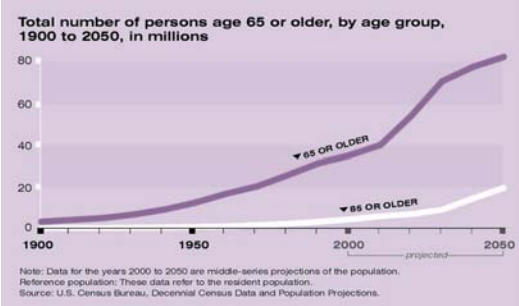
FACT SHEET ON AGING & HEALTH IN AMERICA

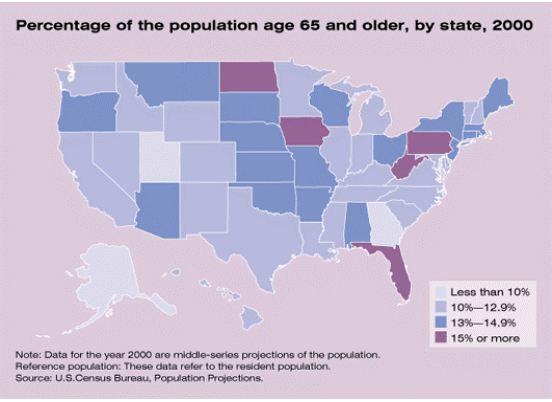
Source of statistical information presented here (unless otherwise noted): **Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics.** ***Older Americans 2000: Key Indicators of Well-Being. Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics,*** **Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. August 2000**. Complete report can be accessed online at **http://www.agingstats.gov**

Number of Older Americans

As defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, older Americans are those over 65 years of age; the oldest old are those over the age of 85. The growth of the population of older Americans has affected every aspect of our society, presenting challenges as well as opportunities to policymakers, families, businesses, and health care providers.

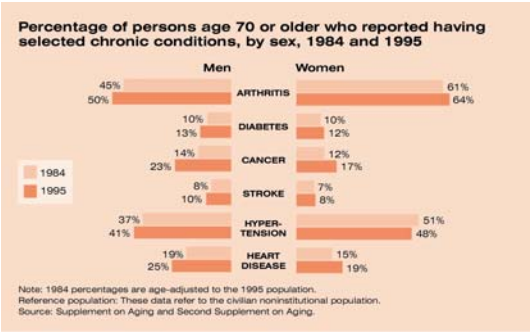


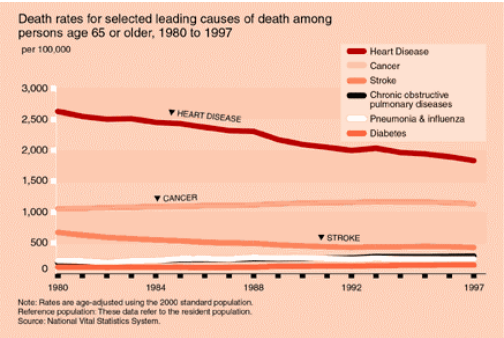
- Average life expectancy in 1900 was 47 years; today's life expectancy is more than 76 years.
- Americans over the age of 65 were 4% of the population in 1900; in 2000, they accounted for nearly 13%;
- In 2011, the "baby boom" generation will begin to turn 65, and by 2030, it is projected that one in five people will be age 65 or older. The size of the older population is projected to double over the next 30 years, growing to 70 million by 2030.
- Florida, Pennsylvania, Iowa, West Virginia, and North Dakota have the highest proportion of older Americans—approximately 15% or more.



Chronic Health Conditions

Many older Americans have one or more chronic health conditions—such as arthritis, diabetes, and heart disease. These conditions can become a significant health and financial burden to not only those persons who have them, but also their families and the nation's health care system. Chronic health conditions often negatively affect quality of life, contributing to declines in functioning and the inability to remain in the community.

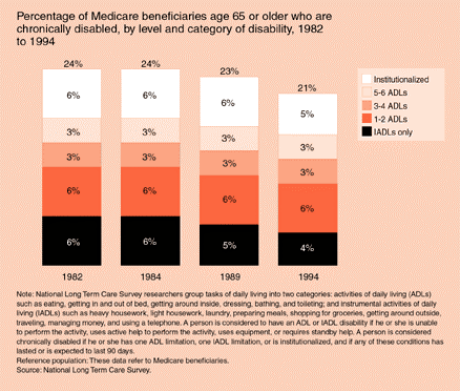


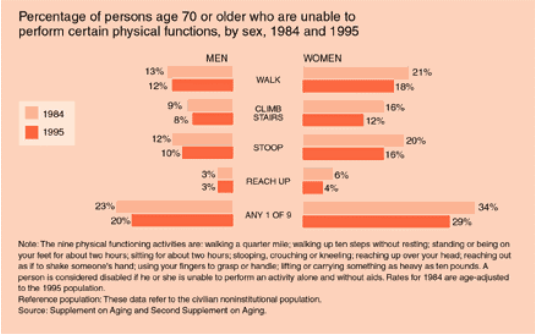


- As of 1995, chronic health conditions among older Americans over 70
  - Arthritis–49%
  - Hypertension–40%
  - Heart disease–31%
  - Cancer–28%
- Five of the six leading causes of death among older Americans are chronic diseases: 1) Heart disease, 2) Cancer, 3) Stroke, 4) Chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, 5) pneumonia and influenza, 6) Alzheimer's Disease. Among persons age 85 or older, heart disease was responsible for 40 percent of all deaths.

Disability

Functioning in later years may be diminished if illness, chronic disease, or injury limits physical and/or mental abilities. Changes in disability rates have important implications for work and retirement policies, health and long-term care needs, and the social well-being of the older population. Different indicators can be used to monitor disability including limitations in Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs), and measures of physical, cognitive, and social functioning.





- Although proportion of Americans age 65 or older with a chronic disability declined from 24 percent in 1982 to 21 percent in 1994, the number of older Americans with chronic disabilities increased by about 600,000 from 6.4 million in 1982 to 7 million in 1994.
- Between 1984 and 1995, older Americans reported improvements in physical functioning.
- In 1995, older black persons were more likely than older white persons to be unable to perform at least one of nine physical activities (33 percent and 25 percent, respectively).