



HEALTHY 03

Chronic Diseases

What it is like to live with a chronic disease; some of the risk factors, and what you can do to prevent them.

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Warsaw University
of Technology



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HEALTHY MODULE 3

Chronic Diseases

In this module, you will learn about some chronic diseases, including associated risk factors and how you can prevent them. Moreover, it will also give you some tips on how to live with a chronic disease and help a friend or relative that has a chronic condition, taking into account the guidance of Family Physicians.

What will you learn

- 1 What a chronic disease is.
- 2 Some symptoms & risk factors of chronic diseases.
- 3 How to prevent different chronic diseases.
- 4 Tips on how to manage a chronic disease.
- 5 Tips on how to care for someone with a chronic disease.



Chapters in this module

1

What is a chronic disease?

2

Living with a chronic disease

3

Caring for someone with a chronic disease



HEALTHY

MODULE 3

CHAPTER 1

What is a chronic disease?

In this chapter, you will learn about some chronic diseases, including risk factors and how you can prevent them. Moreover, it will also give you some tips on how to live with a chronic disease and help a friend or relative that has a chronic disease.

What is a chronic disease?

It is a medical condition in which most cases cannot be cured, only controlled. They are often life-long and can have an impact in terms of quality of life.

It can have various physical, mental, and social consequences that do not only affect patients but also their family members, friends and caregivers.



What will you learn

- 1 What chronic diseases are.
- 2 Heart diseases and prevention.
- 3 Cancer and prevention.
- 4 Chronic respiratory diseases and prevention.
- 5 Diabetes prevention.
- 6 Clinical depression and prevention.



Meet António

António lives with his girlfriend in a modern apartment in an urban area.

He is a journalist and is currently working from home.

He has some health concerns - diabetes and high blood pressure - and has been meaning to make some changes in his lifestyle, namely in his eating habits.

António has diabetes which is a chronic disease. In this chapter, we will learn about diabetes and other chronic diseases. Let's go!

On the next slide, you will find out about António's lifestyle.





António's lifestyle



Positive

- António has diabetes and high blood pressure and he is motivated to improve his diet.
- António likes to stay active and participate in the community



Negative

- He has difficulties when talking about his health conditions and needs
- He has been eating unbalanced and irregular meals




Did you know?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disability worldwide, being coronary artery disease (a type of heart disease) the main one.

Quiz

Click the **Quiz** button to edit this object

 **HEALTHY** **MODULE 3** **CHAPTER 1** What is a chronic disease?

After reading the definition, select some diseases you believe are chronic?

- Pneumonia
- Cholera
- Tuberculosis
- Cancer
- Clinical Depression
- Diabetes

Here are some!

1 Heart disease

2 Cancer

3 Chronic respiratory diseases

4 Diabetes

5 Clinical depression

6 Stroke



Did you know?

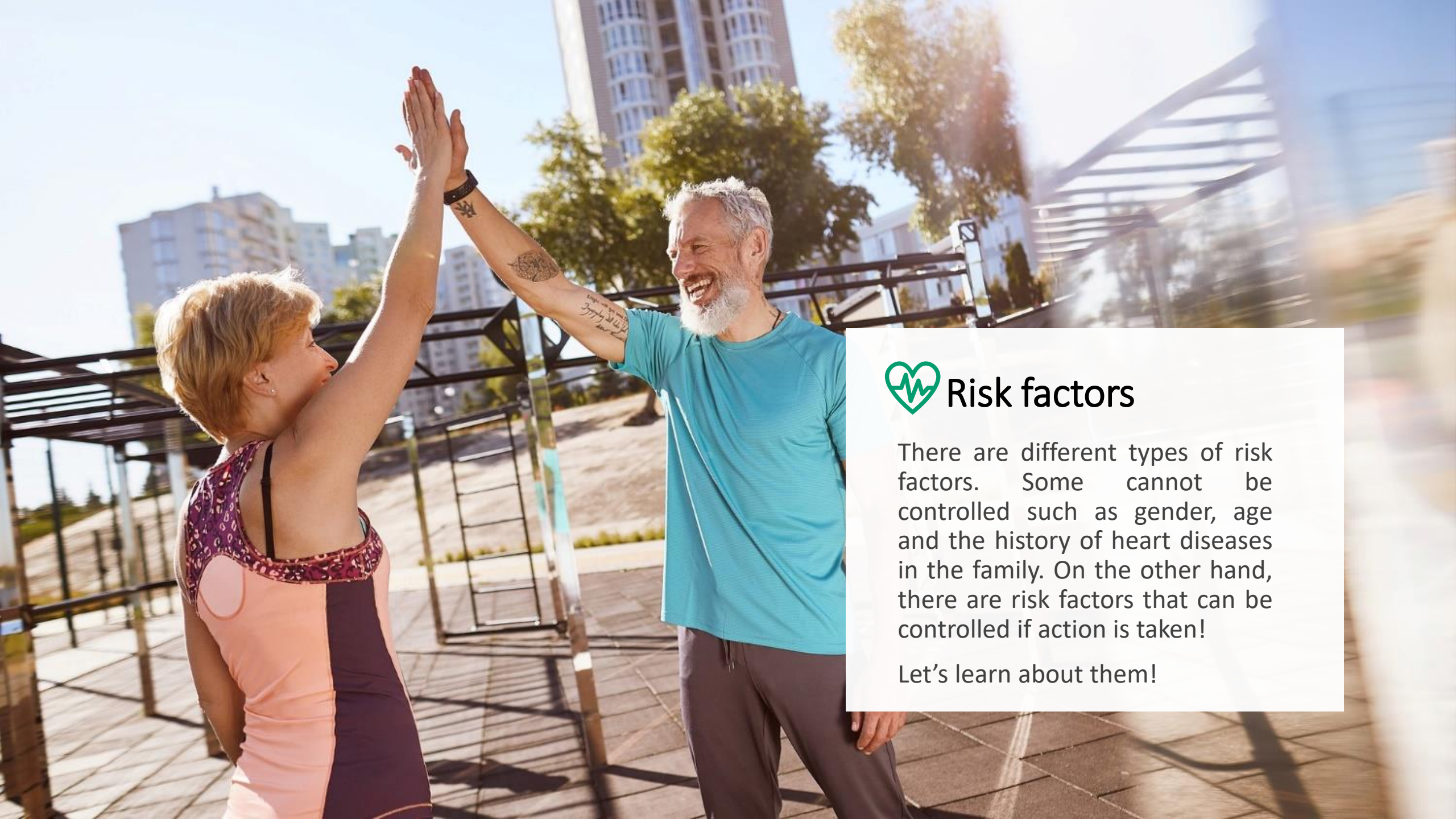
Heart disease, stroke, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes, are by far the leading cause of mortality in Europe, representing 77% of the total disease burden and 86% of all deaths.

Heart Disease

Diseases of this type affect your heart, and are varied, including:

- Heart rhythm problems (arrhythmias)
- Heart defects you're born with (congenital heart defects)
- Heart valve disease
- Disease of the heart muscle
- Heart infection (It can be treatable, but depends on the cause and severity of the symptoms)





Risk factors

There are different types of risk factors. Some cannot be controlled such as gender, age and the history of heart diseases in the family. On the other hand, there are risk factors that can be controlled if action is taken!

Let's learn about them!

Some controllable risk factors



Unhealthy diet

A diet high in saturated fat increases the risk of heart disease. Learn more about having a healthier diet in the module **HEALTHY 02: Lifestyle And Therapy**.



Physical inactivity

According to the World Heart Federation, doing more than 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every week will reduce your risk of coronary heart disease by about 30%. Learn more in the module **HEALTHY 02: Lifestyle And Therapy**.



Stress

Stress can alter the blood and nervous system, which consequently can have negative effects on your heart health. Learn some easy practices to reduce stress in the module **HEALTHY 01: Basic Information On Health And Well-being**.



Smoking

The World Heart Federation says that smoking increases the risk of coronary heart disease by 100%. A great reason to stop smoking, right?



Prevention

Various types of heart disease can be prevented or even treated with healthy lifestyle choices, including exercise and a balanced diet. Learn more about this in module **HEALTHY 02: Lifestyle And Therapy.**

Symptoms

Various symptoms can occur depending on the disease, but here are some symptoms you should look out for and contact a doctor if you notice them:



Chest pain

If it comes on suddenly, especially if taking anti-inflammatory medications does not ease symptoms; The chest pain might feel like a crushing sensation on the breastbone and spread to the jaw, left arm, or back.



Shortness of breath

It might feel like you've just exercised, such as climbing several flights of stairs or taking an aerobics class, but you did not exercise.



Fainting

Sometimes you might feel lightheaded, dizzy, weak, or nauseous before you faint.

How to manage heart disease

Maybe you were born with heart disease, or you were diagnosed later in life, or you need to support someone who has heart disease. Everyone is different and has to follow different treatments. What works for one, might not work for the other. It is very important to have your health checks regularly and ask your medical team what changes you need to make. Moreover, write down your symptoms, so that when you have them, they'll have detailed information. In the next slide, we give you some suggestions about what you can ask your medical team. Let's do this!





Suggested questions

What are the probable causes for my condition?

Are there other possible causes for my chronic disease?

What tests and regular check-ups will I need? And how regularly?

What's the best treatment for me?

Are there any other alternatives to the primary treatment you're suggesting?

What foods should I eat or avoid?

How much and what type of physical activity do you suggest?

I have other health conditions. How do I manage them together?

Are there restrictions that I need to follow?

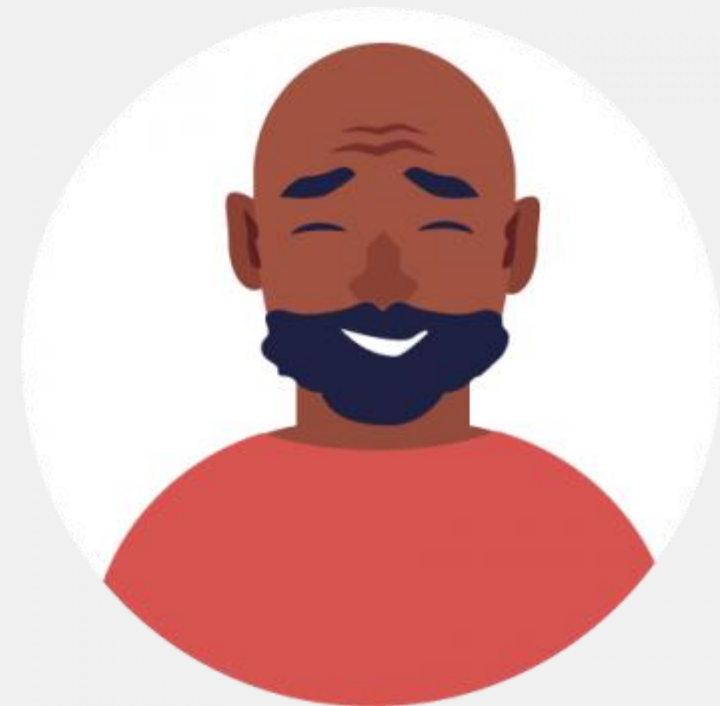
Are there brochures or other materials that I can have? What websites do you recommend?

Should I see a specialised professional?

Activity 1

António has been meaning to make some changes in his lifestyle, for example, eating a more balanced diet. At the same time, he has been noticing that people in his community do not lead healthy lifestyle habits and he is willing to take action and raise awareness about the risk factors!

He has heard about World Heart Day, an annual event that takes place every September 29 and is intended to increase public awareness of cardiovascular diseases, including their prevention and their global impact. Head over to the next slide and see an example of a poster for World Heart Day!



World Heart Day, September 29

You can use simple and free tools, such as “Paint” or [Canva](#) to create a flyer or a poster. In Canva you can find cool layouts in which you just have to add the information, more clipart and images. There are websites with free images, such as [Freepik](#), [Centre for Ageing Better](#) and [Unsplash](#). Or grab a cardboard and some crayons!

It’s up to you to decide what option suits you best! Keep it simple, you don’t have to be a designer to experiment with these tools! Remember you can also do the same for your own community if you feel it’s needed.

Go ahead, choose a risk factor of your choice and create your own poster. Sharing is caring!



Cancer

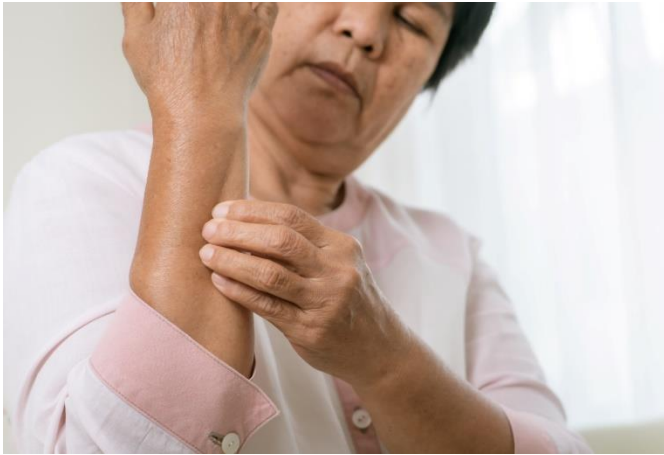
Cancer is a disease caused when cancerous cells in a specific part of the body grow and reproduce uncontrollably. They can invade and destroy surrounding healthy tissue, including organs.

There are more than 200 different types of cancer, such as breast cancer and lung cancer, and each is diagnosed and treated in a particular way.



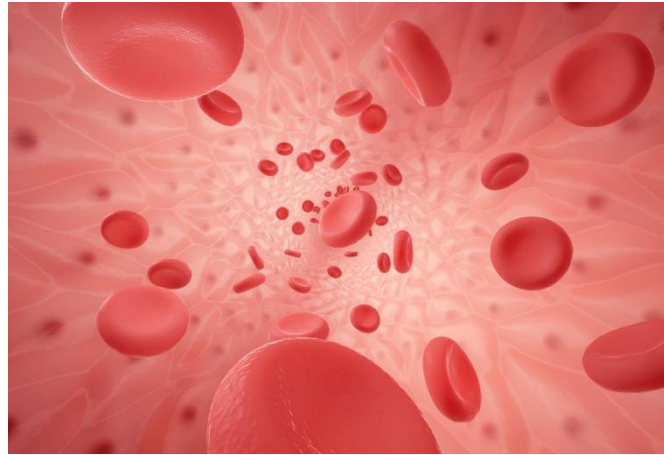
Symptoms of cancer

You should look out for changes in your body's normal functioning or/and unusual and unexplained symptoms, although this does not mean you have cancer. You must check with your doctor. The symptoms include:



A lump or mole that suddenly appears on your body

Get to know your body and pay attention if you see lumps or moles that appear or existing ones that change colour, increase or change the texture.



Unexplained bleeding

If you see blood in unusual places or at unexpected times, for example in your urine, vomit or between menstruation cycles. Also, if you see blood when you cough.



Changes to your bowel habits

If you have diarrhoea or constipation for no clear reason, blood in your poo, a feeling of not having fully emptied your bowels after going to the toilet and/or pain in your stomach or back passage (anus).



Prevention

The prevention tips are the same for cancer as for preventing stroke and heart diseases: balanced eating, exercising, not smoking and limiting your alcohol intake. However, there is one more specific tip to consider: Taking care when getting some sun. Getting sun is important but you need to take some measures.

Let's learn more about that!

Taking care in the sun



Arms and legs

If possible, keep your arms and legs covered by wearing long-sleeved tops and trousers.



Sun cream

Use a sun cream with a high sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30, that protects against UVA and UVB.



Hat

Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face and neck.





Cooler time

Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day. This is usually between 11 am and 3 pm.

Quiz

Click the **Quiz** button to edit this object

 **HEALTHY** **MODULE 3** **CHAPTER 1** What is a chronic disease?

Let's take a quiz!

It is a beautiful sunny day outside so António decided to take his girlfriend and family to the beach and spend some quality time together. Let's help António and check the statements he should follow!

- Put sun cream over 30 SPF on arms and legs
- Be under the sun at 1 pm
- Put sun cream over 30 SPF on his neck
- Do not wear a wear-brimmed hat
- Take a sun cream with low sun protection factor
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt
- Be under the sun after 3 pm
- Take a wide-brimmed hat for his dad

Treatment

Cancer can often be controlled with treatment, which means it can stay the same (not producing more cancerous cells) or go away. There are various treatments for cancer, for example, chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery. A patient might do just one treatment or a combination, and there might be cycles of treatment. Choosing what to do might be a stressful and confusing situation, but the doctor is there to help, say what is the best treatment and answer all the questions you might have.

You will find some questions to ask in the following slides!





Suggested questions

Treatment

- What are the ways to treat my type and stage of cancer?
- What are the benefits and risks of each of these treatments?
- In your opinion, what treatment is best for me and why?
- When will I need to start treatment?
- Will I need to be in the hospital for treatment? If so, for how long?
- How will we know if the treatment is working?

Side effects

- What are the possible side effects of the treatment?
- What side effects may happen during or between my treatment sessions?
- Are there any side effects that I should call you about right away?
- Are there any lasting effects of the treatment?
- Will this treatment affect my ability to have children?
- How can I prevent or treat side effects?

Other

- Do I need to tell you about the medicines I am taking now?
- Should I tell you about the dietary supplements that I am taking?
- Could any drugs or supplements change the way that cancer treatment works?
- Will I need a specialist(s) for my cancer treatment?

Chronic respiratory diseases

These are chronic diseases of the airways and other structures of the lung, including asthma and respiratory allergies.

Asthma is characterized by recurrent attacks of breathlessness and wheezing; severity and frequency depend on the individual characteristics. For some people, it becomes worse during physical activity or at night.





Risk factors

We have talked about smoking, which is a major factor that leads to chronic respiratory diseases.

But there are other factors, such as outdoor and indoor air pollution.

Let's learn more about them!

Household air pollution

According to the World Health Organization, around 3 billion people still cook using solid fuels, such as wood and coal, and kerosene in open fires and inefficient stoves. These cooking practices are prejudicial to health and good air quality and use fuels and technologies that produce high levels of household air pollution with a range of health-damaging pollutants.

Moreover, exposure to damp and mould (biological pollutants) and chemical toxins can be harmful. Let's learn how we can have air quality inside the house!



How to improve air quality

1**2****3**

Keep indoors clean

Good indoor hygiene is essential for improving air quality. Ensure you efficiently clean pet dander, mould and dust. Don't forget carpets that should be vacuum cleaned at least once a week! The bedding should be regularly washed.



Process

1

2

3



Freshen the air

Open the windows regularly to let fresh air in. Although, it might be difficult in cold months, try to open the windows at least a few minutes twice a day!

Process

1

2

3



Change your air-conditioning (AC) filter

If you have an AC system, you must change the filters regularly. They filter out some air pollutants, but if you do not change them, they fill up and do not do their job properly.

Process

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4

↓
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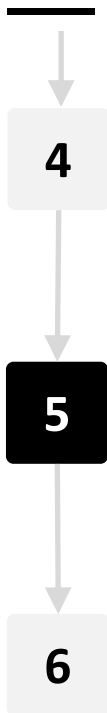
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6



Use cooking vents

As we said previously, a lot of indoor air pollutants come from the kitchen, especially when cooking. Thus, turn on the kitchen vent or open a window when cooking.

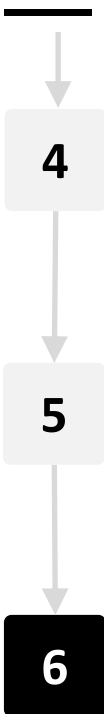
Process



Place a large floor mat at the door

People bring a lot of harmful dirt into the household through their shoes. Having a door mat at the door will reduce the quantity of dirt and other pollutants coming into the house.

Process



Get a dehumidifier

Humidity can become mould and damp, which we have seen are harmful to health. A dehumidifier can decrease the moisture in the air and consequently reduce mould growth. Consider one or the other depending on the weather conditions in your own country.

Note: keep in mind that in modern houses with good environmental certification the air can be, for example, too dry. This can also be an asthma-related irritant and can emerge the need for humidification instead of dehumidification.

Outdoor air pollution

After learning about what you can do to prevent indoor air pollution, let's talk about what can you do to protect yourself from outside air pollution. It is a bit more complex to control than indoor air pollution but there are a few things to have in mind!



Exercise in low pollution level areas

Avoid exercising in green areas where pollution levels are high, for example, near high-traffic areas. A good solution would be exercising in nature where there are no vehicles.



Burning

Don't burn wood or trash. Burning wood and trash are one of the biggest sources of air pollution.



Reduce driving your car

Reduce your car driving as much as possible. Alternatives can be carpooling and using public transportation. If you can't reduce your car driving, choose the less crowded routes.

Treatment & Management

There are different treatments you can do to manage a chronic respiratory condition, such as medication, inhalers and lung therapies. You should always check with your doctor about what is best for you, but here are some that can make a difference!



Improve your breathing

Learning new breathing techniques can help you get more air in and out of the lungs, decreasing shortness of breath. For example, diaphragmatic breathing: Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose. While breathing in, push your stomach out.



Quit smoking

We have talked about this before in this module and discussed how prejudicial it is. Chronic respiratory diseases and smoking is a dangerous combination. Smoking makes the condition progress quickly.



Vaccines

If you have a chronic respiratory disease, there is an increased chance to get lung infections. Thus, it is crucial to get your recommended vaccines.

Diabetes

This chronic and lifelong disease causes individuals' blood sugar to become too high.

There are 2 main types of diabetes:

- Type 1 diabetes, in which the body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells that produce insulin, and
- Type 2 diabetes, in which the body does not produce enough insulin, or the body's cells do not react to insulin.

Insulin is a hormone that regulates the amount of glucose in the blood.





Gestational diabetes

During pregnancy, for some women, their levels of blood glucose are so high that they cannot produce enough insulin to suppress it, as the body is focused on meeting other specific needs from pregnancy.

This is called **Gestational diabetes.**



Pre-diabetes

A lot of people have blood sugar levels above the normal threshold but not high enough to be diagnosed as having diabetes. This is called **pre-diabetes**.

This increases the risk of developing diabetes. In these cases, it is important to monitor and have preventive behaviours. If left untreated it can get progressively worse.

Diabetes' symptoms

Here are some symptoms you should look out for and if you experience them, you should see a doctor to analyse the situation!



Feeling very thirsty

Have you been feeling thirsty more than normal? When you drink water, do you continue feeling thirsty?



Peeing more frequently than usual

Especially at night!



Feeling very tired

Are you feeling tired and restless more than usual?

Diabetes' symptoms



Weight and muscle mass loss

Have you experienced weight or muscle mass loss recently for no apparent reason?



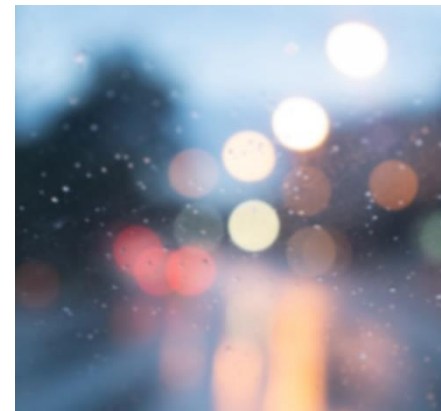
Itching around your vagina or penis

Have you been feeling itchy in that area?



Cuts or wounds that heal slowly

Did you notice that your cuts and/or wounds take longer to heal?



Blurred vision

Check with your eye doctor as this be result of many things!

Prevention

Unfortunately, there are no lifestyle changes that can be made to lower the risk of type 1 diabetes. However, for type 2 diabetes, there are a few things you can do to manage it, let's learn!



Balanced diet

In your diet, you should keep sugar, fat and salt to a minimum and eat a wide range of food. Do not skip meals, you should eat breakfast, lunch and dinner every day.



Exercising

Exercising lowers your blood sugar level. You should exercise for around 2.5h per week. And it can be simple as gardening! Learn more about this in our module **HEALTHY 02: Lifestyle and Therapy!**



Losing weight

Losing weight (if you're overweight) will make it easier for your body to lower your blood sugar levels. However, you should check with your doctor and a nutritionist before making this type of change!



Treatment

To control diabetes you might need to take medication.

Moreover, for type 1 diabetes, insulin injections might be needed. This needs to be prescribed by the doctor, and you should never self-medicate.



Diabetic eye screening

This is a test to check eye problems caused by diabetes, which are called diabetic retinopathy. If not diagnosed early, it can lead to sight loss.

This test can find problems before they occur and it is very simple! If you are diabetic, you should have an eye screen every year.



Here are some questions you can ask your doctor!

Should I check my blood sugar levels at home with a glucose monitor? How often should I check them?

What should be my blood sugar levels?

What are the warning signs or symptoms that my blood sugars are too high? What do I do if my blood sugars are too high?

What are the warning signs or symptoms that my blood sugars are too low? And what should I do if that happens?

What should I change in my lifestyle and diet?

What are the side effects of my medication? (and insulin if you take it)

Will I always need medication and/or/insulin? How do you know these medications are the best treatment for me?



What are the long-term effects of diabetes, and how can I avoid them?

How can other diseases affect me if I also have diabetes?

How often should I be seeing my doctor?

Quiz

Click the **Quiz** button to edit this object

 **HEALTHY** **MODULE 3** **CHAPTER 1** What is a chronic disease?

Let's help António!

As you know, António has diabetes. He has some doubts about managing this chronic disease. Can you help him? Select which actions you think António should do!

- Take the medication prescribed by the doctor.
- Exercise less than 2.5 hours per week.
- Go for a walk every day.
- Miss his yearly diabetic eye screening.
- Have a diet high in fat and salt.
- Do not do any physical exercise.
- Always eat breakfast.
- Skip meals.

Clinical depression

Contrary to other diseases you just learnt that are physical, clinical depression is a mental illness. It is characterized by periods of feeling down and unhappy for weeks or months, not just a few days, which can be normal. Depression ranges from mild, temporary episodes to severe persistent depression. The most severe one is clinical depression. For diagnosis and intervention, an initial evaluation performed by Clinical Psychologists or Psychiatrists is important.

Depression is not a sign of weakness, and it is a real health condition, let's learn more about it!



Depression's symptoms

The symptoms are complex and vary a lot between individuals. The symptoms can persist for weeks or months and interfere with your work, social and personal life. The symptoms list is very long, let's learn about some of them!



Psychological symptoms

Continuous low mood, feeling hopeless, low self-esteem, feeling irritable towards others, no motivation and feeling anxious or worried. Having suicidal thoughts or thinking about harming yourself.



Physical symptoms

Moving or speaking slower than usual, changes in appetite or weight, lack of energy, constipation, unexplained aches and pain, such as headache or stomach pain and changes in sleep, such as difficulty to sleep or sleeping too much.



Social symptoms

Avoiding contact with friends and relatives, taking part in fewer social activities, neglecting your hobbies and interests and having difficulties in your personal and professional life.



Treatment

Depression can be treated by one of the following or combined: lifestyle changes, talking therapies and medication prescribed by the doctor.

You should contact your doctor if you experience symptoms for most of the day, every day, for more than 2 weeks.

How to help a friend who has depression?



Do

- Offer to help with everyday tasks.
- Show empathy.
- Be patient.
- Encourage them to get professional help.



Don't

- Minimize their feelings.
- Compare their experience to others.
- Give up.
- Expect more from the person.



What to say to a friend who has depression?



Do

- You are not alone in this and I am here for you.
- Is there anything I can do for you?
- You don't have to feel ashamed, this is not your fault.





Don't

- You don't look depressed.
- That's not a real illness.
- Smile and you will feel better.
- Everyone has a hard time sometimes.

Quiz

Click the **Quiz** button to edit this object

**MODULE 3** **CHAPTER 1** What is a chronic disease?

Let's help António!

António's mother, Eva, was diagnosed with depression. She takes her medication as prescribed by the doctor but her son António, sometimes does not know what to say in certain situations when she is feeling down. Let's help him, and select what he can say to help his mum!

- It's your own fault.
- Come on mum, it is just a bad stage!
- I'm sorry you're not feeling well, mum. Is there anything I can do to help?
- It is okay to feel like this.
- Please just shake it off.
- You are not alone in this.
- Don't feel sorry for yourself, you are a weak person!
- Mum, you are important to me.



Activity 2

Can you remember the wellness therapies you learnt in the module **HEALTHY 02: Lifestyle and Therapy?**

It can be a great way to improve your mental health, including depression. Why not start a wellness group in your community?

Let's learn the steps you need to follow to start one!

Activity 2

1

2

3



Choose the activity

Can you remember all the wellness therapies you learned? No problem, you can find them [here](#).

Which one do you prefer to start a group?

On the next slides, you can have a sneak peek at some of the therapies presented in that module.

Take a look and choose your favourite one. Let's go!

Activity 2

1

2

3



Make a list of the resources you need!

What materials do you need for your wellness group? Think about everything you need and then think about where you can get the materials. Maybe a partnership where you get materials for free or at a low price?

Activity 2

1

2

3



Human resources

Do you need a teacher/specialised individual to lead the sessions? If so, think about who could fill that role and ask them to join you!

Activity 2

4

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6



Venue

Do you need a specific space for your activity? For example, if you need a room with enough space for dance. Or maybe a room with desks and chairs for people to sit and paint? Is there a place in your community you can think of?

Talk with your local council, they might be able to help!

Activity 2

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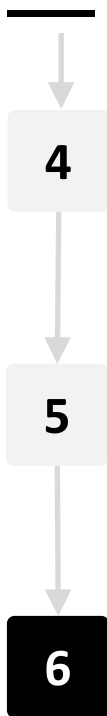


Choose a day and time

After finding all the resources including human ones, and gathering a venue, it's time to decide a day and time!

Check when the venue is available and set a day and time!

Activity 2



Advertise, advertise, advertise!

What is the best way to advertise the wellness group in your community? Social media? Posters in popular places?

Then you are good to go, enjoy your wellness group!

Chapter summary

1

You have learned what chronic diseases are.

2

You have learned about heart disease and prevention.

3

You have learned about cancer and prevention.

4

You have learned about chronic respiratory diseases and prevention.

5

You have learned about diabetes and prevention.

6

You have learned about clinical depression prevention.

Chapter completed!

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this chapter!

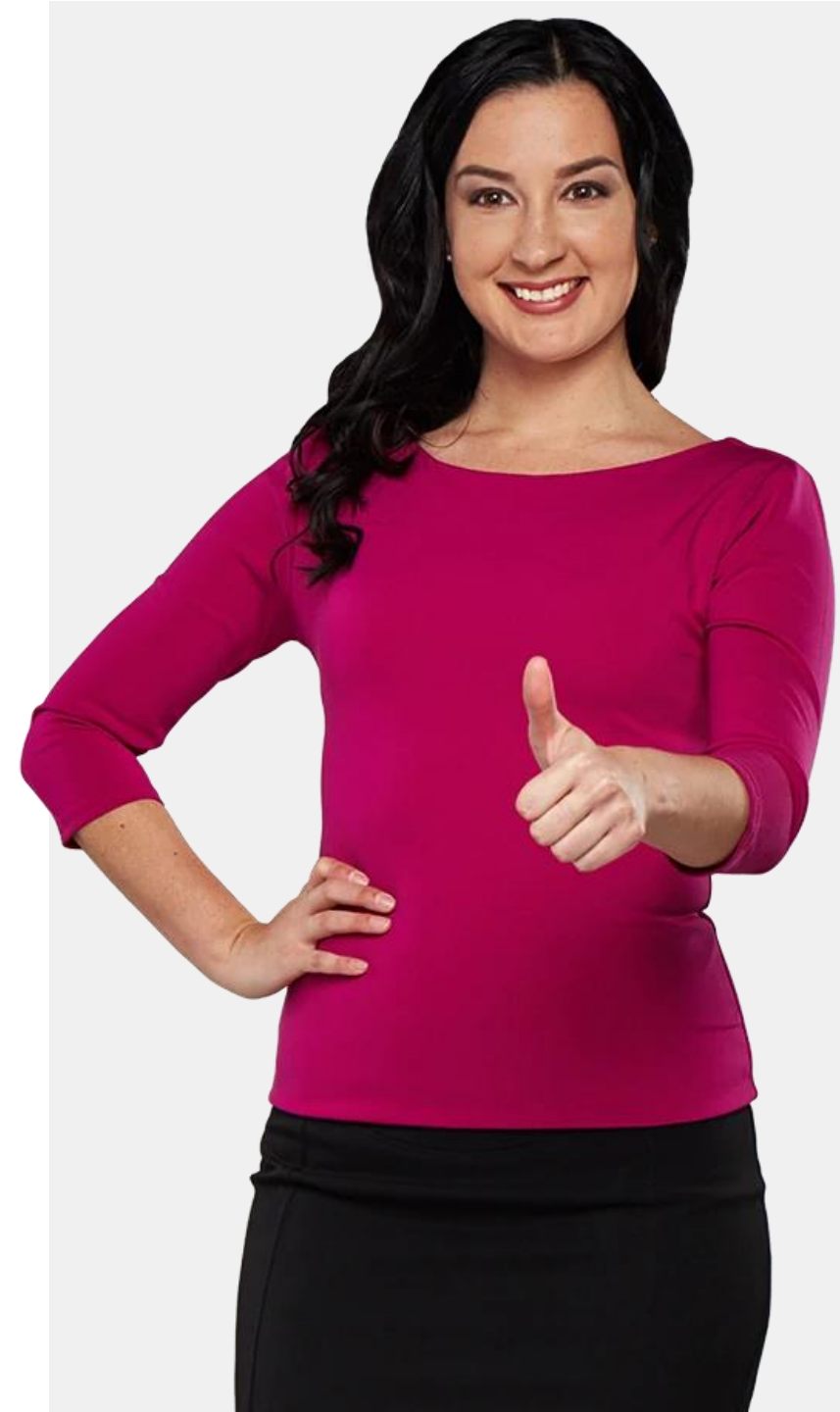
Summary of acquired skills

- 1 What chronic diseases are.
- 2 Some common chronic diseases and how to prevent them.



What is next?

Now you can either repeat this chapter or follow our study recommendation by clicking on one of the buttons below:

[Restart](#)[Next](#)



HEALTHY

MODULE 3

CHAPTER 2

Living with a chronic disease

In this chapter, you will learn more about chronic diseases. Moreover, it will also give you some tips on how to live with a chronic disease or help a friend or relative that has a chronic disease.

Living with a chronic disease

When you are diagnosed with a chronic disease, it might make you feel lonely, be a daunting situation and need to do many life adaptations. However, that does not mean you cannot continue to do the things you love (if needed with some adaptations) and continue to be happy with the ones you love. Here are some tips to deal with the situation!



What will you learn

- 1 What it is like to live with a chronic disease.



Living with a chronic disease

1**2****3**

Reach out to people who are going through the same

Sharing experiences with individuals who have the same feelings and learning from them, as they might have tips that can be very useful! If you do not know anyone who has the same health condition, you can find a support group, either in your area or online. Don't be afraid of speaking up, we are together in this!

Living with a chronic disease

1

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3



Don't be afraid to tell your friends, family and work colleagues

It might be hard and worrying to tell your peers you have a chronic disease. These are normal feelings. They might react in different ways but in the end, they care for you, and it is important they are aware in case you have a medical emergency, and they need to step in.

Living with a chronic disease

1

2

3



Be OK with getting help

Your loved ones and friends might want to help, it is ok to let them help you, it does not make you any less a person. However, set boundaries, let them know how they can help and send them information about the chronic disease. Respecting your privacy is important! You might want to check the support services available in your area.

Living with a chronic disease

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6



Taking and understanding your medication

When diagnosed with a chronic disease you will probably need to take medication. You must understand well what it is for, the side effects and how to take it. Do not be afraid to ask your doctor or pharmacist all the questions you have! Head over to module **HEALTHY 02: Lifestyle and Therapy** if you'd like to learn some tips on what questions to ask next at your doctor's appointment!

Living with a chronic disease

4

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6



Make small and doable changes

Suddenly changing everything will not work out. Start with small changes that you can do, and when this becomes a routine, introduce new changes. It takes around 21 days to create a habit, do not give up and you will get there!

Living with a chronic disease

4

5

6



Permit yourself to let go and accept your limitations

Accept the chronic health condition you have, the limitations and all the feelings you are experiencing, it is a normal process. Do not be too harsh on yourself and do not forget that the disease does not define you, so do not identify yourself with it.

Living with a chronic disease

7



Keep a key with a person you trust

Is there someone that lives nearby that you can trust with your house key? Maybe a relative or a friend? This way if you need help, but you can't get to the door, your friends/family, or if necessary, emergency services can get in.

Chapter summary

1

You have learned more about living with a chronic disease.

Chapter completed!

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this chapter!

Summary of acquired skills

- 1 What it is like to live with a chronic disease.



What is next?

Now you can either repeat this chapter or follow our study recommendation by clicking on one of the buttons below:

[Restart](#)[Next](#)



HEALTHY

MODULE 3

CHAPTER 3

Caring for someone with a chronic disease

In this chapter, you will learn more about what it is like to care for someone with a chronic disease.

Caring for someone with a chronic disease

Maybe you have been caring for someone with a chronic disease for a long time or you have just started your journey as a formal/informal caregiver. There are some challenges and sometimes we don't know how to deal with them.

Let's see some tips!



What will you learn

- 1 What is it like to care for someone with a chronic disease.



Meet Teresa

Teresa lives with her 87-year-old husband in an urban area.

She likes to walk in the public garden near her home every day and goes to classes 3 times a week at a university of the third age.

Her husband, who leads a more passive life, has several long-term (chronic) conditions and is becoming more dependent on her.

What is it like to care for someone with a chronic disease?
Let's find out a bit more in the next slides!



Caring for someone with a chronic disease

1**2****3**

Show empathy and compassion

Having a chronic disease might be challenging, especially at the beginning when people are adjusting to their new reality. It is important to show empathy and compassion, so they feel they are not alone but do not give unsolicited advice. Active listening is crucial, do not just listen but also show attention and be present.

Caring for someone with a Chronic Disease

1

2

3



Research, research, research!

Listen to the person, you can ask what can you do, but do not overwhelm them with questions. They are probably tired of explaining and talking about the disease. Research the condition and read articles online from people who have the same disease, to learn more. If the individual is more dependent on you, speak with the doctor to understand your responsibilities as a caregiver.

Caring for someone with a Chronic Disease

1

2

3



Offer help if you can!

If they request your help with a task, help them but do not ask them why they cannot do it alone. It shows you do not believe them. Imagine having to explain things multiple times? You will not be the only one asking! Moreover, sometimes they are too stubborn or afraid of asking for help, so offer help if you see they need it!

Caring for someone with a chronic disease

4

5



Have a support network

This can be a daunting and challenging experience, not only for the individual but also for the caregiver. It is important to take care of yourself, and your physical and mental health, and to have friends and family members you can reach out to when you need to talk or do some relaxing activities.

Living with a chronic disease

4

5



See what support is available

Depending on the level of dependence of the individual you care for, they might need help in tasks such as hygiene. Check which home services are available in your area to decrease your burden. Moreover, caring for someone with a chronic disease might increase the financial burden. See what financial support is available in your country.



Wellness therapies

What do you already know about therapies?

Have you heard of any of these?

Please, have a look at the therapies described in chapter 5 of the module **HEALTHY 02: Lifestyle and Therapy.**

HEALTHY 02



What NOT to say

Here are some things you should not say to an individual with chronic disease!

- Everything happens for a reason.
- What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.
- You just have to be more positive.
- You'll be fine.
- You'll get over it or get used to it.
- Positive vibes only.
- Everything works out in the end, stay positive!
- Don't worry, be happy!
- It could be worse, right?
- It is what it is, just accept it.
- Maybe, losing weight will help you?
- You should exercise more!

Informal Caregiver Status



Are you an informal caregiver?

Informal caregivers provide care to family members and/or friends, usually without being paid.



Informal Caregiver Status

Did you know that the Portuguese government has the Informal Caregiver Status where you can get a variety of support, including financial one?

[More](#)

Hands full and hands-on: list of useful contacts and services

Here are some useful contacts in Portugal! Can you name some contacts for your country?

- SOS voz amiga helpline – emotional support: 213 544 545 / Daily from 15h30 to 00h30.
- Telefone da Amizade – emotional support: 22 832 35 35
- SOS stop smoking helpline: 808 208 888
- Saúde 24: 808 24 24 24
- Liga Portuguesa contra o cancro: 217 221 810
- Portuguese Association for Diabetics: 21 381 6100
- Portuguese Association For People with Chronic Respiratory Diseases: 211 954 697
- Alcoholics Anonymous Helpline: 217 162 969

Chapter summary

1

What it is like to care for someone living with a chronic disease.

Chapter completed!

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this chapter!

Summary of acquired skills

1

What is it like to care for someone living with a chronic disease.



What is next?

Now you can either repeat this chapter or follow our study recommendation by clicking on one of the buttons below:

[Restart](#)[Next](#)

Module summary

- 1 What is a chronic disease?

- 2 Living with a chronic disease.

- 3 Caring for someone with a chronic disease.

Module completed!

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this module!

Summary of acquired skills

1

What a chronic disease is.

2

Some types of chronic diseases.

3

How to manage a chronic disease and support someone living with a chronic disease.



What is next?

Now you can either repeat this module or follow our study recommendation by clicking on one of the buttons below:

[Restart](#)[Next](#)