



## ***Healthy ageing & lifestyle***

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### **Fact Sheet No.3**

### **Health impacts of ageing with a disability or long-term condition**

More people are living into old age and most will experience some degree of impairment or disability, such as restricted mobility, pain which interferes with daily activities, respiratory issues and incontinence.

Ageing with a disability creates a number of specific as well as general health issues to which we all have to adapt.

#### **Some of the more common health impacts are listed below:**

- Pain
- Fatigue
- Weight gain
- Poor posture
- Wear and tear of joints



- Rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis
  - Respiratory complications
  - Continence problems – changes in bladder and bowel function
  - Osteoporosis
  - Skin changes – increased risk of pressure ulcers
  - Mental health issues – depression, mood swings
  - Intolerance to medications
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- Sleep disturbance and sleep apnoea
  - Loss of libido
  - Lifestyle conditions – diabetes, heart disease, high or low blood pressure

Those living with a disability share the same healthcare needs as the non-disabled, but in addition will have certain health issues specific to their disability. A specific health issue may be permanent and require regular attention and support, while another could be less problematic and require nothing more than close monitoring; they can also be intermittent in nature. Disability is often very complex, with no two people being affected in the same way, even when they are living with the same disability.

### **What support is available?**

**GP:** your GP is often the first port of call, especially for medications.

**Specialist consultants:** you may be under the care of a specialist consultant at your local District General Hospital or a specialist hospital outside your local area.

**Specialist nurses:** there are now many areas where specialist nurses, usually working from a GP surgery, are able to offer support in your own home or at your GP surgery e.g. Continence Specialist Nurses. Contact your GP surgery if you are unsure of what support is available to you.

**Support groups:** There is a large number of support groups out there for just about every condition you can think of and a quick search online will provide their contact details. Your GP surgery and library should also have details of local groups where members often meet on a regular basis to provide peer support and give information.

**On-line forums:** This method of communication does not suit all, not everybody has access to a computer, but it can be very helpful if you have a specific problem that is related to your disability and you are seeking advice from people who have some experience and understanding of your problems.

**Disclaimer**

*The information and opinions shared on this website are based on my personal experience of working in the health sector and research I have carried out whilst writing articles; it is of a general nature and should not be used as a substitute for seeking medical advice. My aim is to ensure that this information is accurate and kept up to date, but you should always consult the appropriate healthcare professionals if you have a concern about your health.*

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