HEALTHY AGING: CONNECTING OLDER ADULTS TO HEALTH INFORMATION

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Agenda

- Older adults and health

- Using and Accessing Health Information

- Teaching Internet Skills to Older Adults

- Recommended resources

Aging in America

According to the CDC:

Healthy Aging for Older Adults

The United States is on the brink of a longevity revolution. By 2030, the proportion of the U.S. population aged 65 and older will double to about 71 million older adults, or one in every five Americans. The far-reaching implications of the increasing number of older Americans and their growing diversity will include unprecedented demands on public health, aging services, and the nation's health care system.

http://www.cdc.gov/aging/

The country is getting older

- The number of people age 65 and older is expected to grow from 39 million in 2008 to 72 million in 2030.

- The first boomers will reach 65 this year.

- Life expectancy in the US is 78 years of age.

Alzheimer's Disease

- Right now, as many as 4.5 million Americans have Alzheimer's Disease

- The number of people with AD doubles for every 5-year interval beyond age 65.

Mental Health

- 20% of adults over 55 have mental illness

- Suicide rate for persons 85 years and older is twice the national rate

- 6 percent of Americans ages 65 and older in a given year or approximately 2 million individuals in this age group have a diagnosable depressive illness

Causes of Death

- Heart Disease - #1 cause of death adults over age 65

- Cancer - #2 cause of death adults over age 65
  - Lung cancer most prevalent
  - Other prevalent: colorectal, prostate and breast (all decreasing)

Birds do it, bees do it…

Some reasons to talk about seniors sexual health

- The majority of older Americans are sexually active

- 15% of new cases of HIV are people over 50

- Most older adults have not discussed sex with their doctors

- #1 reason:

# VIAGRA

Using and Accessing Health Information

Access + Utilization = Health Literacy

- Health Literacy:
  - "The degree to which individuals have the capacity to _obtain, process and understand_ basic health information and services need to _make appropriate health decisions_." (Healthy People 2010)

- ACP Foundation Video:
- http://foundation.acponline.org/hl/hlvideo.htm

Why is health literacy so critical?

- Essential life skill
    - It is the bridge between knowledge and behavior.
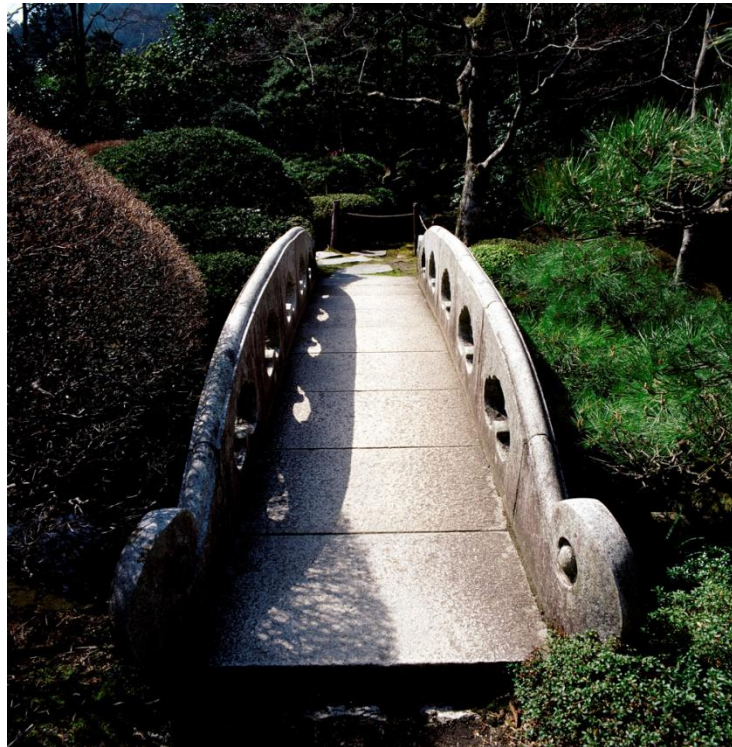
How is it different from "literacy?"

- People of all literacy levels can have low health literacy.

- However, "limited literacy skills are a stronger predictor of an individual's health status than age, income, employment status, education level, and racial or ethnic group." Ask Me 3™

People age 65+ have lower general literacy than the rest of us

Literacy and Age: Percentage of Population Reading at Basic and Below Basic Levels

Overall Population	Age, 16-18	Age, 19-24	Age, 25-39	Age, 40-49	Age, 50-64	Age, 65+
43%	48%	40%	37%	38%	40%	61%

People with low functional health literacy have:

- Poorer health status
- Less treatment adherence and a greater number of medication/treatment errors
- Higher rates of health services utilization, including 29 - 69 percent higher hospitalization rates
- Higher health care costs:
  - $50 - $73 billion in additional health expenditures annually
  - $7,500 more in annual health care costs for a person with limited health literacy, versus a person with higher health literacy skills

Why is an understanding of Health Literacy important for older adults?

- Adults age 63 and older have lower health literacy scores than all other age groups

- Only 3% of older adults surveyed had proficient health literacy skills

The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy

Additional factors affecting understanding of health information

☐ Vision and hearing changes

☐ Cognitive changes

☐ Additional Disabilities

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
Quick Guide to Health Literacy of Older Adults

And to make things worse...

- Multiple conditions

- Many, many medications

- Talking to doctors

- **Internet comfort levels**

Talking to Doctors: The New World Order

□ Before 1972, doctors told patients what they wanted patients to know, and what they wanted patients to do.

□ 1972 – AHA Patient Bill of Rights

  ◻ "The patient has the right and is encouraged to obtain from physicians and other direct caregivers relevant, current, and understandable information about his or her diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis."

Talking to Doctors:
The New World Order

* Now, doctors are just part of the health care team – so is the patient!

* The patient is now asked to make decisions about their own health care process.

* Where do patients get the tools to make those decisions?

Better knowledge = better outcomes

- Ask Me 3™ http://www.npsf.org/askme3/

Nothing — not age, income, employment status, educational level, and racial or ethnic group — affects health status more than **literacy skills.**

That's why clear communication between patients and health care providers is critical.

Good communication = Healthy patients

Start with Ask Me 3.

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

Your health depends on the questions you ask

☐ Questions are the Answer
http://www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer/

  ◻ Build your own personalized list of questions, including:
   ■ When will I get the results?
   ■ How do you spell the name of that drug?
   ■ Can I stop taking my medicine if I feel better?

# Where do most seniors look for health information?

- Health care providers
- Family
- Friends
- Workshops/Presentations
- Print resources
- **Internet**
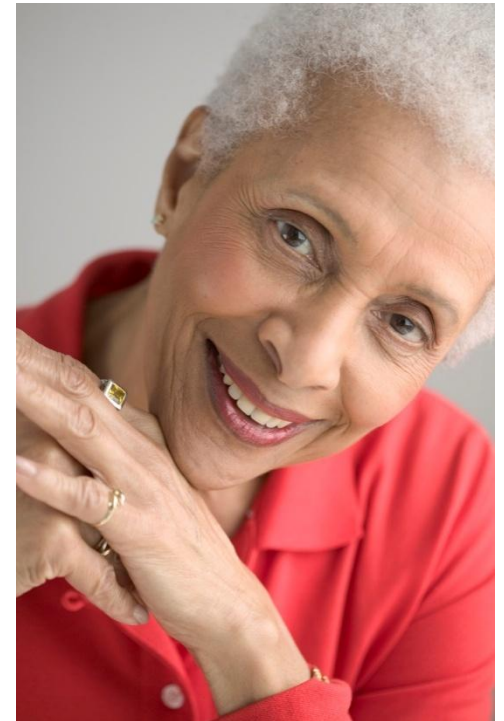
Pew Internet & American Life Project and

Health Information Seeking Behaviors of Older Adults: Results from an Interdisciplinary IMLS-funded Research Project, presentation at 2008 Medical Library Association by Mary Stansbury, Library and Information Science, University of Denver and Ruth Ludwick, College of Nursing, Kent State University.

Older Adults and the Internet
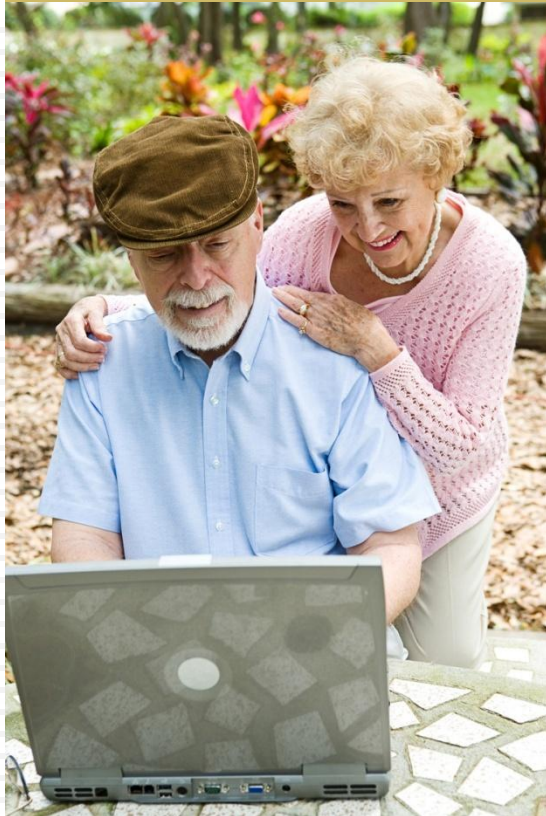
Older Adults & the Internet

- Demographics of Internet Users, July 2009
  - Pew Internet and American Life Project

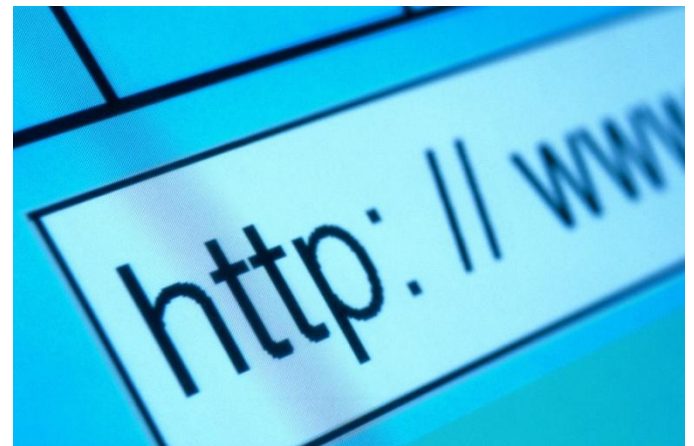|	Use the internet
Total Adults	**79%**
Men	81
Women	77
Race/ethnicity	
White, Non-Hispanic	79%
Black, Non-Hispanic	67
Hispanic (English-speaking)	84
Age	
18-29	92%
30-49	87
50-64	79
65+	42

80 is the new 60

- The number of older adults using the Internet increases as computer users join the ranks of older adults. "Seniors" are not just one generation.

- Seniors who are online are as likely as younger users to go online on a typical day.

- 66% of seniors that use the Internet have looked for health information online.

However, most seniors…

- ☐ live lives far removed from the Internet
- ☐ know few people who use email or surf the Web
- ☐ cannot imagine why they would spend money and time learning how to use a computer
- ☐ are more likely than any other age group to be living with some kind of disability which could hinder their capacity to get to a computer training center

Fox, Susannah. "Older Americans and the Internet."
Pew Internet & American Life Project. 25 March 2004.

How do seniors use the Internet?

- Many older adults who use the Internet don't know how to evaluate the information they find

- Some either trust information found on the Internet too much or not at all

- Wired seniors outpace younger Internet users on only one health topic: Medicare and Medicaid

Fox, Susannah. "Older Americans and the Internet." *Pew Internet & American Life Project*. 25 March 2004.

How can your center help with Medicare?

- The center can:
  - distribute Medicare publications
  - host outreach and education events, especially about the changes coming because of health care reform
  - assist residents in accessing Medicare.gov
- To learn about how to participate in the CMS National Medicare Training Program: http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalMedicareTrainingProgram/

Teaching Health Information on the Internet

Why We Teach Health on the Internet to Older Adults

- Bridge Digital Divide

- Increase confidence

- Increase knowledge of health conditions and healthy lifestyles

- Help people know how to talk to doctors

- Increase skills in evaluating health information resources

Teaching Observations

- Seniors are very hungry for health information

- Seniors are eager to learn

- Learning a new technology may be anxiety producing

Teaching Tips

☐ Provide hands-on practice and repetition

☐ Use health topics they are interested in (HBP)

☐ Provide regular access to computers

☐ Teach small groups, low teacher/student ratio

Teaching Resources

- NIHSeniorHealth: Helping Older Adults Search for Health Information Online:
  A Toolkit for Trainers
  - http://nihseniorhealth.gov/toolkit/toolkit.html

Featuring Health Information from the National Institutes of Health

HEALTH RESOURCES

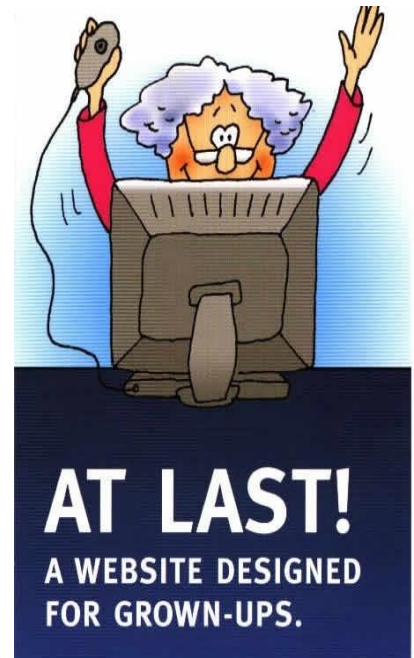# Health Resources

AT LAST!
A WEBSITE DESIGNED FOR GROWN-UPS.

- NIHSeniorHealth
  - http://nihseniorhealth.gov
  - Health information for older adults
  - Partnership of National Institute on Aging and National Library of Medicine
  - Information comes from National Institutes of Health
  - Senior-friendly features (large text, sound, contrast)
  - Information in bite-sized pieces

Health Resources

- MedlinePlus
  - http://medlineplus.gov
  - Links to reliable, understandable health websites
  - Health Topics for Seniors
  - Easy-to-read articles
  - Slideshows that have sound and contrast
  - Medical dictionary
  - Medical encyclopedia with large illustrations
  - Links to local services
  - English, Spanish and other languages
  - No Advertisements!

More Good Health Resources

- African Americans
  http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/africanamericanhealth.html
- American Indians
  http://americanindianhealth.nlm.nih.gov/
- Asian Americans
  http://asianamericanhealth.nlm.nih.gov/
- Arctic Health http://www.arctichealth.org/
- Women's Health http://www.womenshealth.gov/

Health Resources to Download and Print

- National Institute on Aging
  - http://www.nia.nih.gov
  - Free publications (English and Spanish)
    - Health Eating after 50 http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/healthyeating.htm
  - Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center (ADEAR)
  - Database of more than 300 national organizations that provide help to older adults.
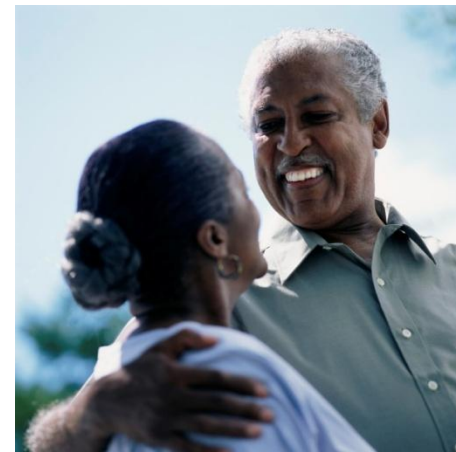
Health Resources in Print

- NIHMedlinePlus Magazine – Free subscription
http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/magazine/

Program Possibilities

- Exercise
- Dances
- Relationships/dating
- Medicare
- Managing Your Medications
- Cooking Healthy Meals
- Memory issues/keeping mind active
- Local resources for seniors
- Legal issues

Thank You!

Questions?

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800-338-7657