Are We There Yet? Providing Elder Friendly Health Information to Seniors

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Elder Friendly Health Information

Presentation Objectives

- Increase awareness of seniors health literacy
- Increase awareness of seniors health conditions
- Understand seniors use of computers and the Internet
- Become aware of quality websites for seniors
- Introduce elder friendly principles
Seniors Health Profile

- Canada’s population over 65 about 5 million people
- Seniors 15% of total population.
- BC has one of highest populations of seniors in Canada

Seniors Health Profile
Fraser Health

- Seniors comprise 13% of Fraser Health’s population
- Seniors are the fastest growing demographic group in Fraser Health
- In BC, seniors account for over 48% of acute care (hospital) services
Reality Check: Boomer Dreams For Later Life May Not Come True.

2013 report on the health of Canadians
Baby Boomers and Health

- 10 year gap between how long Canadians are living and living in good health.
- Lifestyle choices can add health to our years. [www.MakeHealthLast.ca](http://www.MakeHealthLast.ca)
- Baby boomers are concerned about their health, but this concern is not translating into action.
- Risk factors: physical inactivity, poor diet, smoking, stress, and excessive alcohol consumption.
Heart & Stroke Foundation information

2013 REPORT ON THE HEALTH OF CANADIANS

REALITY CHECK: BOOMER DREAMS FOR LATER LIFE MAY NOT COME TRUE.
Baby Boomers and Health

*Risk factor behaviour*

- 85% of baby boomers don’t eat enough fruit and vegetables
- Over 40% are not physically active
- 30% are too stressed
- 21% smoke
- 5% drink too much and 12% are heavy drinkers
Baby Boomers and Health

*Heart and Stroke Foundation report on health of Canadians 2013*

- Baby boomers concerned about their health, but their lifestyle habits don’t show it.
- Heart disease and stroke are leading causes of hospitalization and disability in Canada.
- Making lifestyle changes now can make a difference and reduce risk of heart disease and stroke.

[www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)
Seniors Health Conditions

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Cancer
- Dementia
- Chronic respiratory disease (COPD)
- Osteoarthritis

*Seniors Health Profile 2010, Fraser Health*
Seniors Health Conditions

- Life expectancy 82 years in BC (80 for men and 84 for women)
- 37% of seniors in Fraser Health Region did not graduate from high school
- 50% of seniors consume less than recommended fruit & vegetables daily
- 50% of Fraser Health seniors overweight or obese
Seniors Health Literacy

- **Definition**: degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process & understand basic health information & services needed to make health decisions.

- **3 Areas**: prose literacy, document literacy and quantitative literacy
Health Literacy of Seniors

- Seniors need reliable health information to prevent and manage diseases
- Aging and low health literacy levels may compromise capacity of seniors
- 71% of seniors had difficulty using print materials
- 80% had difficulty using forms & charts.
Health Literacy of Seniors

- Seniors use more medical services and have more chronic diseases than other groups.
- By 2030, 71.5 million seniors will be living in the US.
- Improving health information and literacy a priority for seniors!

www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy
What About Ethnic Seniors?

- Ethnic seniors among most vulnerable
- Multiple obstacles: language, culture, income, literacy
- Family members play critical roles in finding health information
- Complementary/alternative medicine often sought after more frequently
Seniors’ Use of Computers and Internet

- 51% of seniors aged 65-74 used the Internet, compared with 27% of those 75 years and older
- 51% of non-users of Internet were seniors
- Over half of seniors using the Internet searched for health information

Canadian Internet Use Survey 2007
www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/
Seniors’ Use of Computers and Internet

- Some seniors are very comfortable with computers. Important to check with computer comfort before proceeding with patron.

Evaluating Internet Health Information: A Tutorial from the National Library of Medicine
Elder Friendly Principles

- **Social climate**: family centered, interdisciplinary support, value seniors
- **Policy and procedures**: staff education, respectful interaction with seniors, expert staff
- **Physical design**: signage, equipment design
- **Services and systems**: holistic, listening to seniors, taking time
Health Web Sites
British Columbian/Canadian

- **Seniors BC** [http://seniorsbc.ca](http://seniorsbc.ca)
Health Web Sites
British Columbian/ Canadian

- **Health Canada Seniors**
  
Health Web Sites
British Columbian/Canadian

- **Heart and Stroke Foundation**
  [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)
Health Web Sites
British Columbia

- **HealthLinkBC Call 8-1-1 online**
Health Web Sites

American

- National Institute on Aging
  http://www.nia.nih.gov/health
Health Web Sites
American

- National Institute of Health Senior Health page (includes video section)
  http://nihseniorhealth.gov/index.html
Health Web Sites
American

- Medline Plus
  www.medlineplus.gov
Strategies for Libraries

- Build collections based on seniors' diseases, healthy living, and end of life planning, including multicultural resources
- Marketing health resources to senior centres, public health units, specialized seniors health clinics
- Outreach to residential care, assisted living
Strategies for Libraries

- Special populations, especially ethnic seniors
- Health literacy challenges
- Language issues
- Family centered service
- Caregiver information needs
Strategies for Libraries

- Elder friendly and dementia friendly services
- Large print, visual materials
- Offer to print out information, links
- Outreach workshops where ethnic seniors congregate (temples, etc)
Strategies for libraries
NIH Seniorhealth Toolkit
Case Study

- Senior retired nurse comes to library looking for health information and physicians for her health condition, a prolapsed uterus. She wants information on her condition, the main therapies available to weigh her options.
- She wants information on her surgical procedure recommended.
- Where do you look? She does not have a computer.
Best Practices

- Do not assume level of comfort with computers, information
- Do not interpret information
- Do not offer medical, legal or financial advice
- Refer only to trusted sources
- Promote critical evaluation
Conclusion

- Are we ready? We are at the beginning stages
- Library staff training providing services for seniors recommended
- Workshops for seniors in use of computers and Internet for finding health information recommended
Thank you for attending our session!

Help yourself to some of the items provided by HealthLinkBC
Questions?

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References


Section Break