

Enjoying life as a senior...

*means continuing to learn
and to grow...*

A host of adult education courses are offered in communities by municipal recreation departments, secondary schools and Cegeps for people who want to continue to learn and to meet others with similar interest. The number of university institutes for learning in retirement is growing in the Québec regions.

These initiatives are often the result of the efforts of seniors themselves. So seniors should always let the people and institutions involved know what they need to continue to be a part of their community.

Enjoying life while growing old depends on accepting things as they are and acknowledging one's own situation and that of others.

Enjoying life as a senior...

means taking care of oneself...

... It means, first and foremost, an exciting individual adventure consisting of choices, changes and self-respect.

... It means considering aging as natural. Adjustments are necessary and just as important as at other stages in life.

... It also means choosing enjoyable activities, and possibly contributing to solidarity with younger generations.

Despite changes that are difficult to deal with. The loss of a husband, wife or other significant person requires a period of mourning during which assistance is sometimes needed.

Other losses may occur: for example, one may have to learn to live with a disease, leave one's home, retire or get along on reduced financial resources. One must prepare for these events and experience them at the proper pace and with solicitous support.

The changes, losses and gains in life foster thoughts about what is truly important. They require adjustments, which can be made with equanimity. It is natural to think that one's life has an end, just as it had a beginning, and that preparations must be made for this end.

Aging means benefiting even more from one's time and making important choices for oneself.



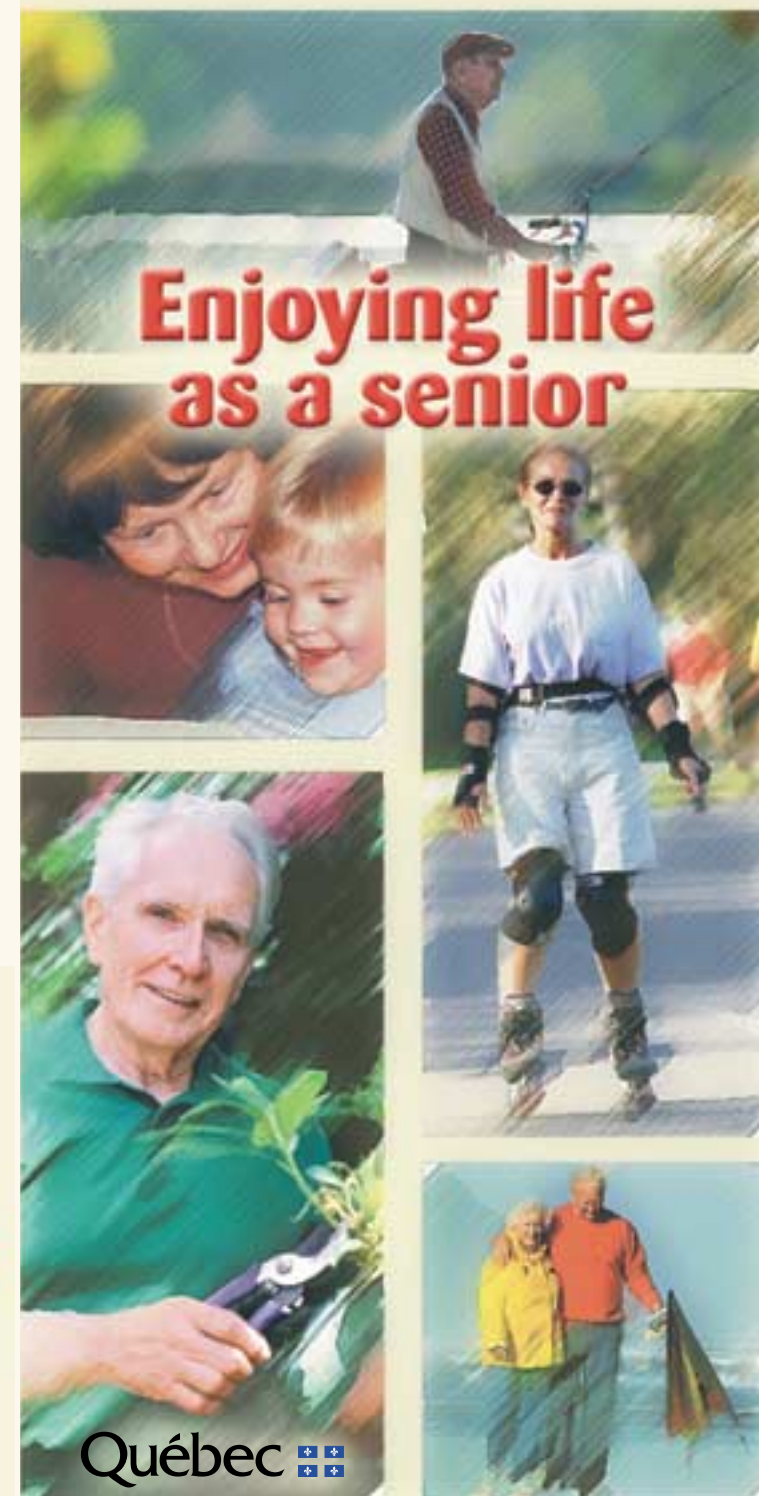
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Québec



Enjoying life as a senior...

means choosing what one wants to do and with whom...

... It means entering into new relationships that can be a source of pleasure and discovery. Younger people need their elders; this is one of the natural aspects of life. Young people and children are often drawn to relationships in which they can get to know themselves and gain in self-respect. Grandparents in particular can help children grow; their affection and sincerity are often invaluable.

... It sometimes means taking advantage of an opportunity to feel useful in one's environment. The neighbourhood, the community, the family and groups can also be sources of people to whom one can confide thoughts and feelings.

Enjoying life... means deciding which people one will be close to and what activities one will engage in. Being alone, if that is one's choice, can be fine. But if one does not choose to be alone, the experience can be difficult.

Enjoying life... also means seeking support, someone's presence, in a family, social or even professional environment, to ward off unwanted solitude.

Enjoying life as a senior...

means knowing that it is possible to age in good health...

Health and well-being can always be improved by conditions that one can change:

- a network of friends and relatives
- beneficial spirituality
- healthy, safe behaviour
- a balanced diet
- restorative sleep
- outdoor physical activities
- stimulating intellectual challenges
- energizing creative activities
- motivating social activities

Other conditions depend on society's choices and also affect health:

- the struggle against prejudice to which older people fall victim
- sufficient income
- a healthy, safe environment

Aging in good health is possible in Québec.



Enjoying life as a senior...

means taking advantage of resources and services...



A multitude of resources are available, and resources are being developed in all Québec regions in step with the interests of seniors. A variety of organizations offer services to those who ask for them.

Many groups and organizations are run and supported by seniors acting as volunteers. Older people often share their time and abilities in mutual assistance ventures.

And many so-called "natural helpers" devote their energies to assisting family members with serious health problems. They are very often elderly women, who, in turn, need assistance and respite to conserve their own health.

CLSCs are trying to provide more and more services for natural helpers. They can especially offer information, training and support to groups that are of great service to their community.

For information on health problems and to find out whom to consult, call the **CLSC Info-Santé** hotline, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Institutions, particularly CLSCs and long-term care hospitals, offer services to older people who are losing their autonomy.