

Aging IQ Answers:

1. **False.** Even among those who live to be 80 or older, only 20-25 percent develops Alzheimer's disease or some other incurable form of brain disease. "Senility" is a meaningless term, which should be discarded.
2. **False.** The American family is still the number one caretaker of older Americans. Older people live close to their children and see them often; many live with their spouses. In all, 8 out of 10 men and 6 out of 10 women live in family settings.
3. **True.** Depression, loss of self-esteem, loneliness, and anxiety can become more common as older people face retirement, the deaths of relatives and friends, and other such crises--often at the same time. Fortunately, depression is treatable.
4. **True.** Today, 12 percent of the U.S. population is 65 or older. By the year 2030, one in five people will be over 65 years of age.
5. **True.** Only 5 percent of the older population lives in nursing homes; the rest are basically healthy and self-sufficient.
6. **False.** Alzheimer's disease or other conditions, which cause incurable damage to the brain, can cause mental confusion and serious forgetfulness in old age but some 100 other problems can cause the same symptoms. A minor head injury, a high fever, poor nutrition, adverse drug reactions and depression can all be treated and the confusion will be cured.
7. **False.** Intelligence per se does not decline without reason. Most people maintain their intellect or improve, as they grow older.
8. **False.** Most older people can lead an active, satisfying sex life.
9. **False.** Stopping smoking at any age not only reduces the risk of cancer and heart disease, it also leads to healthier lungs.
10. **False.** Many older people enjoy--and benefit from--exercises such as walking, swimming, and bicycle riding. Exercise at any age can help strengthen the heart and lungs, and lower blood pressure. See your physician before beginning a new exercise program.
11. **False.** Although certain requirements, such as that for "sunshine" vitamin D, may increase slightly with age, older people need the same amounts of most vitamins and minerals as younger people. Older people in particular should eat nutritious food and cut down on sweets, salty snack foods, high-calorie drinks, and alcohol.
12. **False.** Older people require fewer calories, but adequate intake of calcium for strong bones can become more important as you grow older. This is particularly true for women, whose risk of osteoporosis increases after menopause. Milk and cheese are rich in calcium as are cooked dried beans, collards, and broccoli. Some people need calcium supplements as well.
13. **True.** The body's thermostat tends to function less efficiently with age and the older person's body may be less able to adapt to heat or cold.
14. **True.** Falls are the most common cause of injuries among the elderly. Good safety habits, including proper lighting, nonskid carpets, and keeping living areas free of obstacles, can help prevent serious accidents.
15. **False.** Women tend to outlive men by an average of 8 years. There are 150 women for every 100 men over age 65, and nearly 250 women for every 100 men over 85.
16. **True.** Fewer men and women are dying of stroke or heart disease.
17. **True.** The elderly consume 25 percent of all medications and, as a result, have many more problems with adverse drug reactions.
18. **True.** Medical quackery is a \$10 billion business in the United States. People of all ages are commonly duped into "quick cures" for aging, arthritis, and cancer.
19. **False.** Personality doesn't change with age. Therefore, all old people can't be described as rigid and cantankerous. You are what you are for as long as you live. But you can change what you do to help yourself to good health.
20. **False.** Although changes in vision become more common with age, any change in vision, regardless of age, is related to a specific disease. If you are having problems with your vision, see your doctor.

Source: LIFELONG LEARNING FOR AN AGING SOCIETY - AN INFORMATION PAPER. Prepared for use by the Special Committee on Aging, United States Senate. Serial No.102. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC: 1991. Last updated January 28, 2002.