 100 different types of cancers, ranging from those of the blood to those of the brain.

9 in 10 of all diagnosed cancer cases annually are expected to occur in Canadians aged 50 years and older



Early warning signs

- Significant, unexplained weight loss
- The onset of chronic fatigue
- Changes in the skin - can be jaundice (yellowing of eyes or fingertips), or changes in the appearances of moles (changes colour, is large or growing)
- Blood in the urine and or stool
- Enlarged and or swollen lymph nodes

Impact on quality of life

A cancer diagnosis is often life-changing - it has the power to affect both the emotional and mental well-being of affected individuals. Cancer can impede one's ability to completed daily tasks and often inhibits one from continuing to work. In terms of mental health, cancer can evoke feelings of distress, anxiety and depression.

Top caregiver do's

- Educate yourself - learn everything you can about the specific type of cancer affecting your loved one and how it manifests
- Try to approach all tasks with a positive attitude - it can help set a productive tone for the things you set out to do
- Encourage your loved ones to continue engaging in their passions and social activities that they enjoyed previously

Top caregiver don'ts

- Don't ignore your loved one's boundaries - although it is important to encourage leaving their comfort zones, recognize their limits and don't make them do anything they aren't comfortable with
- Don't forget to prioritize organization; cancer-care can become overwhelming very fast, try to keep an organization system in place for all important documents, forms, etc.

How can ConsidraCare help ?

Dementia can be a challenge, but with proper care, it may be possible to maintain a healthy and happy lifestyle.

ConsidraCare's care experts can help you assess your needs and match you or your loved one with a screened, professional and dedicated live-in caregiver experienced in dementia care. We also provide you, your family and your caregiver with tools and support to deliver an affordable and superior alternative to long-term care facilities.

Why is ConsidraCare's live-in dementia home care a better alternative ?



Consistent, 1-on-1 personal care

Carefully screened and vetted caregivers matched with your loved one's care needs. Primary caregivers stay with the loved one at least 75% of the time.



Families stay in control

We recommend but the families choose who to hire, get a trial period and engage directly with caregivers through our smart platform.



Cost-effective, high-quality care

More affordable than hourly agencies and assisted living facilities, with faster caregiver placement and higher quality of care.



We have your back

We assist with hiring, planning of care and daily tasks, payroll, taxes, WSIB, backup care and more, and are always on hand to help.

Contact us now for a free consultation from our dementia care experts:

1-855-410-7971

wecare@considracare.com

www.considracare.com

How does ConsidraCare work?

We place dedicated live-in care professionals within the homes of seniors , and provides their families and caregivers with a state-of-the art-platform to improve collaboration, increase visibility and improve the delivery of care.



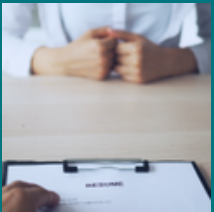
1. Needs assessment

We first work with families to identify their care needs and build a detailed care plan for the loved ones.



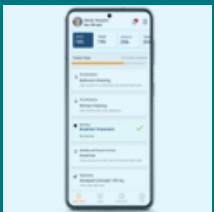
2. Caregiver matching

We match live-in caregivers from our pool of pre-screened caregivers with the loved ones' specific needs and personality, and arrange the interviews with the caregivers short-listed by families.



3. Hiring and trial period

We assist with the logistics of hiring and orienting the caregiver and setting up accounts for CRA, WSIB and payroll processing. The first week is a trial period to allow the families and caregivers to get comfortable with each other.



4. Ongoing care management

Families and caregivers use the ConsidraCare platform to coordinate care planning, daily tasks and timesheets. We take care of payroll, updating care plans, monitoring care delivery and assisting the caregivers and families with addressing any issues.



5. Backup and respite for the caregiver

Every few weeks, we arrange for a back-up caregiver to give the primary caregiver a respite break. Backup caregivers can also be provided to cover the primary caregivers when they take vacation.

We are always happy to help - feel free to contact us through e-mail or phone

1-855-410-7971

wecare@considracare.com

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