

PHARMA HEALTH CLUB

SAFE USE OF MEDICINES FOR BETTER HEALTH

1ST NOVEMBER, 2014

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CARE OF OLD AGE PERSONS

'International Day of Older Persons' is observed on 1st October each year. It is celebrated by raising awareness about issues affecting the elderly.

WHAT IS GERIATRICS & GERIATRIC PATIENT

- Geriatrics is a speciality that focuses on health care of elderly people - Geriatric patients (age > 65 years). [1, 2]
- It aims to promote health by preventing and treating diseases and disabilities in Geriatric patients. [2]
- Aging refers to the irreversible decline in organ function that occurs over time even in the absence of injury, illness, or poor lifestyle choices (eg, unhealthy diet, lack of exercise, substance abuse). With progression of age, each organ loss its capacity to maintain homeostasis under stress. The cardiovascular, renal, and central nervous systems are usually the most vulnerable (the weakest links). [1]



- So to emphasize on Care of Geriatric persons, on the occasion of "International day of Older persons" here are some important points described which should be kept in mind while dealing with older persons...

Important Diseases observed in Geriatric persons:

● Alzheimer's Disease

This is a condition that is characterized by the loss of memory. It is one kind of Dementia which causes problems with memory, thinking and behavior. [4]

Some of commonly found symptoms are as follow:

- Find it hard to remember things
- Ask the same questions over and over
- Trouble in handling money and paying bills
- Impaired reasoning or judgment
- Hallucinations, delusions, or paranoia
- Wandering away from home
- People lose the ability to communicate

- For people with mild to moderate Alzheimer's, Donepezil (Aricept®), Rivastigmine (Exelon®) or Galantamine (Razadyne®) may help. Donepezil is also approved to treat symptoms of moderate to severe Alzheimer's. Another drug, Memantine (Namenda®), is used to treat symptoms of moderate to severe Alzheimer's, although it also has limited effects. [5]
- All of these medicines have possible side effects, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of appetite.
- Herbal medicine: 1 spoon Shankpushpi syrup & 1 Brahmi Vati with water before sleeping every night.
- Memory aids may help some people who have mild Alzheimer's disease with day-to-day living. A calendar, list of daily plans, notes about simple safety measures, and written directions describing how to use common household items can be useful. [5]

● Some preventing aspects are [6]

- Eat diet which includes vegetables, legumes ('Kathol'), fruits, cereals, olive oil, dairy products and low amounts of fats
- Perform Exercise and Physical Activity
- Keeping the Brain Active by working, reading, even playing games!



IN THE
CARE OF
OLD AGE

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

- Parkinson's disease is a brain disorder that leads to shaking, stiffness and difficulty with walking, balance, and coordination. [7] In Gujarati it is named as "Kampavata".
- Four main symptoms of Parkinsons:- [7]
- Tremor, or trembling in hands, arms, legs, jaw, or head
- Rigidity, or stiffness of the limbs and trunk
Bradykinesia, or slowness of movement
Postural instability, or impaired balance
Physicians mainly diagnose this condition by CT scan or MRI. [8]
- The main therapy for Parkinson's is the drug levodopa, also called L-dopa (side effects - nausea, vomiting, low blood pressure, and restlessness). Rasagiline (MAO-B inhibitor) can be given in combination in later stage of Parkinsonism. Some other drugs like Carbidopa & Benserzide are given in combination with L-dopa to increase its effectiveness. Other drugs used to treat parkinsonism are Bromocriptine, Amantadine, Benztropine & procyclidine. (Benztropine & procyclidine are anti-cholinergic and used to reduce tremor). [9]
- Deep brain stimulation, or DBS, is a surgical procedure used to treat the debilitating symptoms of Parkinson's disease. [10]
- Herbal medicine: 1 spoon Kaucha paak twice a day

Rheumatoid arthritis:

Rheumatoid arthritis is an inflammatory disease - an autoimmune disease that causes pain, swelling, stiffness, and loss of function in the joints in a symmetrical pattern. Along with joints it may attack tissue in the skin, lungs, eyes, and blood vessels. [11] In gujarati it is named as "Sandhiva". Rheumatoid arthritis occurs much more frequently in women than in men.

Important symptoms of RA:- [12]

- It is characterized by inflammation of the joint lining which causes redness, swelling, and pain around the joints. A person also feels sick, tired, and sometimes feverish.
- In later stage rheumatoid nodules can be found in joints.
- It is diagnosed by Rheumatoid Factor Test and Citrulline antibody test (check presence of anti-CCP antibodies). Apart from these, Erythrocyte sedimentation rate and WBC count can be useful. [12]

Treatment for RA includes: [13]

- DMARDs include methotrexate, leflunomide, sulfasalazine, and cyclosporine.
- Steroids, which are also called corticosteroids, are another type of drug used to reduce inflammation for people with rheumatoid arthritis. Cortisone, hydrocortisone, and prednisone are some commonly used steroids.
- New types of drugs called biologic response modifiers : etanercept, infliximab, anakinra, golimumab, adalimumab, rituximab, and abatacept.
- Herbal medicine: In diet - Sunth (Ginger), Lasan (Garlic), Methi; With milk - Guggul, With water - Maharasnadi Kwath, Saatodi Churna; Externally - Nagod leaf paste
- Non-medical aspects
- Surgery like Knee replacement
- Balanced diet



Rheumatoid arthritis usually affects joints symmetrically (on both sides equally), may initially begin in a couple of joints only, and most frequently attacks the wrists, hands, elbows, shoulders, knees and ankles

URINARY INCONTINENCE

This is a condition where the person cannot hold or control the flow of urine. [14]

The most common symptom is that when the person laughs or sneezes a small amount of urine leaks out. Eventually leading to them wetting themselves. [15]

Urinary incontinence is a condition that is caused due to the weakening of the sphincter muscles (muscles that control the flow of urine). [14]

To resolve this condition is to use adult diapers that can soak the excess urine. [14]

Medication used to treat Urinary incontinence are [16]

- Terazosin, doxazosin, tamsulosin and alfuzosin - relaxing the smooth muscle of the prostate and bladder neck, allowing normal urine flow and preventing abnormal bladder contractions;
- Terazosin, doxazosin, tamsulosin & alfuzosin - which stops prostate enlargement by preventing release of male hormone DHT - Dihydrotestosterone;
- Propantheline, tolterodine, oxybutynin, darifenacin, trospium chloride and solifenacin succinate - relaxing the bladder muscle and relieving spasms;
- Botox (onabotulinumtoxin A): This is a new treatment that involves using a cystoscope to inject Botox into the bladder muscle to prevent spastic bladder contractions;
- Neuromodulation: This is a new treatment option used for urge incontinence and overactive bladder that involves using an electrical current to alter the nerve reflex arc that regulates bladder contraction.
- Other methods include the use of exercises - Kegel exercises [17,21]
- Surgical aspects:
 - Artificial sphincter
 - Male sling
 - Urinary diversion:

Apart from above mentioned diseases, there are some common and often related medical conditions in older adults, viz., [18]

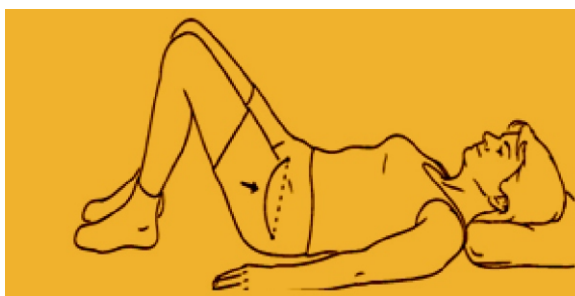
- Difficulty Swallowing
- Malnutrition
- Sleep Problems (Insomnia)
- Delirium (Confusion)
- Vision problems
- Hearing problems (Deafness)
- Dizziness (lightheadedness)
- Fainting
- Osteoporosis
- Pressure Ulcers & Bed sores

Important life style changes for Geriatric patients:[19]

- Smoking cessation
- Using skin moisturizers and sun protection
- Brushing and flossing teeth once or twice a day
- Staying proactive in own healthcare and participating in decision making
- Going to the primary care doctor routinely
- Reviewing list of medications with their doctor(s) often
- Following recommended instructions for health screening, preventive tests, and vaccinations
- Visiting a dentist annually or biannually
- Following up with eye doctor and foot doctor, especially for people with diabetes
- Being aware of potential medication side effects and drug interactions including over-the-counter drugs, herbals, and alternative medicine
- Adhering to routine sleep schedule and using good sleep hygiene
- Engaging in routine and scheduled social activities

Some of the routine medical tests for Geriatrics: [20]

- Influenza vaccination
- Pneumonia vaccination
- Vaccination against shingles
- Blood pressure screening (once a year)
- Smoking cessation counseling
- Vision and hearing exams
- Skin cancer screening
- Cardiac stress tests
- Thyroid function tests
- Mental status exam
- Peripheral vascular disease screening
- Colon cancer screening for adults between ages 50 and 75
- Breast cancer screening with yearly mammogram for females
- Prostate cancer screening with annual rectal exam and PSA (prostate sensitive antigen)
- Osteoporosis screening with bone density scan in women above age of 65
- Diabetes screening in people with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, or previous high blood sugar levels with or without symptoms of diabetes



Lie with hips and knees bent.
Slowly squeeze pelvic floor for **3** seconds.
Rest for **6** Seconds.
Repeat **10** times.
Do **2** times a day.

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