

Common long-term health conditions of later life



Arthritis

Arthritis means inflammation (usually painful) of the joints, such as knee and hip. There are over 200 types of rheumatic diseases so the ways in which the condition affects people can vary significantly. Further information from [Arthritis Care](#). Pain, stiffness, loss of strength and difficulty moving may be common issues.

Heart disease

'Heart disease' is a term that covers several problems relating to the heart and the circulatory system. Sometimes also called cardiovascular heart disease (CVD), it leads to the narrowing of arteries carrying blood around your body. Further information from [British Heart Foundation](#). Breathlessness, dizziness and strain on the heart in lifting may be common issues.

Respiratory diseases

A common concern for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD), asthma and other respiratory diseases is a narrowing of the airways, which impacts on the ability to breathe and a worry that difficulties in breathing will restrict their ability to carry out ordinary daily tasks. Further information from [Asthma UK](#).

Macular disease

Macular disease is a condition that leads to the loss of the central part of vision. The macula is a small area of the retina at the back of the eye. When the cells in the macula deteriorate, this affects your eyesight in general but to begin with it can affect it in a variety of specific ways. For example objects in front of you change size, or shape, or colour; you can only see parts of pages for reading; it is difficult seeing in bright light or see when moving from a dark to a light room.

With macular disease, over time the central part of vision is lost but the side vision (peripheral vision) remains functional. Further information from the [Macular Society](#) and/or the [RNIB](#).

Stroke

A stroke happens when part of the blood supply to the brain is cut off, and brain cells are either damaged or die. Strokes can lead to temporary or sometimes permanent loss of function, strength and control. Some people find their sight is affected; a stroke can also make some people feel unsteady or confused. Further information from the [Stroke Association](#).