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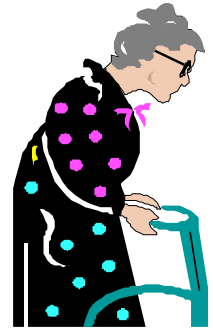
# CHRONIC DISEASE

*It Can Be a Normal Part of a Senior's Everyday Life*

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Many seniors wake up every day knowing they will be facing tough challenges throughout the day. They suffer from a chronic disease that will put limitations on their daily activities. Maybe they'll have to eat a special diet, need assistance moving from place to place, or have to plan their day around taking medications. Some will regularly swallow their pride and ask for help doing some of the simple things they used to do for themselves.

These illnesses can be very difficult for seniors – both physically and (often overlooked) emotionally. What's amazing is how many of the seniors make the necessary adjustments to go on living as full a life as they can. They strive to maintain as much independence as possible. They follow rigid regimens to help stabilize or improve their condition. Most importantly, they refuse to give up to the illness. Not only do they help themselves, but through their action and mental toughness, they inspire those of us who happen to be watching.



*Many seniors deal with and work around their chronic illnesses.*

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## DEFINITION & NUMBERS

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### What Is Chronic Disease?

A broad definition of a chronic disease is an illness that is prolonged, does not resolve spontaneously, and is rarely cured completely. Some of these diseases are preventable. All of them have physical, emotional, personal and financial costs. The most common illnesses in the chronic category are:

- ◆ Arthritis
- ◆ Cancer
- ◆ Diabetes
- ◆ Heart Disease
- ◆ Hypertension

Note: *Numerous organizations (such as the American Heart Association) make educational information on these illness readily available to the public.*

### Related Statistics

- ◆ More than 130 million Americans had at least one chronic illness in 2005.
  - ▶ About 25% of the people with chronic conditions also have limitations with one or more activity of daily living, also known as ADL's.
- ◆ Some chronic illnesses can be avoided through healthier behaviors. However, about 1/3 of U.S. adults do not meet common recommendations for aerobic physical activity.
- ◆ Some estimates of the cost of chronic illness in the U.S. are more than \$1 trillion per year.
  - ▶ When estimates are projected out to 2050, some are in excess of \$6 trillion.

(Sources: AARP, Chronic Disease Center, CDC)



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