

You Really Can Manage Dependency

The third stage of our life we call Dependent, when we can no longer fulfil our normal functions of daily living without some support. The reasons may be physical conditions and/or declining cognitive skills which affect our core activities of self-care, mobility and communication.

It's useful to distinguish between 'dependency' and 'frailty'. Specific conditions like arthritis or dementia may affect your ability to perform some routine tasks but you may otherwise retain many functions, being dependent but not necessarily 'frail'.

By the Dependent stage, through following the longevity planning process it's likely you will have implemented planning decisions regarding Aged Care, so that with support you are able to function usefully.

What may our dependency look like?

Our personal SHAPE Analyser results provide an estimate of how long our dependency may be. Our longevity planning will have used these results to plan the previous stages of our longevity, typically following interaction with professional health advisers.

We become more different from each other over time, so individual solutions are necessary. It's helpful to get a general indication, and the table below shows – on average – that the period of dependency decreases the longer we are alive.

Age	65	75	85
Male Dependent Years	3.4	3.0	2.3
Female Dependent Years	5.6	5.1	4.1

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2017)

Action as early as midlife can have a significant impact on wellbeing and longevity outcomes, so longevity planning is likely to contribute to less time in dependency and better quality of life.

Notice the gender differences, which again emphasise the importance of individual personal plans.

Managing Dependency

Working through the key elements of longevity planning provides a better chance of supporting your general wellbeing as well as potentially adding to your longevity and reducing your dependency.

For example, there is growing evidence that issues from midlife onwards can influence the onset and severity of dementia in later life – such as peripheral hearing loss, obesity, high blood pressure, and excess alcohol. From age 65 there are factors like smoking, inactivity, social isolation, diabetes, and air pollution. As well affecting dementia, some of these issues can be disabling or life threatening. With good health advice, we can often take preventive action.

Progress is being made with cures and treatments. However, it makes lifestyle and economic sense to take a preventive approach when available and able to be readily undertaken.

Your Longevity Plan

Start or revisit your own Longevity Plan to better prepare for the future.

Try your free upgraded
SHAPE Analyser now