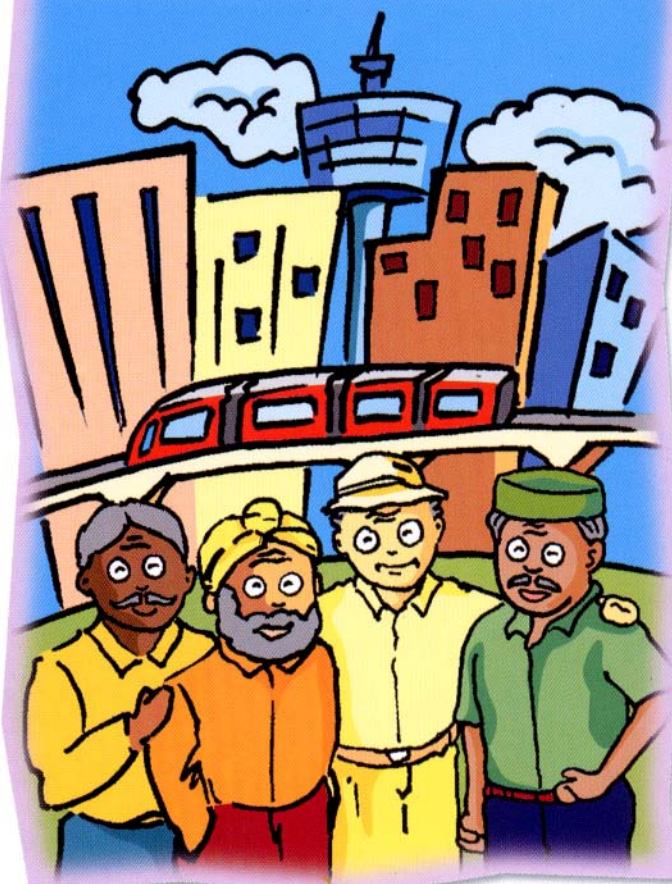


# GROWING OLD GRACIOUSLY





# Introduction

Retirement marks an inevitable and important milestone in our lives. We can only delay the end of our working life for a time, but not forever.

In Singapore, the official retirement age has been raised from 60 to 62 in January 1999. The Government will also extend the retirement age to 67 in 7 to 10 years to ensure greater financial security in old age.

Our retirement may be seen as the beginning of a new chapter filled with fresh opportunities, interests and friendships. Many of us, however, may find ourselves overwhelmed with the lack of “focus” this new “freedom” provides, and view retirement with doubt and insecurity. We must therefore prepare ourselves physically, socially, emotionally, financially and legally for our golden years ahead.



# Keeping

## Fit & Active

As we grow older, we appreciate the importance of staying fit and well. We can keep ourselves active by following some simple tips:-

- **Avoid stress**

People whose lives revolve around their work are most likely to suffer from stress in retirement. Begin to prepare for your retirement many years beforehand by developing a new interest, taking up a hobby and exercising regularly.

- **Have an adequate and balanced diet**

A balanced diet is necessary for good health. You need to ensure that your meals contain sufficient protein (meat and certain vegetables), carbohydrates (rice and flour), and fibres (vegetables, fruits and cereals). You should avoid eating too much fatty food (cream, eggs, cheese, butter, animal fats and fried meals) and too much sweet food (cakes, puddings, chocolate and jam).

Women may require calcium supplements long before retirement. They may also be offered Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) to help avoid the development of osteoporosis (loss of bone mass through calcium deficiency). Women should have a detailed discussion with their doctors before embarking on it.

# Maintaining

## a Healthy Lifestyle

- Do not smoke as smoking is well known to increase the risk of cancer.
- Do not consume excessive amounts of alcohol as this will damage your liver.



- Exercise regularly. You will be able to continue with quite strenuous exercise if you have been active all your life. It is never too late to start exercising. Walking briskly and swimming are very good exercises to start with.
- Take particular care of your eyes, teeth, ears and feet. The impairment of any of these can reduce the quality of your life.
- Have regular medical and dental check-ups
- Lead an active social life. Make an effort to go out and take part in activities specially tailored for retirees. If you are fit enough, travel to experience and appreciate interesting new places, peoples and cultures.

- Be extra careful in your daily activities. Take it easy when climbing stairs. Make sure your home is safe, adequately lit and has non-slip flooring. Cross roads and use transport with care.
- Do part-time work. Keep your mind active by working part-time. This will not only supplement your income, but also expand your professional and social network.
- Have a positive mental attitude. Stay close to your family and friends. Continue to enjoy a fulfilling sex life with your spouse.
- Make good use of your time. Take up hobbies you've never had time for, such as chess, painting, a musical instrument or keeping pets.



# Nurturing

## Good Relationship

### a) With Your Family

- Your relationships with your spouse, children, grandchildren and siblings are important in your Golden Years.
- Be understanding and supportive towards your **spouse**. Develop common hobbies and interests with your spouse prior to retirement, so that you can spend quality time together when you retire.



- Develop good relationship with your children by spending quality time with them and cultivating open communication with them from young. This bond will enhance your communication with your adult children after your retirement.

- Respect your **children** and their decisions, and give advice only when they ask for it. Do not be upset if your advice is not acted on - your views have given your children an additional perspective for decision-making and problem-solving.
- Be appreciative of the effort made by your **adult children** to look after you in view of the competing demands made on their limited time and resources. Your appreciation will encourage more contact and filial behaviour from your adult children and young grandchildren.
- If you need to stay with your children, choose the one you can get along with best. Allow your **adult children** to spend time with their spouses and children or go for their holidays. When your children's families are happy, their relationship with you is likely to improve.





- Spend time with your **grandchildren**, especially when their parents are at work. Be a model of desirable values and behaviour for your grandchildren. Support your adult children in their parenting efforts, even if there are differences in parenting styles and methods of discipline. Remember that ultimately they are the parents, and they are responsible for their own decisions.
- Cultivate a close relationship with your **siblings**, when young. The understanding and bonding developed over time will promote mutual care and concern in later years.



### b) With Your Friends

Keep in close touch with friends and acquaintances by calling or visiting them. Make friends with your neighbours and residents in your community. Offer your help where possible.

# Planning for a Financially Secure Retirement

You should plan with two main aims:-

- To guarantee that at least part of your money is absolutely safe and will bring in an assured income (ie **savings**).
- To set aside some funds for **investment** so as to increase your savings.



## CPF -

### Your Social Security Saving Plan

The CPF is a comprehensive social security savings plan, which has provided many working Singaporeans with a sense of financial security and confidence in their old age. Today, the overall scope and benefits of the CPF encompass the following:

- Retirement
- Healthcare
- Home Ownership
- Family Protection
- Asset Enhancement

All these serve the primary purpose of providing for the CPF members' old age. Members should therefore plan their CPF well, whether in using it to purchase property, investments, insurance or leaving it as cash savings, so that it will provide them with a comfortable retirement later on.

### a) Retiring in comfort starts with early planning.

Planning for your retirement is important. Try asking yourself the following questions:-

- Will I have enough cash for my retirement?  
Plan the use of your CPF savings for retirement carefully.
- Medical expenses?  
Saving for future medical expenses is important as the need for medical care increases significantly, as one grows older. So use your Medisave savings wisely i.e. staying in affordable wards when hospitalised.
- Thinking of buying a house?  
Map out your finances carefully. Buy a house within your financial ability to repay the housing loan.
- Investing?  
Your CPF is for old age. So when investing, do take a prudent approach.



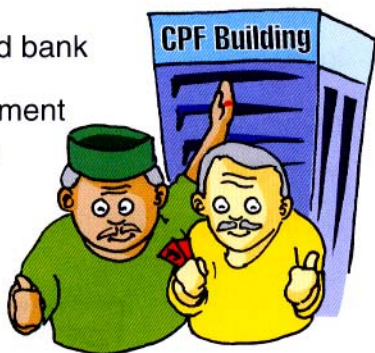
## **b) When you turn 55**

You can withdraw your CPF savings in a lump sum after setting aside a Minimum Sum in your Retirement Account. Look after the Sum you withdraw carefully as it is your old-age savings that took you the past twenty to thirty years to build up.

### **Minimum Sum Scheme**

The Minimum Sum Scheme (MSS) helps you to be financially independent. The regular income from your Minimum Sum helps meet your basic living expenses in old age. Your Minimum Sum can be:-

- Used to buy a life annuity which gives you a life-long income.
- Put in an approved bank
- Left in your Retirement Account with CPF Board



At present (July 2000), the Minimum Sum is \$65,000.

### **Topping-Up of the Minimum Sum**

You may top up your parents' and spouse's Retirement Accounts through cash deposits or transfers of cash savings. You may also top up your own Retirement Account using cash.

### **c) Earn higher interest through Transfer of Ordinary Account savings to Special Account**

Members below 55 years of age may transfer their Ordinary Account savings to top up their Special Account to \$40,000. From 1/1/2001, the "\$40,000" would be "\$65,000" - in line with the prevailing Minimum Sum amount (which will change every 1st July till 2003). This enables you to build up cash savings for retirement and at the same time, enjoy the higher interest rate for the Special Account. You are advised to plan your long-term funding needs carefully before making the transfer, as it is **irreversible**.

### **d) Your CPF is enough for old age**

Yes, there is a tendency for members to take for granted that their CPF would be able to support the lifestyle they have been used to. Sure, the CPF can and is adequate for retirement provided we consider all of a member's CPF assets i.e. cash in the CPF accounts, as well as property and investments bought with CPF. If a member wants to retain his property, his CPF would only be adequate for his basic retirement needs. If he wants to have more cash, he can choose to sell off his property or downsize to a cheaper one. Alternatively, he should put aside more personal savings, or continue working for as long as he can.



You will be better off in retirement if you are preparing for it now. So TAKE CHARGE. PLAN EARLY. SECURE YOUR RETIREMENT.

CPF Toll-free line 1800-227 1188

## **Tribunal for the *Maintenance of Parents***

- The Tribunal for the Maintenance of Parents provides a legal means for parents who are unable to support themselves to claim maintenance from their children who are capable of supporting them but are not doing so.
- For parents who wish to discuss or negotiate matters such as maintenance and allowances with their children and want help to do so, they can call and seek advice from the Singapore Action Group of Elders (SAGE) Counselling Centre at Tel: 1800-353 8633.







The contents of this pamphlet was drafted by  
Singapore Action Group of Elders with contribution  
from the Committee on the Aged for



**MCDS**

Ministry of Community  
Development and Sports

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