

### **Risk Factor – Needing Help With Health and Personal Care**

- Often, older adults need help with health and personal care because of *long-term or chronic diseases or conditions*.
- For older adults the most common chronic conditions are: **high blood pressure, diabetes, incontinence, heart disease, arthritis, depression, emphysema, and vision and hearing loss.**
- Chronic diseases or conditions get worse slowly. They are often due to: heredity, lifestyle factors (smoking, lack of exercise, poor diet, stress, etc.), exposure to things in your environment, and things going on in one's body.<sup>1</sup>
- About 80% of older adults have at least one chronic disease. And, 50% have two or more.<sup>2</sup>
- Studies have shown that poor health is not an inevitable effect of aging.<sup>3</sup>
- Older adults with chronic conditions may need help with bathing, taking pills, making meals, walking, going to the bathroom, rides, staying safe, and **avoiding falls that cause injury.**

**KEY TIP: Take care of your chronic conditions. You will need less help from others and you will spend less on health and long-term care expenses, including nursing home care.**

### **Other Tips**

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<sup>1</sup> Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions, Stanford University, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/publications/aag/aging.htm>

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