### TRUE FALSE

1. Everyone becomes “senile” sooner or later if he or she lives long enough. **(False)**
2. American families have by and large abandoned their older members. **(False)**
3. Depression is a serious problem for older people. **(True)**
4. The numbers of older people are growing. **(True)**
5. The vast majority of older people are self-sufficient. **(False)**
6. Mental confusion is an inevitable, incurable consequence of old age. **(False)**
7. Intelligence declines with age. **(False)**
8. Sexual urges and activity normally cease around age 55 to 60. **(False)**
9. If a person has been smoking for 30 or 40 years, it does no good to quit. **(False)**
10. Older people should stop exercising and rest. **(False)**
11. As you grow older, you need more calories, but fewer vitamins and minerals, to stay healthy. **(False)**
12. Only children need to be concerned about calcium for strong bones and teeth. **(False)**
13. Extremes of heat and cold can be particularly dangerous to older people. **(True)**
14. Many older people are hurt in accidents that could have been prevented. **(True)**
15. More men than women survive to old age. **(True)**
16. Deaths from stroke and heart disease are declining. **(True)**
17. Older people on the average take more medications than younger people. **(True)**
18. Snake oil salespeople are as common today as they were on the frontier. **(False)**
19. Personality changes with age, just like hair color and skin texture. **(False)**
20. Sight changes with age. **(True)**

### ANSWERS

1. False. Even among those who live to be 80 or older, only 20 percent to 25 percent develop Alzheimer’s disease or some other incurable form of brain disease. “Senility” is a meaningless term that should be discarded.
2. False. The American family is still the number one caretaker of older Americans. Most 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, 12.4 percent of the U.S. population are 65 or older. By the year 2030, 20 percent of the population will be over 65 years of age. The fastest growing group are those over age 85.
5. True. Only 6 percent of people over age 65 live in nursing homes; the rest are basically healthy and self-sufficient.
6. False. Mental confusion and serious forgetfulness in old age can be caused by Alzheimer’s disease or other conditions that cause incurable damage to the brain, 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 but also leads to healthier lungs.
10. False. Many older people enjoy—and benefit from—exercises such as walking, swimming, bicycle riding, and strength training. Exercise at any age can help to strengthen the heart and lungs and lower blood pressure. See your physician before beginning a new exercise program.
11. False. Older people need fewer calories (due to lower basal metabolic rates) but the same amounts of most vitamins and minerals as younger people. Some authorities recommend higher intakes of certain nutrients (calcium, vitamin D, antioxidants, B vitamins) for older adults.
12. False. Adequate intake of calcium as part of a bone-healthy diet is needed throughout life. This is particularly true for women, whose risk of osteoporosis increases after menopause.
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 precautions, including proper lighting, nonskid carpets, and living areas free of obstacles, can help to prevent serious accidents.
15. False. Women tend to outlive men by an average of six 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. This has been a major factor in the increase in life expectancy.
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, old people can’t all be described as rigid and cantankerous. You are what you are for as long as you live, unless you choose to make a change (for example, to be more outgoing or more flexible).
20. True. Changes in vision become more common with age, but any change in vision, regardless of age, is related to a specific disease. If you are having problems with your vision, see your doctor.