

OCTOBER 1 – INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

Age is no obstacle to health!

The International Day of Older Persons was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on October 1, 1990. In the Republic of Belarus, this day has been celebrated since 1992.



International Day of Older Persons aims to draw public attention to the quality of life of older people, maintaining their health, social activity, and dignity in society. Protecting the rights and legitimate interests of older citizens, maintaining their social status, and creating conditions for active aging are important areas of state social policy in the Republic of Belarus.

Aging is a natural stage of human life. According to the accepted classification in gerontology, old age is defined as the period from 60 to 75 years, senility is defined as the period from 75 to 90 years, and people over 90 are considered centenarians.

The modern concept of healthy aging is associated not only with life expectancy but also with maintaining its quality. Active longevity implies the ability to maintain physical and mental activity, independence, social connections, and interest in life for as long as possible.

With age, the human body undergoes natural changes such as decreased physical endurance, deterioration of vision and hearing, loss of muscle mass, slower metabolic processes, and disturbances in sleep, memory, attention, and emotional state.

In old age, regular medical monitoring and preventative care are crucial, as chronic cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders, and other conditions requiring constant monitoring are more common during this period. It's important not to attribute any decline in well-being solely to age, as lifestyle significantly impacts the health of older adults.

Factors that increase the risk of developing diseases and reducing quality of life include insufficient physical activity, unbalanced diet, smoking, alcohol abuse, excess body weight, high blood pressure, and carbohydrate and lipid metabolism disorders.

Disease prevention in old age should be comprehensive and include care for a person's physical, mental and social well-being:

1. Regular physical activity is essential for people of all ages. Exercise helps maintain muscle strength, joint mobility, coordination, and balance, and has a positive effect on cardiovascular health and overall well-being. Daily walks, physical therapy, gymnastics, and stretching exercises can all be beneficial.

2. A nutritious and balanced diet is an essential component of healthy aging. It should include vegetables, fruits, grains, and high-protein foods (lean meat, fish, low-

fat cottage cheese, and fermented milk products). Dietary fiber, found in vegetables, fruits, and grains, is especially important, promoting normal bowel function.

3. During sleep, the body restores its physical and psychological resources. Therefore, it is especially important for older adults to maintain a regular sleep and rest schedule.

4. Reading, learning new things, creative pursuits, board games, and other intellectual activities help maintain interest in life and maintain cognitive activity.

5. Quitting bad habits such as smoking and alcohol abuse is an important component of chronic disease prevention and promotes active longevity.

6. Taking responsibility for your health requires regular medical monitoring and prompt consultation with specialists. Don't delay a visit to the doctor if you experience severe weakness, shortness of breath, chest pain or discomfort, dizziness, blurred vision or speech, swelling, prolonged emotional decline, memory or sleep problems. Monitoring chronic diseases is especially important. If recommended, regularly measure your blood pressure, blood glucose levels, and other health indicators.

7. Elderly health encompasses not only physical well-being but also mental well-being. It's important for family and loved ones to be attentive to their emotional well-being. Support, communication, shared walks, and opportunities to engage in hobbies help maintain a sense of self-worth and active participation in social life.

Medical care for older people includes preventive measures, timely diagnosis of diseases, treatment and monitoring of patients with chronic diseases, and, if necessary, consultations with doctors of various specialties and rehabilitation measures.

International Day of Older Persons is not only an opportunity to honor older people, but also a reminder of the importance of maintaining good health and active longevity for all people.

Old age should be filled with social interaction, creativity, moderate physical activity, and new interests. It's not just the number of years lived that matters, but also their quality, as well as the ability to remain an active participant in society.

Caring for older adults is the responsibility of families, communities, and healthcare and social workers. Attention, respect, support, and simple human compassion can make an older person's life much more fulfilling and happier.

Take care of your health, take care of yourself and your loved ones!