

You Really Can Manage Dependency

Much attention is focused on deficiencies in aged care. However, the need for aged care is a result of increasing dependency, which can be separately addressed.

‘Dependent’ is when we can no longer fulfil our normal functions of daily living without support. The reasons may be physical conditions, declining cognitive skills, or both.

Effectively managing dependency is an important aged care strategy. In later life we progress through three stages – Able, Less Able and Dependent. Our personal SHAPE Analyser results indicate each of these stages as well as our estimated lifespan. The Analyser also highlights our responses to individual questions which show potential for improving our wellbeing.

These responses provide the basis for actions in our Longevity Plan. Early action can have a significant effect on longer term outcomes, influencing our longevity, how long we remain Able, how soon we may become Dependent and to what extent.

Because we become more different from each other over time, the best actions are those which reflect us personally. What is best for us may not be as useful for someone else. Individual solutions are necessary.

As this table shows, increasing longevity leads to shorter dependency – a good reason for acting as soon as possible based on what we know about ourselves. There are also gender differences.

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

When do we start?

An example is dementia, which typically leads to dependency. Research provides growing evidence that issues in midlife 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 take preventive action – the sooner the better.

With dementia and other serious conditions of ageing, 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.

Dependency and Aged Care

Effectively managing dependency impacts our approach to aged care. It also affects decisions on where we can live, how we prepare our Advanced Care Directive and how we discuss these and other issues with our legally appointed ‘substitute decision maker’. There are potentially significant financial impacts. These points are identified, discussed, and listed for attention in our own Longevity Plan.

Preparing well for dependency can put us on track to make the best of the rest of our life.

Your Longevity Plan

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

Try your free upgraded
SHAPE Analyser now