

# Aging Myths and Facts

## Dispelling the myths about Older Adults:

Take this 5 minute quiz to determine your level of knowledge about Older Adults. You might be surprised by your score!

<http://www.seniors.gov.on.ca/en/agingquiz/index.php>

## Responding to Older Adults with Substance Use, Mental Health and Gambling Challenges

### True or False?

1. The older you get, the less sleep you need.
2. People take more medications as they age.
3. As your body changes with age, so does your personality.
4. Intelligence declines with age.
5. Most older people live alone.
6. Most people get dementia if they live long enough.
7. Senior women have the lowest income of all adult groups.
8. Most older adults have no interest in, or capacity for, sexual relations.
9. Many older people are preoccupied with death.
10. Most seniors who are new to Ontario speak neither English nor French.

### Answers

1. **False.** In later life, the quality of sleep may decline, but not the total sleep time. As people age, they are likely to take more naps rather than sleep for long stretches.
2. **True.** Most older Canadians take at least one kind of prescription or over-the-counter medication. Older people are also more likely than younger adults to take more than one medication.
3. **False.** A person's personality stays the same throughout life, except when changes result from Alzheimer disease or other forms of dementia, stroke or other serious illness.
4. **False.** Most people's intellect stays the same or improves with age, although it may take longer for older people to learn something new.
5. **False.** Most Canadian seniors live with their spouse, common law partner, extended family or others. In 1996, only 29 per cent of older people lived alone.
6. **False.** Dementia is not a normal part of aging.
7. **True.** In 2001, 46 per cent of widowed, single or divorced women aged 65 and older lived below the poverty line. This is the highest poverty rate of any family type in Canada.
8. **False.** Aging does not necessarily change a person's interest in or capacity for sexual relations. However, ways of expressing sexual feelings may change, and opportunities for sexual relations may decline due to the loss of a partner, or changes in health or living arrangements.
9. **False.** Attitudes toward death vary, but often older adults are less anxious and more matter-of-fact about death. As they see others close to them die, they begin to accept their own mortality, and tend to speak more freely about death and dying.
10. **True.** Of the more than 6,000 senior immigrants to Ontario from 1996 to 1999, 64 per cent of women and 56 per cent of men spoke neither English nor French.

Adapted from **Ontario Seniors' Secretariat: Aging Quiz**. Reprinted with permission.