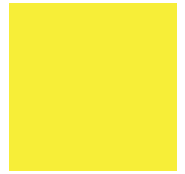




# Recommendations for quality aging.

By Gustavo Olvera Girón





# Agradecimientos:

A mi esposa, mis padres y mi hermano.

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IMPRESO EN MÉXICO

*“The secret of a good old age  
is simply a honored pact  
with solitude”.*

**GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ**

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# INTRODUCTION

This publication is a basic guide for consultation and reference of recommendations and advice for the care and attention of senior adults. It is based on the experience that over the eight years course I have acquired in the management of homecare services and healthcare for people over 65.

## e-book structure

**This e-book is grouped into ten sections.** In each of them, relevant topics related to companionship, health and diet for the elderly are briefly developed. In addition, at the end of each section, very useful recommendations for general homecare are listed. In the appendices at the end of the book you will find additional basic and specific information.

# 1. Comfort

It is defined as all those material conditions that provide well-being or comfort. Comfort can be obtained through a physical object-furniture, pillows, etc.-or an environmental or abstract circumstance-safety, appropriate temperature, silence, lighting. You can also experience through rest, pleasure, absence of obligations and all those situations that help people relax, how to wear comfortable clothes, take a vacation and read a book.



## Recommendations

- Ensure that the seniors is comfortable at all times.
- Avoid the use of too tight or too loose garments.
- Ensure that the seniors uses layers of clothing, since it will favor better ventilation and thermal sensation for the body.
- Keep the room temperature between 22 ° to 24 ° C (71 to 75 F). In addition, it must have adequate ventilation and lighting.





## 2. Diet and hydration

Many times, when we hear about "diet" we associate this term with strict levels of nutritional discipline that, at times, seem difficult to carry out. Nevertheless, diet does not refer to making sacrifices, but to implementing a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

The diet consists of those foods that we eat every day, so we must aim for a balanced diet, nutritious, complete and varied and that fits the needs of the elderly. In addition, it is very important that it goes hand in hand with good hydration.



### Recommendations

To maintain a proper hydration diet, I suggest a very simple formula for water intake - juices, teas, coffee and natural water - based on the person's weight in kilograms, multiplying by a factor of 0.0325, and the result is an approximate in liters that should be consumed daily. For example, a person of 65 kg should ingest 2.11 liters of water during the day, which is equivalent to about six glasses of 355 milliliters.

- Increase the intake of fresh vegetables and low sugar fruits and decrease the consumption of red meats and deep fried foods during the meal.
- Avoid refined sugars and spicy foods with a high level of sodium.
- Avoid processed or zero calories foods.
- Perform at least 30 minutes of physical exercise daily or, whenever appropriate, passive therapies.
- Perform cognitive stimulation exercises.
- Avoid the consumption of alcohol and tobacco.

### 3. Communication and overwatch

Communication refers to the spoken, visual, gestural, corporal and attitudinal language that people use to convey a message, an idea, a request or an order. Communication is the ideal channel for people to understand feelings, moods and health at a given time.

We understand overwatch or surveillance, as whom "is in charge of one"; to the responsibility that one has over such person; to monitoring and observing behaviors, symptoms, moods; as well as the registry of indicators related to the health of an individual.



### Recommendations

Call and speak frequently to seniors to know they are well.

Avoid falls. One in every three seniors suffers at least one fall per year. (See Appendix A: Recommendations for making the house safer).

Help in organizing their income and expenses, and invite them to participate and prioritize their finances.

Avoid hiding bad news. In case of a present difficult situation, it is important to inform them about what is happening, trying, as much as possible, to keep them calm.

Respect the authority of the elderly. It is necessary to negotiate and agree with him what is most convenient.

Allowing them to make their own decisions, considering that they can change their mind at any moment. Reaching to an agreement between the parties will lead to a better understanding.

Respect their usual and customary practices, as long as their health and wellbeing are not put at risk.

Keep in mind that seniors, occasionally, will seek to be the protagonists in events and conversations. We must be tolerant, because it is fundamental in relationships.

Have a set of additional keys with a relative, friend or neighbor.

Advise the elderly to notify a relative or guardian when leaving home, specifying where they will go and how long they will be absent.

Have at hand, in a visible and preferably easy dialing, emergency telephone numbers.

Consider installing an internal wireless doorbell to request assistance.

If a closed-circuit video system is installed in the home of the seniors, it must be ensured that someone in the family can have remote access to view the cameras if necessary.



## 4. Coexistence and companionship

Coexistence is the peaceful and harmonious getting along between people in the same space. It is the indispensable interaction of all people for wellbeing and health.

The term companionship refers to "being" with the person, to ensure the welfare and the act of keeping company and provide support at every moment that the person so requires; that is, to be there at the right and timely moment".



### Recommendations

Treat seniorss always with patience, attention and affection.

Avoid risky environments at all times. Make their safety a priority.

Make sure that the canes, crutches or walkers that they use for their mobility are in prime conditions. If necessary, replace worn parts or invest in new equipment.

Help and facilitate the execution of daily tasks.

Have suppliers of goods, food, medicines, laundry and cleaning services that have home delivery and service guarantee. Look for online errands services.

Try to keep seniorss in contact with their loved ones and friends.

Take them on vacation at least a couple of days every six months.

Avoid, as much as possible, abrupt changes in their lifestyle. If these are imminent, allow them to happen and help them adapt to them gradually.

Help at all times to rest, especially if they say feeling fatigued.

If there are plans to travel with seniors or they have plans to travel, we must follow a series of recommendations that will make a more pleasant trip. (See Appendix B: Recommendations when leaving on a trip).

Reading the news, a book or magazine articles for them, in addition to encouraging coexistence, will help them to keep busy at least during a day space.

Making them laugh helps their mood and mental state.

Preventing them from staying up or going to sleep after ten o'clock at night.



# 5. Health care

The term "health" is understood as the physical, psychological, social and spiritual state in which a person finds himself throughout the day and which accumulates over the years. The ideal state of health is one that is at a perfect level of equilibrium, well balanced in all respects and with the ability not to be affected by factors that may compromise that balance.

Health has to do with diet and hydration, physical activity, emotional state, level of stress, the productive and economic stage of the person, their social interaction, with diseases, habits, and so on.

The care is all those "take care" tasks that are carried out so that a patient gets comfort, vigilance, quality in health, emotional support, communication and companionship.



## **Basic recommendations for health care and monitoring of medical aspects**

Check that there are no wounds in the person's body. If there were, no matter how small they are, on arms, legs, feet and hands, ask for medical help.

During hot season, apply sunscreen and make them wear a hat when going outside.

Avoid self-medication. An effective way to organize prescribed medications is to sort them by day of the week and schedule by using pill boxes. Currently, there are several applications for mobile phones that manage the intake of medicines, glucose measurements and oxygen saturation, etc.

It is very important to have a legible copy of the medication and the doctor's phone at hand.

Try to have elders to take small naps throughout the day, because with age the sleep cycles are shortened.

Maintaining the updated medical agenda is of the utmost importance, by so doing it will be easier to follow up on all medical appointments and visits to the studies and laboratories, as well as to the therapies that have been assigned to them. If for some reason they could not attend, they must be reprogrammed as soon as possible.





## Preventing and avoiding falls

Place railings on stairs and steps.

Place anti-slip tape on steps to avoid accidents.

Install automatic sensor lights and lamps with motion sensor.

Install bars and handles in showers and bathrooms.

Secure all loose wires and extension cords on the floor.

Fix rugs and carpets corners or remove them permanently.

Keep the areas of the house well lit.

In case any senior suffers an accident, call and ask 911 for help. If possible, put the person in a safe and comfortable place. In case of an injury, request the support of a doctor or hospital for a professional checkup.







## Preventing and avoiding poisoning and burns

Avoid smoking in enclosed spaces, rooms and carpeted areas.

Keep the house well ventilated.

Review gas and electric systems periodically.

Be aware of what is put on the stove or electric grill.

Avoid filling up pots and wells that may spill with hot liquids.

Make sure you have not left candles, lamps and other electrical appliances on.

Place visible labels on containers of dangerous liquids with the product name.



# 6. How to choose a good homecare service provider

Before hiring a home care service for seniors, it is necessary to keep in mind certain requirements, such as some type of permit or certificate issued by authorities that guarantee the seriousness of the service provider.



## Recommendations

### Must ask questions:

1. What kind of services do they provide? Assisted living? Nursing? Do they cook food and do errands? Do they drive vehicles? Do they perform housekeeping, cleaning and laundry?
2. How long have they been in the homecare and assistance business?
3. Can they be hired immediately, or there is a waiting list?
4. When hiring do they carry out a needs assessment questionnaire and prepare a home care plan?
5. Do they have a supervision process?

6. What certifications and preparation does the caretakers or nursing staff working in their organization have?
7. What shifts do they work? Do they have 24/7 availability?
8. Does the agency or organization have records, permits or certifications?
9. Do they have civil liability insurance?
10. What to do if you are not happy or comfortable with the assigned staff?
11. Does the assigned staff count with a bond or insurance?

If the agency or organization you are looking for does not answer adequately each and every question, or the patient and family are not convinced of the services they are to receive, another provider is to be found.

Healthcare services and homecare well performed, not only provide dignity, independence, and maximum comfort to the patient receiving the care; but also help families to keep united and involved with loved ones.

Keep in mind that home assistance is personalized and designed to meet the needs of the patient; hence immediate attention is guaranteed.

Evidence shows that eight hours a day of home care is less expensive than the care services of patients admitted to nursing homes, clinics or hospitals.

Home assistance not only provides a direct relationship, but also facilitates socialization, activities and coexistence. In addition, it avoids patient isolation, promotes healthy eating and constant vigilance; as well as gives peace of mind to family and friends knowing that the patient is not alone.

# 7. Assisted living and residence centers

The questionnaire below and the interpretation of the answers, serve as a guide for deciding which type of assisted living or home center is best appropriate for an elder. There are different public and private entities that offer different types of services: day centers, temporary stay, assisted residences, permanent living, asylums, etc. Some of these take care of healthy and independent adults; others only adults with health problems, and others who are specialized in mental health disorders.



## Recommendations

As mentioned above, these questions will help to better choose the type of house of residence according to the needs of the elderly and the family. The obliged questions have to do with:

- What's our economic budget?
- Where is the residence located?

The best option will be one that adjusts to the economic possibilities and is in a perimeter close to the daily activities of the family, this way it will facilitate the tasks of logistics -transfer, visits, schedules, errands- and will allow the relatives to be close to the elders.

**The following questions will greatly complement the decision:**

1. What is the degree of dependency of the elder adult and his / her state of health?
2. What guarantees does the residence offer?
3. Has the residence website been consulted and have the comments or recommendations of other users been read?
4. What kind of equipment does it have? Is the place adapted to fit the needs of the elderly?
5. How are the facilities health and sanitary conditions?
6. What team of professionals and specialists does the residence count with to serve the users?
7. What are the admission policies? What happens if the health status of a resident changes?
8. Do they have complementary services?



## 8. How to choose the right equipment and medical accessories for home care

Occasionally, for better care and attention of the elderly, it will be necessary to have certain medical equipment at home, such as hospital beds, wheelchairs, oxygen equipment, shower chairs, among others. If this is the case, there are different options, such as renting, borrowing, or buying it.

Currently, there is a wide variety of equipment available in the market, with different features and costs. Before renting or buying it, one must consider the medical prescriptions, since each patient has different needs. (See Appendix C: Main characteristics of the most common equipment for the care of patients at home).

In most cases it will not be necessary to make major repairs or adjustments at home; adequate space for the installation of the equipment is more than enough.

## Recommendations

- Find equipment that guarantees the safety of the patient's health.
- Provides comfort and well-being.
- Adapts easily to patient's needs.
- Ensures that the personnel taking care of the patient, have the skills and knowledge to properly use the equipment.

In any of the cases, the supplier of the medical equipment must be certified, should be able to provide guarantees and training on the correct handling and use of the equipment.



# 9. Appendices



## Appendix A: Recommendations for making the house safer

### 1. Identify the risky zones at home:

- a. stairs;
- b. kitchen;
- c. shower or bathroom;
- d. garden, patio, and
- e. poorly lit places.

### 2. Identify the elements of risk at home:

- a. mats in living rooms and candles in rooms;
- b. electrical cables and extensions;
- c. standing lamps;
- d. heaters and fireplaces;
- e. electric blankets, and
- f. slippery floors.

### 3. The most common accidents are:

- a. stumbles;
- b. slips;
- c. falls;
- d. Burns;
- e. light blows;
- f. poisoning, and
- g. run over.

### 4. Accidents cause:

- a. health affectation;
- b. decrease in life quality;
- c. serious injuries;
- d. temporary or permanent disability, and
- e. death.

Once the risk assesment is concluded, proceed to fix it or eliminate tha risk.





## Appendix B: Recommendations when leaving on a trip

1. Help the elderly on planning and organizing their trip.
2. Take advantage of discounts applicable to airlines, transportation and hotels for the elderly.
3. Check websites for hotels, airlines, trains, buses and choose those that have what is necessary for the comfort and safety of the +65 traveler.
4. Ensure that a pharmacy, clinic or hospital is available for any eventuality in the travel destination.
5. Do not forget to bring along all medications and a contact card in case of emergency, as well as always carry an ID.
6. When traveling, seniors should always wear comfortable clothes and shoes, plus a hat or cap, sunscreen and have access to a bottle of water.
7. Have a copy of the travel itinerary and contact telephone numbers at hand of the destinations and hotels where they will be staying.



## Appendix C: Main characteristics of the most common equipment for the care of patients at home.

Equipment Name	General characteristics	Additional accessories	Suggested for patients with
<b>Hospital bed</b>	Single bed, multi-position, adjustable height, adjustable backrest, electric motors, remote control, safety rails. Load capacity 100 kg.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sectioned base mattress at least 10 cm thick.</li><li>• Air mattress (alternatate pressure mattress).</li><li>• Waterproof mattress covers.</li><li>• Food table.</li><li>• Bed support table.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hip fracture.</li><li>• Advanced oncology.</li><li>• Colostomy or ileostomy.</li><li>• Column injuries.</li><li>• Prostrated or semi prostrated by stroke.</li><li>• EMS o ELA.</li></ul>
<b>Wheelchair</b>	Wheelchair for adult, 24" rear wheels rubber, with folding footrest, foldable, wheel brakes, vnyil or canvas seat and back. Load capacity 100 kg.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removable leg rest.</li><li>• Sponge cushion or mini spheres for seating.</li><li>• Transfer wheelchair with 150 mm wheels.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fracture of foot, ankle, knee, leg.</li><li>• Oncological.</li><li>• Difficulty to walk.</li><li>• Respiratory, cardiac or renal impairment.</li><li>• EMS or ALS.</li></ul>

Equipment Name	General characteristics	Additional accessories	Suggested for patients with
<b>Medical oxygen equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxygen concentrator with a capacity of up to 5 liters per minute.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nasal tips.</li> <li>• Oxygen mask.</li> <li>• Extension of 7 m for nasal tips.</li> <li>• Humidifier cup</li> <li>• Portable oxygen tank of 0000.</li> <li>• Oxygen cylinder support with a capacity of 0000.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respiratory, cardiac or renal impairment.</li> <li>• EMS or ALS.</li> <li>• COPD.</li> <li>• Pneumonia</li> </ul>
<b>Plastic chair or bench for the shower</b>	<p>Plastic shower chair, in aluminum, with rubber pads on legs, backrest, removable arm-rests, adjustable height.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shower rails.</li> <li>• "Telephone type" shower set.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced oncology and oncology.</li> <li>• Colostomy or ileostomy.</li> <li>• Column injuries.</li> <li>• Foot, ankle, knee, leg fracture.</li> <li>• Walking difficulties.</li> <li>• Disabled patient.</li> <li>• Respiratory, cardiac or renal impairment.</li> <li>• EMS or ALS.</li> </ul>

Equipment Name	General characteristics	Additional accessories	Suggested for patients with
<b>WC chair with wheels</b>	WC type chair with removable bowl, brakes on wheels, washable, with bucket for discharges, back-rest, armrest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waterproof.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty to walk.</li> <li>• EMS or ALS.</li> <li>• Disabled patient.</li> </ul>
<b>Rails for WC</b>	Screw rails for WC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Height increase for WC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fracture of foot, ankle, knee, leg.</li> <li>• Oncological.</li> <li>• Difficulty to walk.</li> <li>• Respiratory, cardiac or renal failure.</li> </ul>
<b>Walker</b>	Foldable walker in aluminum, with adjustable height, safety bolts, padded cuffs, lightweight, quick release foldable buttons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walker with front wheels.</li> <li>• Walker with resting seat and wheels on all four legs.</li> <li>• Basket or bag for walker.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty to walk.</li> <li>• Respiratory, cardiac or renal impairment.</li> <li>• Disabled patient.</li> </ul>
<b>Intravenous holder tripod</b>	Metallic tripod with adjustable height intravenous, with wheels.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for intravenous support or fluid supply through probes.</li> </ul>

### **Other equipment available in the market:**

- Reclining and electric reclining armchair.
- Aspirator of phlegm and secretions with aspiration cannula 16 or 18 Fr.
- Nebulizers with masks for adults.
- Cranes and harnesses for patient mobilization.
- Infusion pumps.
- Mattresses and cushions to prevent bedsores, ulcers and sores.

### **Minor equipment for monitoring vital signs:**

- Thermometers
- Digital blood pressure monitors (automatic or semi-automatic).
- Oximeters.

### **Auxiliary equipment for walking:**

- Adjustable height cane.
- Quad leg walking stick.
- Adjustable height aluminum crutches.

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*Recommendations*  
for **quality aging.**

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# Patrocinadores



[enfermerasqro.com](http://enfermerasqro.com)



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