



## Living with Chronic Illness

The statistics are startling: six in ten Americans live with at least once chronic disease, such as diabetes, dementia, heart or kidney disease, or cancer. Four in ten live with more than once chronic condition. Besides the impact on quality of life, chronic illnesses are also the leading cause of disability and death and account for 86% of healthcare costs.

Living with a chronic illness can be stressful, not only for the person with the illness but for family members. Ideally the person with a chronic illness will have a healthcare provider who monitors all aspects of care and is aware of all treatments and medications the person is receiving. Ways to cope with the stress of chronic illness include the following:

- Educate yourself on the illness and how to best manage symptoms
- Join a support group
- Accept emotional support from family and friends and avoid social isolation
- Make healthy choices with regard to nutrition, exercise, and sleep
- Look for community resources and programs that support health and wellness, such as programs and seminars offered through YMCAs, clinics, and senior centers.
- Be aware that chronic illnesses can be linked to anxiety and depression. Talk with your doctor if you experience signs of depression or other mood disorders.

## Preventing Chronic Disease

Research shows that chronic inflammation is the common factor of many disease states, including major degenerative illnesses such as coronary artery disease, diabetes, cancer, and Alzheimer's disease.

While some diseases are hereditary, other chronic conditions are linked to:

- Tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke
- Poor nutrition
- Lack of regular physical activity
- Excessive alcohol use

Positive lifestyle changes, such as quitting smoking and eating a healthy diet, can be beneficial for everyone in the family.



If you, or someone you know, is interested in addiction recovery services, primary care, or mental health care for children or adults, contact InterCommunity. To receive services at any of our Hartford or East Hartford

locations, please call 860-569-5900.

