

Free guide from AGS, AARP helps older Chinese Americans understand health

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On the eve of National Minority Health Month, which helps raise awareness for disparities in health and care among minorities in the U.S., a new resource is available to help one such group, older Chinese Americans, better understand and drive their own well-being. Developed by the American Geriatrics Society (AGS) with support from AARP, "Chinese American Older Adults: A Guide to Managing Your Health" is a free resource that highlights the most common health concerns in the Chinese American older adult community and ways that they can talk to healthcare providers about addressing them proactively.

"Identifying [health](#) issues prevalent to the Chinese American community and informing and educating [healthcare providers](#) about them is critical to helping older people live healthier lives. We need to understand the unique needs of minority groups such as Chinese Americans to ensure their [health concerns](#) are being recognized and met," said Daphne Kwok, AARP Vice President of Multicultural Markets and Engagement, Asian American and Pacific Islander Audience. "AARP provides and funds research and tools—like this guide—that help individuals, healthcare providers, and organizations reduce gaps in knowledge about underserved communities."

As the guide explains, common health concerns for older Chinese Americans include hepatitis B infections, cancer (especially liver, head, and neck), depression, tuberculosis (TB), cardiovascular disease, diabetes, genetic diseases (including thalassemia and glucose-6-dehydrogenase deficiency), and alcoholism. Many of these

conditions require not only expert care but also sensitivity to cultural norms and considerations that can help or hinder well-being depending on how they are addressed.

"We know that people from different backgrounds can have different health risks," said Nancy Lundebjerg, AGS CEO. "With AARP's support, guides like this will help ensure that older Americans and their healthcare providers can engage in meaningful, actionable, and culturally sensitive conversations about healthcare needs, expectations, and decisions."

Based on expert-authored guidance from clinicians who care for older Chinese Americans, the AGS guide offers simple, practical recommendations addressing cultural issues and opportunities head-on. These include suggestions for talking to healthcare providers about sensitive subjects like:

- Prescription medications. Bringing all medicines to wellness visits is an important way to discuss potential side effects or difficulties following directions, affording treatment, or simply filling prescriptions.
- Traditional medicines and remedies. These options can reflect important aspects of cultural identity, but they may interact poorly with certain pharmaceuticals and can be adjusted to suit personal preferences and needs.
- Empowering family members and friends to make healthcare decisions. This can be especially important when working to convey health wishes and expectations before a problem arises.
- Completing an advance directive, a legal document that helps to outline clear expectations for end-of-life care.
- Speaking with someone about fears of mistreatment or abuse—physically, financially, and emotionally.

"Chinese American Older Adults: A Guide to Managing Your Health" is available for free download in English and Chinese at [AARP.org/AAPI](https://www.aarp.org/aapi) or [HealthinAging.org](https://www.healthinaging.org).

Provided by American Geriatrics Society

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