



The 5Ms of Geriatrics

Even though people all over the world are living longer and healthier lives, our health can change over time because of the different conditions and concerns we may face. Many of us, especially as we reach our mid-70s and beyond, may develop different combinations of diseases, health conditions, and disabilities. Our health needs become more complex as we get older, and what matters most to us may vary also.

Geriatrics healthcare professionals, like geriatricians and many others who have advanced training in the care of older adults, can play an essential role in diagnosing and managing these conditions and health needs based on what matters to each person. Geriatrics providers focus on 5 key areas, known as the Geriatrics 5Ms*. The “Ms” stand for the targets that are important to care for us all as we age.

The Geriatrics 5Ms*

Multicomplexity	Geriatrics healthcare professionals ¹ focus on these 4Ms...	When caring for older adults, all health professionals should consider...
M ulticomplexity describes the whole person, typically an older adult, living with multiple chronic conditions, advanced illness, and/or with complicated biopsychosocial needs.	M ind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mentation ■ Dementia ■ Delirium ■ Depression
	M obility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Amount of mobility; function ■ Impaired gait and balance ■ Fall injury prevention
	M edications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Polypharmacy; deprescribing ■ Optimal prescribing ■ Adverse medication effects and medication burden
	What M atters Most	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Each individual’s own meaningful health outcome goals and care preferences

¹Geriatrics health professionals are pioneers in advanced-illness care for older individuals, with a focus on championing interprofessional teams, eliciting personal care goals, and treating older people as whole persons.

*Adapted by the American Geriatrics Society (AGS) with permission from “The public launch of the Geriatric 5Ms” [on-line] by F. Molnar and available from the Canadian Geriatrics Society (CGS) at <http://canadiangeriatrics.ca/2017/04/update-the-public-launch-of-the-geriatric-5ms/> Accessed July 14, 2020.

The Team Approach

Geriatrics also is known for its team-based approach to caring for older people and working with families and other caregivers. The geriatrics care team may include (but is not limited to) any or all of the following professionals:

- Geriatricians
- Nurses
- Nurse practitioners
- Physician assistants
- Social workers
- Consultant pharmacists
- Nutritionists
- Physical therapists
- Occupational therapists
- Speech and hearing specialists
- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists

These professionals evaluate an older adult's medical, social, emotional, and other needs. The team also helps manage multiple chronic conditions and medications and focuses on health concerns common in older people, such as falls, memory concerns, and incontinence (inability to hold urine or feces).

Geriatrics team duties include:

- Evaluating a person's social supports and living situation
- Considering the person's ability to perform daily activities such as bathing, dressing, and eating
- Giving special attention to personal preferences and values when it comes to planning our care

When to Consult a Geriatrics Healthcare Professional

Consider consulting a geriatrician or other geriatrics healthcare professional when:

- You or an older person you know has health conditions that cause significant impairment or frailty. Impairment most often occurs when people are over the age of 75. Older adults who benefit most from geriatrics expertise typically have a number of diseases and disabilities, including cognitive (or memory) concerns.
- Family members and friends are under significant stress as caregivers.
- You, an older person you know, or their caregivers have trouble following complex treatments or managing relationships with many healthcare providers for multiple health conditions.

How Can I Find a Geriatrics Healthcare Professional?

You can use our free Find a Geriatrics Healthcare Professional tool (www.healthinaging.org) to get an instant list of healthcare providers in your area who are trained in the special health care needs of older adults. Search by city, state, or zip code or call 800-563-4916 to have a list mailed to you.



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