

# AGING in Arizona

## **The older population of Arizona is growing**

Arizona is among the top five states nationally for the pace of aging. In 2030, nearly 1 in 5 Arizonans will be 65 years old or older.<sup>1</sup>



## **AZ Fast Fact**

*In 2008, 71% of Arizonans 65 years old or older reported having at least one chronic condition. Of the same group, 20% reported having three or more chronic diseases.<sup>2</sup>*

### **Chronic Conditions**

In 2008, 14% of older adult Arizonans reported having heart disease, 13% have had a heart attack, 7% reported ever having a stroke, and 54% have high blood pressure.<sup>3</sup>

Among people 65 years old or older

in Arizona, 19% have diabetes and 56% have some form of arthritis.<sup>3</sup>

In 2007, 17% of people 65 years old or older reported that they had osteoporosis.<sup>4</sup> In 2006, 14% of Arizonans 65 years old or older reported having fallen in the past year and of those, 37% reported having been injured as a result of a fall.<sup>3</sup>

In 2006, the most common cancer diagnoses among Arizonans 65 years old or older are prostate cancer (2579 cases), lung cancer (2412 cases), colorectal cancer (1485 cases), and breast cancer (1472 cases).<sup>4</sup>

An estimated 13% of Arizonans 65 years old or older have Alzheimer's disease.<sup>5</sup>

Of those 65 years old or older, 13% report ever having asthma, slightly higher than the US average where only 11% of those 65 years old or older have ever been told they have asthma.<sup>3</sup>

### **Demographics**

1 in 4 households in Arizona includes a resident who is 65 years old or older.<sup>1</sup>

43% of the population 65 years old or older would live below the poverty line if they did not receive Social Security. More than 1 in 4 of all Arizonans rely on Social Security as their only source of income. 9% of those 65 years old or older in Arizona live in poverty.<sup>6</sup>

2 out of 3 US adults aged 60 and older have low literacy skills. Those with low health literacy and chronic diseases have less knowledge of their disease and its treatment and fewer self-management skills.<sup>7</sup>

### **Death Rates**

The 5 leading causes of death among people 65 years and older in Arizona are heart disease, cancer, lung disease, Alzheimer's, and stroke.<sup>8</sup>

### **Risk Behaviors**

Nearly 2 out of 3 Arizonans 65 years old or older is overweight or obese.<sup>3</sup>

Although 16% of Arizonans aged 55 to 64 years old reported that they were smokers, only 7% of those age 65 years old or older smoke.<sup>3</sup>

Nearly 1 in 20 Arizonans 65 years old or older are heavy drinkers, which includes men who have more than two drinks per day and women who have more than one drink per day.

5% of older adults in Arizona report that they binge drink, including men who have five or more drinks on one occasion and women who have four or more drinks on one occasion.<sup>3</sup>

### **Quality of Life**

In 2008, 25% of Arizonans 65 years old or older reported poor or fair health. 18% reported poor physical health, 8% reported that their mental health was not good, and 10% said they rarely or never received the social support that they need.<sup>3</sup>

Among people 65 years or older in Arizona, 35% reported limitations in their activity due to physical, mental, or emotional problems.<sup>3</sup>

Of those 65 years old or older, 22% reported needing the use of special equipment such as a cane, wheelchair, or special bed.<sup>3</sup>

In 2008, more than 300,000 people over age 65 reported having a disability. 22% reported difficulty walking or climbing stairs; 15% reported difficulty doing errands such as shopping or visiting a doctor's office; 8% reported difficulty dressing or bathing.<sup>3</sup>

Of people 65 years old or older in Arizona, 17% reported they were deaf or had serious difficulty hearing; 8% reported being blind or having serious difficulty seeing even with glasses; 9% reported having serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.<sup>3</sup>

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## Primary Prevention

The majority of older adults in Arizona reported in 2009 that they do not get the recommended levels of physical activity, including 54% who are not moderately physically active at least 30 minutes 5 days per week or vigorously active for at least 20 minutes 3 days per week.<sup>3</sup>

Of those 65 years old or older in Arizona, 73% do not eat the recommended 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.<sup>3</sup>

Older adults with chronic disease are at high risk for complications and death as a result of influenza and pneumonia. In 2008, 28% of Arizonans 65 years old or older reported they had not had an influenza vaccine during the past year and 29% had never received a pneumonia vaccination.<sup>3</sup>

Almost 1 in 5 women 65 years or older in Arizona had not had a mammogram to screen for breast cancer in the past 2 years and had not had a pap test for cervical cancer screening within the past 3 years.<sup>3</sup>

Among men in Arizona 65 years old or older, 14% had not had a Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) test, the test to detect prostate cancer, within the past 2 years.<sup>3</sup>

In 2008, 25% of men and women 65 years or older in Arizona reported never having had a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy to screen for colon cancer. 70% had not had a blood stool test to screen for colorectal cancer in the past 2 years.<sup>3</sup>

In 2007, 93% of older adult Arizonans reported that they had their cholesterol checked in the past five years, and 5% had never had their cholesterol checked.<sup>3</sup>

## Health Care Utilization and Costs

With Medicare coverage for most older adults in Arizona, close to all people 65 years old or older report they have health insurance coverage. However, only 65% of adults 65 or older had a routine checkup in the past year.<sup>9</sup>

In 2008, there were 236,000 hospitalizations of those 65 years old or older in Arizona. While this age group makes up only 13% of the current Arizona population, they comprise one third of all hospitalizations.<sup>10</sup>

It is predicted that by 2023, Arizona will face \$99 billion in chronic disease costs annually, \$25.7 billion of which could be avoided through lifestyle changes, better disease management, greater use of screening tests and education.<sup>11</sup>

The cost of providing health care for an older adult is 3 to 5 times higher than the cost for someone younger than age 65.<sup>12</sup>

### Sources:

1. US Census Bureau. US Population Projections.
2. Arizona Health Survey, 2008.
3. CDC. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2006-2009.
4. Arizona Cancer Registry, 2006.
5. Alzheimer's Association. Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures, 2010.
6. US Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2006.
7. National Patient Safety Foundation. Partnership for Clear Communication.
8. Arizona Department of Health Services. Arizona Health and Vital Statistics, 2008.
9. Arizona Department of Health Services. Arizona Health and Vital Statistics, 2007.
10. Arizona Department of Health Services. Hospital Discharge Database, 2008.
11. St. Luke's Health Initiatives. Arizona Health Futures, 2009.
12. Arizona Department of Health Services. Report on Aging in Arizona, 2010.

## Further information and resources

Arizona Department of Health Services  
Arizona Living Well Program

**azlivingwell.com**

A website providing information on evidence based health promotion programs for physical activity and self management of chronic conditions available in Arizona.

Arizona Living Well Institute

**azlivingwellinstitute.org**

The Institute provides statewide information on effective and efficient methods of promoting and implementing evidence-based health promotion programs throughout the state, such as the Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management program.

Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Aging and Adult Services

**azdes.gov**

**enter in Search: division of aging**

Information on the services available to help older adults achieve or maintain their independence.

Arizona Health Matters

**arizonahealthmatters.org**

An interactive website that provides information about community health, including health indicators by county and zip code.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Healthy Aging Program

**cdc.gov/aging**

An online source for credible health information, including basic information about diseases, control, prevention, and research for an aging population.

National Council on Aging

**ncoa.org**

Web-based information and resources on evidence based health programming, community support organizations, advocacy and secure retirement to support and promote a long, healthy life.