

# A GUIDE TO HEALTHY AGEING.

**A PATHWAY IN 6 STEPS**  
short version - 2024



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All the scientific references and other additional information can be consulted in the detailed version of this guide, available here:

<https://www.imad-ge.ch/vieillissement-en-sante/>

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| Term                         | Definition   |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Aquatic exercises</b>     | Exercises undertaken in a swimming pool or an immersion tank aimed at developing strength, endurance, and the flexibility of upper and lower limbs.  |
| <b>Caregiver</b>             | The caregiver is someone from the family or entourage who helps a person in a non-professional and informal manner. This help may take different forms, such as providing care, offering company, or ensuring safety.  |
| <b>Cognitive capacities</b>  | Cognitive capacities are all the brain's skills that enable a person to understand, interpret and interact with the world that surrounds them.   |
| <b>Cognitive stimulation</b> | Cognitive stimulation is generally practiced within a group. It is defined as taking part in a series of activities and discussions aimed at improving general cognitive and social functioning. These activities can include word games, puzzles, music, as well as practical activities, such as cooking or gardening. |
| <b>Cognitive training</b>    | An activity guided by an expert professional aiming to stimulate and train cognitive functions, such as memory and attention.  |

| Term   | Definition   |
|--|--|
| <b>DASH Diet (Dietary Approaches to Stopping Hypertension)</b> | A diet rich in fruit and vegetables, in dairy products that are low in fat and low in saturated fats, total dietary fat and cholesterol.   |
| <b>Environment</b>   | Environment refers to a person's living space, regardless of context. It is a point of reference, a place of safety, freedom and control.  |
| <b>Friendship training</b>                                     | This involves courses aimed at encouraging the development of friendships, to improve existing friendships, to set goals and limits in terms of friendship, social skills.   |
| <b>Healthy ageing</b>  | The process of development and maintenance of functional ability that enables well-being <sup>[11]</sup> in older age.   |
| <b>Hearing aid</b>   | A sound amplifier designed to compensate for a loss of hearing.  |
| <b>Intergenerational activities</b>                            | Activities that connect seniors and young people to foster cooperation, interactions and discussion between generations.   |
| <b>Locomotor capacities</b>                                    | Locomotor capacities refer to a person's ability to move from one place to another, to take part in leisure activities and to do physical exercise, as well as to carry out everyday tasks, with or without the help of technical tools. |

| Term                           | Definition  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Meditation</b>              | A practice that consists of reflecting, thinking and deeply concentrating on a subject or action for example.   |
| <b>Mediterranean diet</b>      | This diet is based on a high consumption of plant-based food (fruits, vegetables, nuts and cereals) and olive oil, moderate rations of fish and poultry, low intake of dairy products (yoghurts, cheese), red meat, sugar and moderate wine consumption.                |
| <b>Mindfulness</b>             | Structured programmes including meditation and physical exercises such as yoga.   |
| <b>Nutritional education</b>   | Advice and training provided by professionals specialised in the field (dietician/doctor specialised in clinical nutrition), aiming to raise awareness and voluntarily change practices for a healthy and balanced diet.  |
| <b>Nutritional supplements</b> | Nutritional supplements come in liquid, semi-solid, powder or pill form and contain a variety of essential nutrients. They are used to help people suffering from malnutrition or at risk of malnutrition.  |
| <b>Occupational therapy</b>    | Occupational therapy includes assistance and support in learning or relearning daily life activities, whether this is personal care or leisure. This also includes training for the physical, cognitive, emotional and social abilities necessary for these activities. |

| Term                            | Definition   |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Physical activity</b>        | This covers any movement requiring energy expenditure performed during leisure time, at work, or to go somewhere/go out.   |
| <b>Physiological capacities</b> | Physiological capacities are the characteristics and functions of the human body's organs.   |
| <b>Psychological capacities</b> | Psychological capacities are mainly associated with a person's emotional functions.  |
| <b>Psychotropic medications</b> | Psychotropic medications include sleeping pills (to promote sleep), anxiolytics (to reduce anxiety), antidepressants (to treat depression), sedatives (to calm or relax), as well as mood-regulating medications (to stabilise mood swings). The majority are available on prescription only.  |
| <b>Respite</b>                  | Respite aims to provide temporary or regular support to people who are ill, disabled or dependent, in order to support the caregivers in the help they provide and thus prevent their exhaustion. There are various forms of respite, such as temporary care and respite units, daycare centres, respite services in the home, outside the home, and even respite options while on holiday. Home help and care services are other examples of ways in which respite can be provided. |

| Term                      | Definition  |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Screening</b>          | Screening involves all the examinations and tests undertaken within a population in order to identify a deficiency or illness.  |
| <b>Sensory capacities</b> | Sensory capacities concern sight and hearing. Visual ability is the ability to clearly see details (shape, colour), regardless of distance. Hearing ability is the ear's ability to perceive sounds with precision.         |
| <b>Social connections</b> | Social connections are the set of daily interactions with family, friends and acquaintances. These social relationships can promote participation in meaningful activities, while reducing loneliness and social isolation. |
| <b>Stopping smoking</b>   | Motivational and/or pharmacological activities/approaches guided by professionals or structured programmes.   |
| <b>Support groups</b>     | Discussions between peers, facilitated or not by specialists, enabling those concerned to learn from each other, to strengthen their skills in terms of health and autonomy, while benefiting from psychological support.   |
| <b>Tai chi</b>            | An activity involving a set of slow movements and physical postures, associated with a meditative state of mind and controlled breathing.   |

| Term            | Definition  |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Vitality</b> | Vitality is the human organism's ability to correctly function both physically and mentally, even faced with everyday challenges such as injuries, infections or falls. A varied and balanced diet plays an essential role in maintaining vitality. |
| <b>Yoga</b>     | An activity that encompasses physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation.   |

**This guide is the result of the “VleSA” (Healthy Ageing) project<sup>[i]</sup> which took place between November 2021 and November 2023. The aim of the VleSA project was to assess the feasibility of implementing an integrated and coordinated pathway<sup>1</sup> for healthy ageing in the Canton of Geneva. Nestled within the framework for healthy ageing of the World Health Organization (WHO), which promotes the principles of Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE)<sup>[ii]</sup>, the VleSA project has been recognised as contributing to the “United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing”<sup>[iii]</sup>.**

The main outcome of the project was an informative guide, contextualised in the Canton of Geneva, linking the interventions that are scientifically recognised as promoting healthy ageing among people aged over 50 with the activities and institutions in the canton. The expertise of local stakeholders (seniors, health and social care professionals, associations, municipalities in Geneva) was sought throughout the project to produce a co-constructed and consensual version of the guide for use by the widest possible audience.

This short version of the guide summarises the contents of the detailed guide, concisely offering the scientific information and the key steps that are involved in developing a healthy ageing pathway. It was created following feedback from stakeholders and designed in such a way that those people interested in developing this pathway can do so individually, without the assistance of a professional if this is not desired. It is therefore mainly intended for people aged over 50, and for caregivers.

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<sup>1</sup> A health pathway represents a set of methods and instruments designed to get the members of a multidisciplinary (health-social) team, including the readers of this guide and friends/family, to reach an agreement regarding the tasks that need to be carried out for healthy ageing. It encompasses all available actions, resources and means, such as personal motivation, local assistance provided by volunteers and professionals, as well as friends/family, with the aim being to achieve the set goals.

All information and publications related to the VleSA project are available on the website:



**<https://www.imad-ge.ch/vieillissement-en-sante/>**

**This guide is intended for information purposes.  
We recommend you consult your doctor\*  
regarding any personal health-related  
questions or before starting a new treatment.**

\* By “doctor” we are referring to one’s General Practitioner (GP)/ Primary Care Physician / family doctor





## This guide is intended for:

seniors and caregivers

## Its objective is:

to pass on scientific knowledge on healthy ageing in a practical way and to provide specific information for seniors living in the Canton of Geneva, so that you can build your own pathway for healthy ageing.

## It proposes:

**6 steps** to guide you in building your own pathway, aiming to define the personal goals and actions to put into place to successfully do so.



- 1** The first step encourages you to think about your own vision of health of healthy ageing.
- 2** The second step provides reading matter on the important areas of healthy ageing. This includes the activities that are scientifically recognised as strengthening these, as well as international recommendations and tips for daily life. The aim is to provide you with information about scientific knowledge, so that you may make enlightened choices for your health.
- 3** The third step involves an assessment of your capacities and resources to identify areas for improving your overall health.
- 4** The fourth step focuses on selecting a health area to address, choosing a specific personal goal, identifying the actions to be implemented, and determining any potential needs to initiate the identified actions.
- 5** The fifth step offers guidance in the Canton of Geneva towards the main bodies dedicated to people aged over 50, so that you may find information, seek advice and gain support, depending on your individual goal.
- 6** The sixth and final step involves drawing up a precise action plan to implement your healthy ageing project.



# 1 - Defining health

14|15

The following questions aim to encourage reflection on the concept of health and to explore one's own interpretation of healthy ageing.

*What does "being healthy" mean to you?*

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*What does "healthy ageing" mean to you?*

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*How would you assess your overall health at the moment?*



*In your opinion, what resources and skills/capabilities do you need to mobilise in order to strengthen, optimise, or maintain your health?*

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# 2 - Expanding your knowledge

Each of us have unique skills that can be reinforced to promote healthy ageing<sup>[IV]</sup>. This encompasses physical and mental capabilities, as well as external resources that play a key role when it comes to healthy ageing.

It is scientifically well-established and known by the general public that certain types of behaviour promote health, like physical activity and a healthy diet. In fact, these types of behaviour may have a positive impact on several skills/capabilities.

More specifically:

|                                 |                           |       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| <b>Locomotor capacities</b>     | Mobility                  | p. 7  |
| <b>Vitality</b>                 | Nutrition                 | p. 8  |
| <b>Cognitive capacities</b>     | Mental functions          | p. 9  |
| <b>Psychological capacities</b> | Moral, mood               | p. 10 |
| <b>Sensory capacities</b>       | Vision and hearing        | p. 11 |
| <b>Physiological capacities</b> | Organ function            | p. 12 |
| <b>Social connections</b>       | Contact with other people | p. 14 |
| <b>Environment</b>              | Living space              | p. 15 |
| <b>Caregiver support</b>        | Caregivers                | p. 16 |

The following pages present the activities that have been shown by scientific research to be effective or promising in maintaining or reinforcing these skills/capabilities and resources<sup>[V]</sup>. They also contain recommendations from major health institutions, as well as tips for daily life.

**Adapt these general indications and recommendations to your situation and your needs.**  
**Consult professionals for a personalised follow-up.**

Locomotor capacities relate to a person's mobility: how they move and get around. They enable them to be more independent to take part in different daily activities more easily.

## Which specific activities?

- ✓ Any kind of physical exercise, including yoga, tai chi, dance, aquatic exercises
- ✓ Exercises that work on your balance, gait, muscular strength, flexibility endurance, joint mobility and are supervised by a professional
- ✓ Intergenerational activities, music and singing
- ✓ Nutritional supplements and reviewing medicines on your GP's prescription or under their supervision
- ✓ Home adaptations

### Specific recommendations

- Exercise regularly: 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week or 75 minutes of sustained activity
- Split up the exercise: into 10-minute periods throughout the day and gradually increase the activity
- Vary the activities: endurance, muscle development, balance and flexibility, and avoid a sedentary lifestyle
- If you have limited mobility, take part in a suitable activity 3 times per week to find the right balance
- Remain active depending on your own capabilities and state of health



## Tips

### ADD MOVEMENT TO YOUR DAY!

Avoid remaining seated for more than 45 minutes, by getting up during ad breaks when you watch television or by taking the stairs instead of the lift, for example.

Gently start taking part in a physical exercise and gradually increase the intensity.

Find a suitable activity, especially one that you enjoy doing.

**Vitality** means that our body and our brain are functioning correctly, even when we face challenges like injuries, infections or falls. Eating a variety of balanced foods plays an essential role in maintaining this vitality. It helps us stay mobile, mentally fit, reinforces immunity and the bones, while reducing the risks of problems, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers.

## Which specific activities?

- ✓ **Balanced and varied meals prepared by specialised services**
- ✓ **Nutritional supplements on your GP's prescription**
- ✓ **Nutritional education**

### Specific recommendations

- Vary your diet with fruit, vegetables, wholegrain cereals and pulses
- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day
- Include proteins in each meal (milk, cheese, yoghurt, eggs, meat, chickpeas, lentils, beans, tofu, hummus)
- Limit foods that are high in sugar, salt and fat
- Drink at least 1.5 litres of water every day (pure water, unsweetened fruit/herbal teas)
- Limit alcohol



## Tips

### SHARE DELICIOUS MOMENTS!

Enjoy meals and foster conviviality.

Opt for spices instead of salt and vary what you drink.

Move to stimulate your appetite and improve digestion, or to lose weight.

See your dentist regularly, even if you have dentures.

Pay attention to changes in your appetite or in taste linked to taking certain medicines and discuss this with your GP.

Cognitive capacities help us to pay attention, orient ourselves, perceive and interact with the world around us, as well as communicate and express ourselves. They are also for remembering life events, learning and accumulating knowledge, solving problems and making decisions. Taking part in regular intellectual and physical activities, maintaining social contacts and having a balanced diet can help preserve these important capacities for remaining independent.

## Which specific activities?

- ✓ Cognitive stimulation and cognitive training (led by professionals, including taking part in a series of activities, such as crosswords, puzzles, sudoku.)
- ✓ Any type of physical exercise, including aquatic exercises and dance
- ✓ Intergenerational activities
- ✓ Music and playing an instrument
- ✓ Meditation and mindfulness

### Specific recommendations

- Take part in intellectually stimulating and fun activities, individually or in a group
- Periodically check and treat blood pressure
- In the event of a loss of hearing, see a specialist and use hearing aids
- Limit, or even stop, alcohol consumption and smoking
- Adopt a healthy and balanced diet, the Mediterranean diet for example\*
- Stay in shape, take part in regular physical activity\*



## Tips

### MAINTAIN YOUR CURIOSITY AND THE DESIRE TO LEARN!

Take part in fun and stimulating activities (reading, crosswords, sudoku, drawing, writing), go to the theatre, visit museums, attend conferences or take lessons, by focusing on interaction and sharing, and having frequent contact with friends and family.

Listen to music or play an instrument.

Sleep well and respect recommendations regarding certain medicines, especially sleeping pills.

\*Physical activity and diet play an indirect role on cognition

Psychological capacities are mainly linked to emotions, namely the mental aspects associated with feelings and emotions. Emotional well-being is an essential element of health. It influences our way of reacting to stress, our effectiveness and our aptitude to manage everyday life. Mental health results in positive emotions, social relationships and self-confidence.

## Which specific activities?

- ✓ Psychologist-led therapy and music therapy
- ✓ Any type of physical exercise, including aquatic exercises and tai chi
- ✓ Intergenerational activities, music and singing
- ✓ Mindfulness
- ✓ Continuing education and learning

### Specific recommendations

- Take part in regular physical activity
- Take part in social activities
- Learn new things and get involved in creative activities
- Stay in touch with your entourage
- Prepare your transition to retirement by anticipating change and planning rewarding activities
- Ask for help or support if necessary
- Work towards accepting change and yourself by communicating with friends/family or a professional



## Tips

**CULTIVATE POSITIVE EMOTIONS,  
AND GOOD SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS!**

Walk in the countryside.

Spend time in the company of an animal.

Stay in touch with your friends/family.

Force yourself to do something every day.

Listen to music.

Share any concerns with friends/family  
or a professional.

Sensory capacities relate to sight and hearing. Visual ability is the ability to clearly see details (shape, colour), regardless of the distance. Hearing ability is the ear's ability to perceive sounds with precision. Sight enables people to be mobile and interact safely with their environment. It also helps maintain social contact and independence, including the ability to drive. Hearing helps people to communicate and understand discussions to maintain their autonomy, mental health, and cognitive functions.

## Which specific activities?

- ✓ **Assessment of visual or auditory deficiencies and/or impairments and provision of care (sight) or hearing aids (hearing)**

### Specific recommendations

- From the age of 65, see an ophthalmologist every two years
- Get screened if you have hearing difficulties, see a professional for hearing aids if necessary
- Protect your eyes and your ears (from the sun and from loud noises)
- Have a balanced diet, rich in fruit and vegetables\*
- Avoid smoking and alcohol consumption\*



## Tips

### SEE A DOCTOR IF YOUR ABILITIES DIMINISH!

Take breaks from your screen use (computer, tablet, or other), protect your eyes from the sun outside.

Harmonise lighting to avoid significant differences between the luminosity of screens and the room.

Protect your ears by using ear plugs in a noisy environment.

Take hearing breaks when listening to music for a long time or in very noisy environments.

\*Smoking and alcohol consumption damages blood vessels and, consequently, organs. A balanced diet plays an indirect role on Sensory capacities

**Health means more than the absence of illness or disability. It represents an overall state of physical, mental and social well-being. Different behavioural, environmental or genetic factors can influence health and disturb its balance.**

**Physiological capacities, namely the characteristics and functions of the body's organs, can influence some of these factors to protect or improve health. Although these capabilities are not infinite, it is possible to preserve and maintain them thanks to a healthy lifestyle.**

## Which activities?

- ✓ Any kind of physical exercise, including tai chi, dance, exercises working your balance, gait, muscular strength, suppleness, endurance and joint mobility
- ✓ A balanced diet, such as Mediterranean or DASH diet
- ✓ Limiting alcohol consumption and stopping smoking
- ✓ Screening for cancers and cardiovascular risk factors
- ✓ Vaccines

### Recommendations

- Take part in regular physical activity and have a balanced and varied diet
- If you are an active smoker, consider the possibility of stopping
- Regularly estimate your alcohol consumption. Maximum 1 glass per day and 5 glasses per week for a woman, and 2 glasses per day and 10 glasses per week for a man, with a break of 2 days per week

- Assess cardiovascular risk with your GP (high blood pressure or high cholesterol)
- Discuss regular screenings for colon, cervical, breast or prostate cancer, and lung cancer among people at risk, with your doctor
- From the age of 65, get screened for osteoporosis
- Follow the recommendations in terms of vaccines (flu and COVID-19, shingles and pneumococcus)
- Preserve your teeth and mouth through daily care and regular check-ups with a dentist



## Let's talk about sexuality, urinary incontinence, sleep

Healthy ageing also means remaining fulfilled in **your sexuality**. However, problems such as pains, breathing difficulties, muscular and bone disorders, medicines or depression may influence sexuality by causing issues such as erectile dysfunction, vaginal dryness or low libido. Preventing chronic illnesses remains the best means of preserving your sex life. Talk about it with your partner and/or your doctor.

**Urinary incontinence** problems can affect your everyday life and social interactions, even if it is often embarrassing to talk about.

With age, **sleep problems** are frequent among old people, but it is possible to maintain a good night's sleep without resorting to sleeping pills. Simple methods like training the lower abdominal muscles and pacing your visits to the toilet during the day may help.

It is possible to improve your **sleep** by following simple rules: reducing coffee and alcohol consumption, exercising during the day, adjusting your bedroom in terms of temperature, noise and light, and limiting screen use in the evening. In some situations, it may be important to look for signs of sleep apnoea. It is worth knowing that sleeping pills may create a dependency and become less effective in the long-term.



### Tips

#### FOLLOW A GOOD LIFESTYLE TO PRESERVE YOUR CAPABILITIES

Look into the previously mentioned recommendations and discuss them with a doctor to gain a better understanding.

Get exposure to natural light.

Follow your prescribed treatment and regularly discuss the medicines used with your doctor.

A regular pace of life to sleep better.

Maintain a fulfilled sex life.

Don't be afraid to speak to your GP about subjects that may be difficult to broach, such as sexuality or urinary incontinence, because there are solutions!

Maintaining relationships with family, friends and acquaintances is essential for healthy ageing. These ties prevent us from feeling lonely and isolated, which can happen when we go through difficult periods as we grow old. Loneliness and isolation can affect our physical and mental health.

## Which activities?

- ✓ Intergenerational activities and volunteering
- ✓ Music and singing, arts and crafting
- ✓ Support and mutual aid groups
- ✓ Psychologist-led therapy and mindfulness
- ✓ Any kind of physical activity
- ✓ Training in information/communication technology (e.g. internet, smartphone.), encouraging friendly connections

### Specific recommendations

- Take part in social activities, which promotes overall health
- Participate in local life, which helps fight social isolation
- Maintaining Social connections with family and friends, even remotely
- Favour local activities to help maintain a good quality of life



## Tips

### STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FAMILY AND ENTOURAGE!

Invite or visit friends.

Do what you enjoy doing, in good company.

Go out regularly to get fresh air, move about, walk in the countryside or in your neighbourhood.

Get involved in cultural, social, or charitable activities.

Become familiar with IT and communication tools.

Share your feelings of solitude with your entourage and friends, and ask for help if necessary.

A person's environment<sup>2</sup> is their living space, a place that offers them safety, freedom and control. This aspect is important because most of us would like to carry on living in our homes for as long as possible. Sometimes, adjustments to the accommodation are needed to meet our personal needs and to make the environment more comfortable and secure.

## Which activities?

- ✓ **Professional consultations and follow-up for home modifications and adaptations**

### Specific recommendations

- Thinking about possible adaptations and anticipating potential mobility issues may let you carry on living in your home for as long as possible, and may provide greater comfort, well-being and safety

.....  
<sup>2</sup> The distal environment (access to services, urban planning) is also important for healthy ageing as it influences the ability to get involved in different activities. This aspect of the environment is outside the scope of this guide, but you may find information on this webpage: [https://architecturesansobstacles.ch/normes\\_et\\_publications/directives-habitat-pour-personnes-agees-liste-de-controle](https://architecturesansobstacles.ch/normes_et_publications/directives-habitat-pour-personnes-agees-liste-de-controle)



## Tips

### COMPLETE SAFETY AND PEACE OF MIND IN YOUR HOME!

Ensure there is suitable lighting in all living spaces to avoid accidents.

Avoid obstacles, such as doorsteps, unsteady furniture, no-fixed carpets, and extension cords on the floor.

Use the handrails on the stairs and add no-slip strips to the steps.

Adapt and secure the bathroom with a shower seat and handles. Install grab bars in the shower or toilet to make it easier to get around.

Reorganise the cabinets so that useful objects are close at hand.

Get help from an occupational therapist to identify specific needs and adaptations to your home.

In the event of difficulties staying in your home; consider moving to more suitable accommodation (e.g. a building with support for old people).

A caregiver is someone from the family or entourage who helps a person in a no-professional and informal manner. This help may take different forms, such as providing care, offering company, or ensuring safety. It is important to promote and strengthen the health of caregivers as early as possible through various activities.

## Which activities?

- ✓ Face-to-face or online support groups
- ✓ Caregiver training
- ✓ Psychologist-led therapy
- ✓ Respite

### Specific recommendations

- Don't put your own life on hold, make time for yourself, continue to have activities for yourself
- Take part in socio-cultural, educational and fun activities, as they strengthen overall health
- Maintain Social connections and relationships with family and friends, even remotely
- Pay close attention to your own health and ask for help if needed



## Tips

### TAKE CARE OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS AND MAKE SURE YOU ENJOY YOURSELF!

Stay in touch with your entourage, family and friends.

Make sure you have free time for activities and leisure.

Become familiar with IT tools to find practical advice

Listen to your own needs and pay close attention to your own health.

Ask for help if it becomes difficult to continue providing support, because there are support services for caregivers.

## 3 - Assessing your capacities

36 | 37

|                                 |   |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Locomotor capacities</b>     | Do you struggle to get up from a chair without support?                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
|                                 | Do you struggle to walk?  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
|                                 | Do you have balance problems or have you fallen during the past 6 months?               | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Vitality</b>                 | Have you unintentionally lost 3 kg over the past three months?                          | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
|                                 | Have you lost your appetite?  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Cognitive capacities</b>     | Do you have memory problems, for example, not knowing what day it is?                   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
|                                 | Do you have orientation problems, for example, not knowing where you are?               | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Psychological capacities</b> | Over the past two weeks, have you felt depressed or hopeless?                           | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
|                                 | Over the past two weeks, have you lost interest or pleasure in doing things?            | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Sensory capacities</b>       | Do you struggle to see far or to read? (with your glasses)                              | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
|                                 | Do you struggle to follow conversations in noisy environments? (with your hearing aids) | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |

|                                 |   |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Physiological capacities</b> | Do you know which are the most important vaccines to have with advancing age?   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
|                                 | Do you know which important screenings and medical check-ups you should have regularly?   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Social connections</b>       | Do you feel lonely?   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Environment</b>              | Does your home have obstacles in terms of lighting, or accessibility to the bathroom, the stairs?   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
|                                 | Do you struggle to get around outside your home because of obstacles, such as the lack of a lift?   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Caregiver support</b>        | Are you the caregiver for a friend or family member? (providing care, assistance, emotional support to someone in your entourage who has temporary or permanent disabilities) | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
|                                 | Has this role had a negative impact on your life?   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |
|                                 | Have you felt a lack of support in this role as caregiver?  | <input type="checkbox"/> yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> no |

## 4 - Setting your goals

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**After finding out more about the various health areas and assessing your skills/capabilities, the idea is to identify the priority area to address first. This also requires exploring any practical aspects regarding the type of action to undertake and the potential needs for carrying out this action.**

*What is the health area you would like to work on first?*

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*With regard to this health area, what is your specific goal?  
What are you aiming for?*

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***To maintain or reinforce the skill/capability you noted as important, what actions could you implement?***

Changing the types of behaviour or habits that are a risk to your health ☐ yes  
☐ no

Reinforcing an activity that you already take part in ☐ yes  
☐ no

Starting a new activity ☐ yes  
☐ no

Modifying your living space or finding a more suitable one ☐ yes  
☐ no

Getting back in touch with your family and friends, or making new acquaintances ☐ yes  
☐ no

Seeing or talking to a health or social care professional ☐ yes  
☐ no

***To begin the action(s) noted above, what would you require?***

Details of the resources and activities available near your home ☐ yes  
☐ no

Practical, administrative, social or financial help ☐ yes  
☐ no

Information linked to your home ☐ yes  
☐ no

Respite, support as a caregiver ☐ yes  
☐ no

Support from an expert ☐ yes  
☐ no

Support from a friend or family member or a volunteer ☐ yes  
☐ no

**At this step, the objective is to find useful information and addresses for implementing tangible actions in order to achieve your desired health goal.**

The guidance on offer is not exhaustive, but intended to be representative of the existing bodies in the Canton of Geneva. Useful information and addresses are given to lead you to the main resource points.

### Resources and activities available near your home

The first point of contact is the municipality. The Geneva municipalities and/or the clubs for seniors offer activities and opportunities to make new acquaintances.

Find your municipality's website:  
<https://geneve-communes.ch/>

Refer to the list of clubs for seniors here:  
<https://lafede.ch> | tel: 022 301 68 94

As well as your municipality, there are associations and structures open to all seniors residing in the Canton of Geneva, offering a wide range of activities (physical, socio-cultural, educational)

**There are two key resources in terms of the information on offer and/or their lists of various structures, enabling you to stay informed and find your bearings in the Canton of Geneva.**

**The City of Geneva** proposes the “Senior citizens’ guide: living in Geneva as a senior citizen and/or retired person” on its website: [www.seniors-geneve.ch](http://www.seniors-geneve.ch) This very comprehensive guide gathers together all the practical information for living as a senior citizen in Geneva. Among others, the topics include:

- **Leisure** (events, socio-cultural activities, holidays)
- **Making yourself useful** (opportunities for volunteering, for sharing knowledge/experience)
- **Health** (nutrition, physical exercise, memory, age-related illnesses, geriatrics, home nursing care, suitable accommodation)
- **Safety** (adapting your home, professional support, prevention of theft)
- **Finding help** (administrative, financial, legal, social assistance, home help and care, laundry, shopping and errands, social information, integration, abuse)

This information is also available in the “Genève en poche” mobile app that you can download on your smartphone.

**The Hospice général** (public assistance office) has a directory covering different subjects that may interest senior citizens living in Geneva. The main fields concerning senior citizens are:

- **Home help and care**
- **Social insurance**
- **Establishments for old people**
- **Information - support**
- **Leisure activities - travel - holidays**

You can look up these useful addresses at the website:  
<https://www.hospicegeneral.ch/fr>



## Practical, administrative, social or financial help

The **Geneva municipalities** offer this type of support and there are also structures or services specifically dedicated to these subjects.

**Geneva Public Transport (TPG)** offers a free assistance service, available from Monday to Friday, 7.00 am to 7.00 pm. Book 48 hours in advance on 022 328 11 11. There are also car transport services for people with reduced mobility, like the Transport service offered by the **Genevan Croix-Rouge**:

<https://www.croix-rouge-ge.ch/activites/personnes-agees/transports-croix-rouge>

The **Social Information Office (BIS)** offers practical information about social assistance: <https://www.info-sociale.ch/>

Financial support additional to the pension (AVS) state pension may be requested from the **Office for Supplementary Benefits (SPC)**: <https://www.ge.ch/organisation/service-prestations-complementaires>

The **Pro Senectute Genève** foundation offers individual consultations for seniors for all questions regarding finance, accommodation, administrative support, law and health: <https://ge.prosenectute.ch/fr.html>

The **AVIVO Genève** association has a social office specialised in questions linked to retirement: <https://avivo.ch/office-social/>

The **Fondation Appuis Aux Aînés** grants personalised ad hoc financial assistance and provides advice: <https://appuis-aines.ch/>

## Information linked to your home (adaptation/possibilities of living space)

To undertake modifications in your home to make it more suitable, don't hesitate to discuss this with your GP, who will be able to refer you to a professional specialised in that field.

**IMAD's occupational therapy** assesses a person's capabilities with regard to their physical and social environment and offers proposals to adapt the environment to remove or work around obstacles:

<https://www.imad-ge.ch/prestations/ergotherapie/>

The State of Geneva provides all the necessary information regarding **buildings with support for old people (IEPA)**, so-called intermediary structures whose accommodation is adapted to promote the comfort and safety of tenants:

<https://www.ge.ch/document/liste-iepa>

The Canton of Geneva now has **54 nursing homes (EMS)**, listed on the State of Geneva's website:

<https://www.ge.ch/etablisements-medico-sociaux-ems>

The "Habitat(s) Seniors – Typologie des logements adaptés dans le canton de Genève" brochure (in French) published by the **Geneva Senior Network Platform (Plateforme du réseau seniors Genève)** presents the different types of accommodation for senior citizens, to guide them towards a choice adapted to their personal wishes and requirements:

<https://www.plateformeseniors.ch/publications/habitats-seniors-typologie-des-logements-adaptes-dans-le-canton-de-geneve/>

## Respite, support as a caregiver

The “**GE suis proche-aidant**” website gathers useful information for caregivers, particularly regarding financial support and administrative aid, training, respite possibilities, forums and a dedicated helpline: Proch’info 058 317 7000

[www.ge.ch/dossier/ge-suis-proche-aidant](http://www.ge.ch/dossier/ge-suis-proche-aidant)

For information about **Temporary Respite Units (UATR)**, refer to the website::

<https://www.imad-ge.ch/prestations/unite-daccueil-temporaire-de-repit-uatr/>

## Support from a health expert

**Your GP** remains the first point of contact for any health-related question or a referral to a specialised professional.

**Pharmacies**, as local players, can also provide guidance on various points regarding health or even social matters.

To turn your intentions with regard to your own healthy ageing into action, it is suggested to summarise the first 5 steps and to establish an action plan.

### Summary of decisions taken in the previous steps

1. *The capacity that you have chosen to maintain or reinforce is:*

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2. *Your specific goal is:*

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3. *The action that you could implement to reinforce this skill/capability is:*

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4. *Your needs to implement this action are:*

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### Practical aspects: How to succeed?

How can you implement this action in practical terms? What do you need? (For example, to contact an association/a specialist; to plan transport)

*When can you implement this action and how frequently?*

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*How can you measure progress towards your goal?*

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*When do you see yourself achieving your goal?*

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**By highlighting the personal value of healthy ageing and respecting each individual's unique aspirations, the steps proposed in this guide aim to support people to identify and establish a personal health goal. These steps can be revisited at any time, iteratively with different goals each time. By defining what is important for one's own healthy ageing, as well as the needs for taking actions that promote ageing healthily, it is possible to set goals that are as specific, measurable and achievable as possible.**

The Canton of Geneva offers a wide range of activities and support available locally by the municipalities and different institutions dedicated to senior citizens. The activities programme is variable, regularly updated, and often changes depending on the season. The best way to navigate this is through one's municipality as the first point of contact or by discussing it with one's GP in case of existing health issues.

This guide aims to complement international and local recommendations with the intention of supporting individuals in their health pathway, by providing scientific knowledge so that they may act in an informed manner in terms of healthy ageing. It is hoped that, by following the steps proposed in the guide, the reader will have initiated a reflection on their health and developed their own path toward healthy ageing.

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## Personal notes

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