


# Why Aging Adults in Montana Should Be a Public Health Priority

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# The State of Aging in Montana

Healthy Aging

# AGING

- ◇ How do we define aging (older) adults?
  - ◇ A. 75 Plus
  - ◇ B. 65 Plus
  - ◇ C. 50 Plus
  - ◇ D. 40 Plus

What is Gerontology?

# How old is Montana?

- ◇ Montana is the oldest state in the west (Avg 39.8)
- ◇ Rural counties are older yet, average age is over 53 in several counties and getting older.
- ◇ What does this tell us???????

Source: Eric Deitrich (2019) MTFP & US Census Data

What  
percentage of  
the  
population is  
over the age of  
50 in  
Montana?

- ◇ A. 168,000 (15%)
- ◇ B. 183,100 (17%)
- ◇ C. 351,100 (33%)
- ◇ D. 459,000 (42%)

# Montana's Aging Population

[https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/sltc/  
documents/AgingReports/  
Map65\\_2000-2030.pdf](https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/sltc/documents/AgingReports/Map65_2000-2030.pdf)



# What happens when we age?

What is our bodies response to Aging?

Inflammation becomes more predominant as our bodies get older or worn out.

Wear and Tear Theory of Aging – progressive damage to our bodies, once they wear out they do not function properly (Stibich, 2020).

What is Inflammation?

A process by which your body's white blood cells and the things they make protect you from infection from outside invaders. When your body is not fighting disease or illness, it will trigger pain in areas of weakness (arthritis) (Mayo Clinic, 2020)

# Types of Inflammation

1. Acute inflammation is short lived (lasts hours or days)  
examples: painful conditions of the joint and musculoskeletal system, minor arthritis
2. Chronic inflammation is longer lasting (lasts months or years)  
examples: rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, gouty arthritis
3. Conditions linked to chronic inflammation  
examples: cancer, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, Alzheimer's disease

Some researchers believe that inflammation is the leading cause of death

Source: Mayo Clinic & National Institutes of Health, 2019



Why would  
researchers be  
inclined to  
state that  
inflammation  
is the leading  
cause of death?

- ◇ Inflammation causes pain
  - ◇ Decreased desire to move
  - ◇ Decreased movement leads to weight gain
  - ◇ Weight gain leads to higher risk of (diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, illness)
  - ◇ Increase in disease is linked to death.



How do we reduce  
Inflammation?

# Prescription Medications & Physical Therapy

- ◇ Muscle relaxants, anti-inflammatory medications, pain reduction medications (opioids)
- ◇ Prescribed physical therapy, massage, or chiropractic sessions (not easy as we age)

What is the  
average  
number of  
medications  
that people  
over the age of  
50 take?

- ◇ A. 3 per day
- ◇ B. 4 per day
- ◇ C. 5 per day
- ◇ D. 6 per day

# Opioid Prescription Use

- ◇ In 2017, 26.8% of people in the U.S. in the older age group of 65 + were prescribed at least 1 opioid for chronic pain (CDC, 2020)
- ◇ In Montana (2018) Providers wrote 54 opioid prescriptions for every 100 Persons. US avg is 51.4 % (MT DPHHS, 2016).
- ◇ Between 2000 and 2015, 693 deaths were attributed to prescription opioid poisoning (MT DPHHS, 2016).
- ◇ Death Rates are highest for persons 25-54 years of age (MT DPHHS, 2016).

# How can we interpret the average death rate?

Conclusions about opioids and older adults.

1. The same data showed that in death, opioids were combined with other drugs.
2. Aging adults take on average more than 2 prescription drug at a time.
3. Younger people get the drugs from somewhere (prescription or from a family member)
4. Therefore we need training (awareness) on how to handle these circumstances

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# The Bright Side

*You are here for training*

*Keeping older adults safe*

*Caregiver wellness*

*Drug interactions*

*Home Safety*