

# Healthy Ageing 101: Navigating a New Year of Evolving Health and Wellness Considerations for Older Persons in Light of this Never Ending Pandemic

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# Objectives



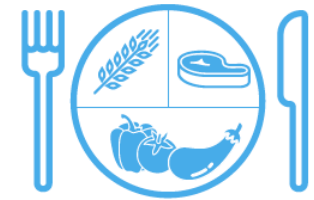
- What can you do to enable healthy ageing during a pandemic
- How to stay healthy through nutrition, exercise, sleep and social interactions
- What vaccines should you be getting as older persons and what about COVID-19 booster and 4<sup>th</sup> shots?
- Recommend strategies and resources to support healthy ageing

# COVID-19 Has Been Awful...

- With Older People being the most vulnerable population to COVID-19 – its been a tough and awful two years.
- With over 92% of Canada's deaths being amongst the 60+, the silver lining is that now 94% have received at least their first two doses of the COVID-19 Vaccine, but only 57% have gotten a booster shot thus far.
- We better appreciate the impact of social isolation and how poorly supported our LTC Systems are.
- So we have a lot to do, but every one of us can still do things to promote our own healthy ageing.

# Things that Enable Healthy Ageing

- A Balanced Diet
- Avoiding Smoking
- Drinking Alcohol in Moderation
- Regular Physical Exercise
- Regular Sleep and Rest
- Managing Stress
- Getting Recommended Vaccinations
- Maintaining Social Networks
- Staying in Contact with your Health Care Provider



# Nutrition Risk and Ageing

- More than 33% of Canadians over 65 are estimated to be at risk for poor nutrition
- The risk for poor nutrition increases if you
  - live alone and/or struggling financially
  - are physically inactive
  - are experiencing physical or cognitive decline
  - are using medications to manage certain chronic conditions
- Poor nutrition increases a person's 3-year risk of mortality and hospitalization

# Why are Older Adults More At Risk?



- Changes to our bodies as we age — decreased mobility, sense of taste and smell, vision, metabolism, oral health
- Diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, kidney disease and cancer all have their own dietary requirements
- Food preferences related to one's place of residence, ethnicity and lifelong habits can challenge maintaining good nutrition
- Some physical conditions, like arthritis, can make eating more physically challenging by making it difficult to swallow or digest food

# How to Achieve A Balanced Diet?



- Choose vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein-rich foods at every eating occasion
- Choose foods with healthy fats instead of saturated fats
- Limit your consumption of highly processed foods. If you choose these foods, eat them less often and in small amounts
- Prepare meals and snacks using ingredients that have little to no added sodium, sugars or saturated fats
- Make water your drink of choice over sugary drinks

# Drinking in Moderation



- Drinking too much alcohol can increase your risk of health problems
- Benefits to reducing your alcohol consumption:
  - Reduced risk of heart disease and diabetes
  - Increased energy and less feelings of fatigue
  - Improved sleep
  - Improved weight management as alcohol is high in calories

**Note:** Many prescription medicines can be dangerous when mixed with alcohol. Always talk to your health care provider about your medications if drinking alcohol.



# Staying Physically Active

- Older adults should aim to get 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic exercise per week, in bouts of 10 minutes. Activities such as:
  - Walking
  - Light jogging
  - Dance classes (via ZOOM)
  - Chair exercises
  - Yoga / Tai Chi
  - Stretching exercises
  - Gardening
  - Taking the stairs instead of the elevator

## DID YOU KNOW?

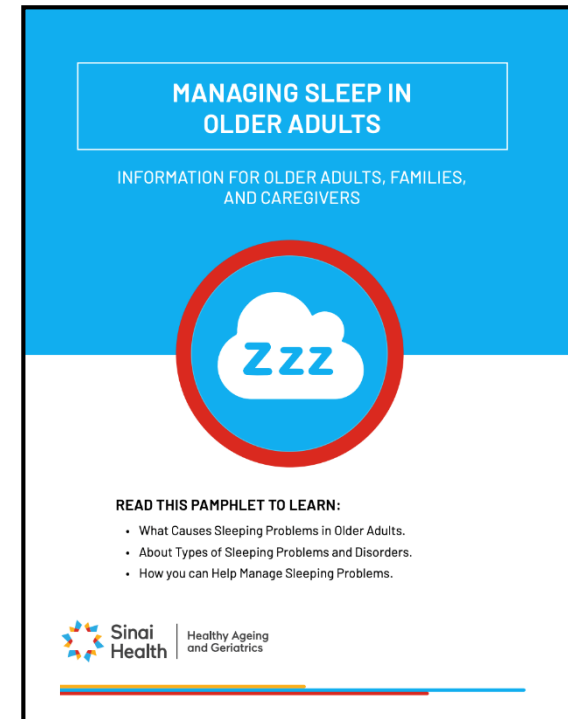
Climbing 20 flights of stairs a week reduces one's risk of death by 10%

# Benefits of Regular Exercise

- Gives You More Energy
- Promotes Mental and Cognitive Health
- Increases Physical Strength
- Promotes a more Restful Sleep
- Decreases Feelings of Fatigue
- Maintains/Improves Heart Health
- Reduces Feelings of Depression/Anxiety/Stress
- Improves Blood Sugar Control
- Maintains Bone Strength
- Prevents Falls by making your muscles and bones stronger, and improving your balance and coordination

# Common Sleep Changes As We Age

- Advanced circadian rhythm
- Decreased total nocturnal sleep time
- Delayed sleep initiation
- Reduced slow-wave sleep (stages 3 and 4)
- Reduced REM sleep
- Reduced threshold for arousal from sleep
- Fragmented sleep with multiple arousals
- Increased daytime napping



Find more information about sleep in our free resource “Managing Sleep in Older Adults” on our website <https://sinaigeriatrics.ca/patient-resources/managing-sleep-in-older-adults/>

# How's Your Sleep?

You can tell if you are experiencing sleep problems if:

- You have trouble falling asleep at night
- You wake up constantly during the night
- Your sleep feels light
- You feel tired during the day
- You have difficulty concentrating throughout the day
- You have low energy and do not feel rested



# Sleeping Better As You Age



## DURING THE DAY:

- Avoid large meals and drinking fluids a few hours before bedtime
- Avoid napping
- Get out of bed at the same time each morning

## DURING THE NIGHT:

- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, and cool (19° C/69° F) to keep comfortable throughout the night
- If it helps, use soothing noise (e.g. a fan, other appliance, “white noise” machine)
- Develop a sleep ritual (same routine each night before going to bed) and only go to bed if you are sleepy

# Minding Our Senses...



- While there is considerable individual variation, on average sensory processes (vision, hearing, taste, smell, and touch) don't work as well as people get older.
- The eye lens, for example, is less able to change shape so as to adjust to close and far objects, and the size of the pupil narrows so as to let in less light.
- Hearing loss begins at age 20, and for many involves growing inability to hear higher frequencies as sensory receptors in the ear and nerve cells in the auditory pathway to the brain are lost.
- Taste buds become less sensitive with aging, and after age 80 more than 75 percent of older adults show major impairment in their sense of smell.



Normal Vision



Cataract



Age-related Macular Degeneration



Glaucoma

# Minding Our Senses...



## ADDRESSING SENSORY LOSS ISSUES

- Many normal changes can be compensated for through increasingly sophisticated assistive devices (hearing aides, glasses, etc.) and through home modifications.
- Cataracts, Glaucoma and Macular Degeneration are all treatable conditions and can prevent blindness, falls and dementia.
- Addressing Hearing Loss can also prevent falls and dementia as well.



## COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR HEARING LOSS

Improving two-way communication between the talker and the listener will help you or your loved one stay active in social situations.



### Prepare the Environment

If you or your loved one is experiencing hearing loss, make sure the environment is comfortable for speaking and listening.



#### Noise

- Reduce any background noise.



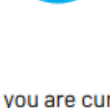
#### Lighting

- Converse in a well-lit room.



#### Distance

- Sit or stand close to the other person.



#### Angle

- Face the other person. Do not sit on an angle or with your back to them.

If you are currently experiencing hearing loss, try the following:



#### Hearing Aid(s)

- Use your hearing aid(s) or other assistive device(s) to obtain maximum benefit.



#### Glasses

- If you wear glasses, have them with you at all times. Visual cues gained from speech reading, facial expressions, and gestures are helpful.



### Asking Questions

- Always ask questions to clarify the part of the message you didn't understand.

If your friend or loved one is experiencing hearing loss, keep the following in mind during conversations:

### Speed

- Avoid talking too fast or too slow and take pauses to make sure you are understood before moving on.



### Volume

- Speak in a normal or slightly loud voice – do not shout or whisper.
- Avoid shouting or exaggerating mouth movements.



### Visibility

- Keep your hands away from your mouth if speaking.
- Face the person directly and keep eye contact.

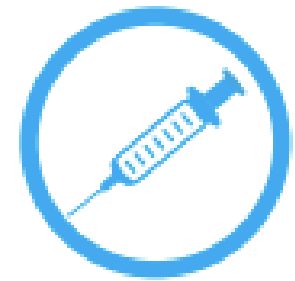


### Attention

- Say the person's name before starting a conversation.
- Do not talk from another room as it is difficult for someone hard of hearing to understand what is said.
- Be patient and be prepared to write things down if necessary.

# Vaccinations for Older Adults

- Many older Canadians are at increased risk of developing preventable diseases. To avoid this, talk to your health care provider about the recommended vaccinations:
  - Pneumonia (Pneumococcal)
  - Shingles (Varicella/Herpes Zoster)
  - Tetanus (Every 10 Years)
  - Influenza/Flu Vaccine (Every Year)
  - COVID-19 Vaccines (Boosters ARE Recommended)



**93%** of Canadians aged 60+ were fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as of December 11, 2021.

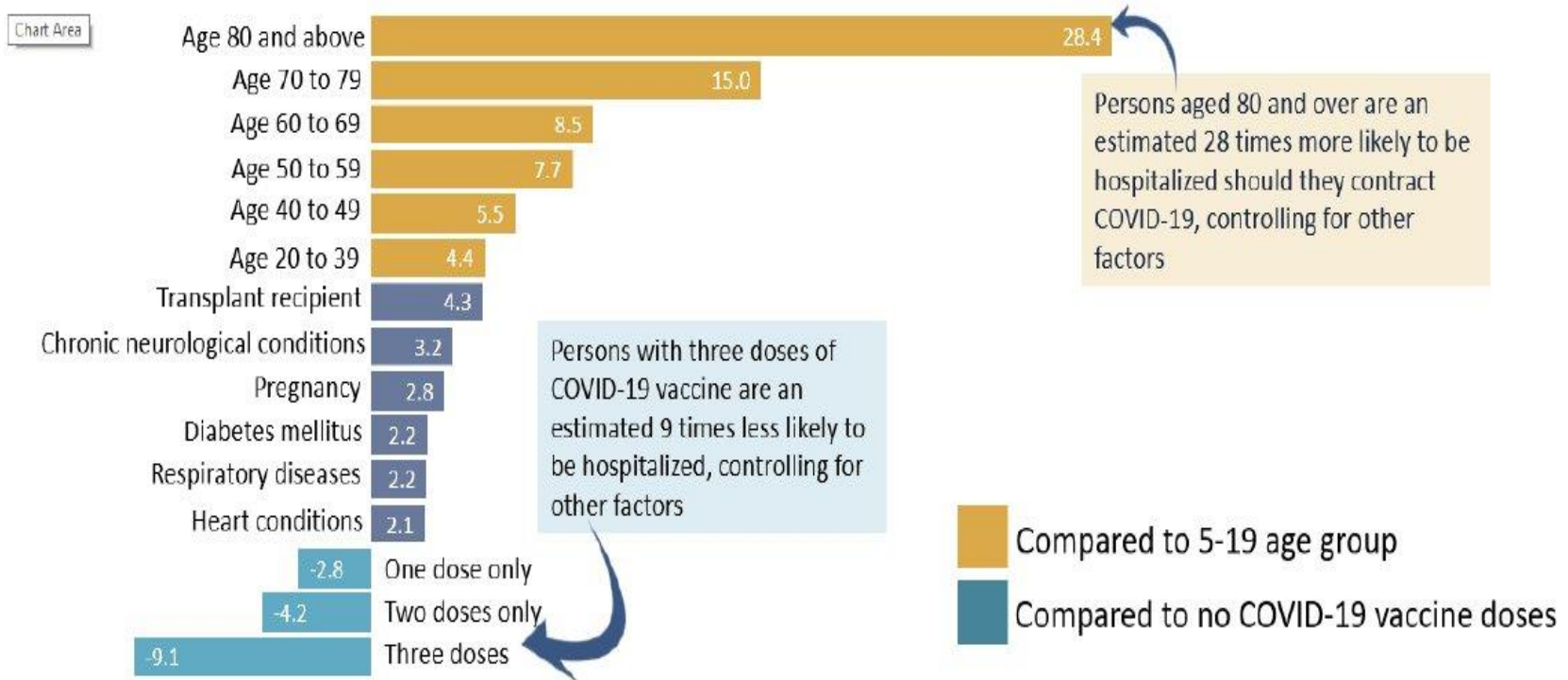
However, as of 2021, only:

- **70%** of Canadians aged 65+ had received the influenza vaccine
- **55%** of Canadians aged 65+ had received the pneumococcal vaccine
- **27%** of Canadians aged 50+ had received the shingles vaccine



# The Effectiveness of COVID-19 Vaccines

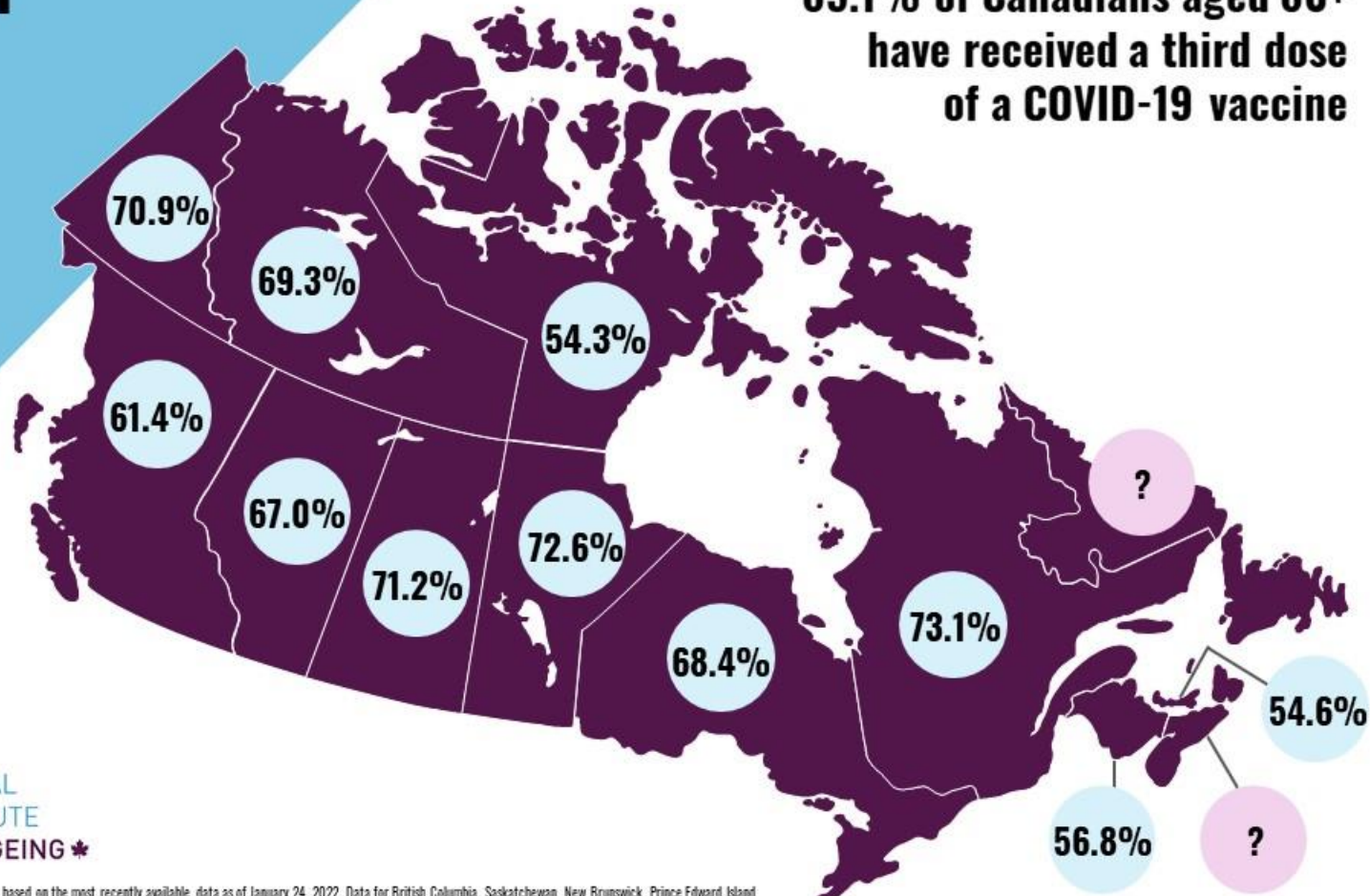
**Age** is the largest risk factor for COVID-19 hospitalization; each dose of vaccine provides added protection. Below are Times more likely (than a person under age 20) estimates.



# Older Canadian COVID-19 Booster Vaccination Tracker

Available data as of  
Jan 24, 2022

**65.1%** of Canadians aged 60+  
have received a third dose  
of a COVID-19 vaccine



**NIA** NATIONAL  
INSTITUTE  
ON AGEING \*

Sources: Estimates on the number of third doses administered are based on the most recently available data as of January 24, 2022. Data for British Columbia, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut come from PHAC's Canadian COVID-19 vaccination coverage report and include vaccinations up to and including January 15, 2022. Data for Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec come from provincial websites and include vaccinations as of January 16-21, 2022. Population Estimates come from Statistics Canada, Table 17-10-0005-01 Population estimates on July 1, by age and sex.

# Maintaining Strong Social Networks

- Staying socially active and maintaining positive relationships can help you maintain your physical and emotional health
- A lot of activities are being held virtually, so you can still stay connected as much as possible
- If you are doing in-person activities, remember to stay safe and protect yourself, by maintaining your distance, wear a well-fitted mask and do things in well-ventilated spaces. ***[www.covidvisitrisk.com](http://www.covidvisitrisk.com)***



# Keep Connected with Your Care Providers

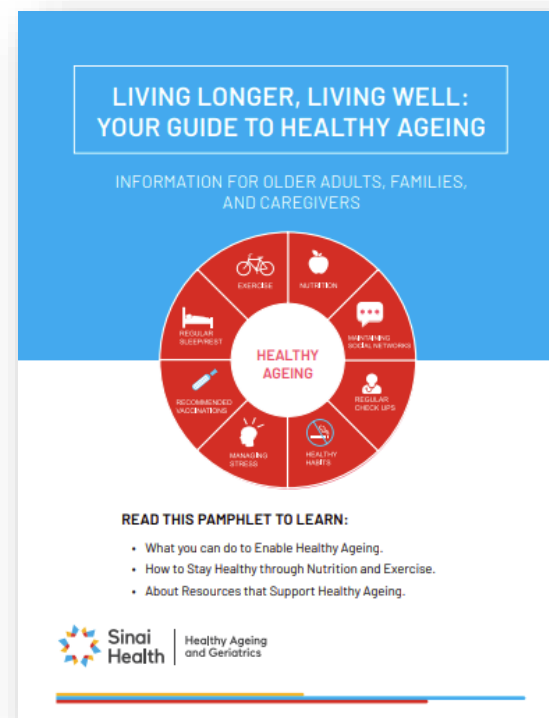
- A Good Offence is a Great Defense
- If there is anything out of sorts, keep note of it and write down what you are experiencing.
- Take a list of your concerns to your care provider. This way it's written down and you can prioritize what should be dealt with sooner rather than later.
- Ask your provider on an annual basis if there are any vaccinations you are eligible for and what else you can do to stay healthy and well.

# Additional Resources

<https://sinaigeriatrics.ca/healtheducation/>

Find more information in “Living Longer, Living Well: Your Guide to Healthy Ageing” available on our website

<https://sinaigeriatrics.ca/patient-resources/living-longer-living-well-your-guide-to-healthy-ageing/>





# Additional Resources



Find more information in “COVID-19 Vaccines – What Older Canadians Need to Know” available on our website

<https://sinaigeriatrics.ca/patient-resources/covidvaccines/>



**Canada’s Food Guide**

[www.unlockfood.ca](http://www.unlockfood.ca)

**Healthy Eating: Variety and Balance**

[www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)

**Physical Activity Guidelines**

<https://csepguidelines.ca/>

**Exercise and Falls Prevention Programs**

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/exercise-and-falls-prevention-programs>



# Questions? (Submit through Q&A)



# Stay Connected With Us



<https://sinaigeriatrics.ca/healtheducation/>

## Website:

<https://sinaigeriatrics.ca>

## Twitter:

@SinaiGeriatrics

@DrSamirSinha

## LinkedIn Account:

Healthy Ageing and Geriatrics Program (Sinai Health and University Health Network)

# Upcoming Healthy Ageing Sessions

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**Schedule will be communicated  
via mailing list email**

# Upcoming Events & News

## 2022 Sinai Health/UHN Geriatrics Summer Scholars Program

- Application cycle will open end of January
- Visit <https://sinaigeriatrics.ca/geriatrics-summer-scholars-program/> for more information

## 2022 Sinai Health/UHN Geriatrics Institute Education Day

- 12<sup>th</sup> annual edition to be hosted in June
- Date will be communicated via email