

A BRIEF LOOK AT -



CARE OF THE GERIATRIC PATIENT

Usually, a person is considered a senior citizen at age 65. Each person ages differently, though, so the effects of aging may not be present for some until later. If you look at your elderly patient from a psychosocial perspective, the needs of the PERSON become greater due to common changes of aging. Because of this, the way you care for the geriatric patient must also change. Let's look at some of the changes and ways you can adjust your care.

CATEGORY	AGING CHANGES	ADAPTATIONS
PSYCHOLOGICAL	Difficulty with memory, personality changes, wanders, delusions	Give reassurance, be patient, redirect, limit stimulation
ELIMINATION	Incontinence	Encourage regular voiding schedule, use adaptive aids such as commode
REST AND ACTIVITY	Falls, decreased range of motion, gait changes	Provide adequate lighting, handrails, promote activity, exercise
SAFE ENVIRONMENT	Thinning skin and hair, decreased blood supply to nails	Avoid daily baths, avoid harsh soaps, inspect skin carefully, provide nail care
OXYGEN	Decreased activity tolerance due to reduced blood flow, coronary artery blood flow decreased	Frequent rest periods, change positions slowly
NUTRITION	Decreased appetite, decreased ability to chew and swallow, indigestion	Smaller, more frequent meals; sit up during and after meals.

The patient and caregivers also face the following tasks:

- ▶ adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health;
- ▶ adjusting to retirement and reduced income;
- ▶ establishing satisfactory physical living arrangements; and,
- ▶ cope with the death of friends and loved ones.



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QUIZ

1. All people age the same.
 True
 False

2. The needs of the PERSON do not become greater due to the common changes of aging.
 True
 False

3. To help a patient prone to falls, provide adequate lighting and handrails.
 True
 False

4. A way to help a patient who gets indigestion is to offer smaller, more frequent meals.
 True
 False

Signature

Date

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ANSWER KEY

1. FALSE
2. FALSE
3. TRUE
4. TRUE