

# FAQs

## Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME)



### 1. What is CDSME?

Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME) is a set of interactive classes or workshops that educate older adults with chronic conditions on ways to improve and manage their own health.

### 2. How do I know if I have a chronic disease?

Chronic diseases are conditions that last a year or more and need ongoing medical attention, limit daily activities, or both. Your doctor can tell you whether your condition is considered “chronic,” but common examples include diabetes, hypertension, obesity, heart or lung disease, arthritis, cancer, and depression.

### 3. Who qualifies as an older adult?

Adults age 60 and over are considered “older adults” and are eligible for CDSME classes.

### 4. What will I learn in the classes?

Each class is different, but you will learn practical steps to improve your own health and quality of life. You will discover how to better control your condition through exercise, healthy eating, symptom management (pain, fatigue, sleep, shortness of breath, stress, and depression), weight loss, and communication skills. You will also learn skills like action planning, problem solving, and decision making to help you reach your goals. The classes are focused on connecting peers with similar health experiences.

### 5. Do the classes cost money?

No. The classes are free to all participants.

### 6. How big are the classes and how long is each session?

Most classes are small (10-15 individuals), and they run a little over two hours every week for six weeks. A few classes are self-directed or one-on-one with an instructor.

### 7. I see my doctor regularly. Why would I need these classes?

Connecting with your doctor is very important. Classes add to what you learn from your doctor by allowing you to meet others who are facing the same issues and discover practical steps you can take every day. Participants share common experiences, discuss concerns, and celebrate successes in a supportive environment. Classes do not replace doctor visits, but they offer another way for you to care for yourself.

### 8. I want to take a class but cannot attend in person. Are there virtual classes available?

Yes, some classes have an online option, and there are also self-directed classes for those who cannot travel.

## 9. I want to attend a virtual class, but I don't know how to use the technology. Where can I learn how to use it?

Many organizations providing classes have technology support available. Reach out to the contact for information on any training or support for joining the sessions. Additionally, many libraries and community centers offer access to and instructions for using basic computer technology. There are also many free services including:

- [Senior Planet](#) provides a Technology Helpline (Monday-Friday 9 am- 5 pm EST, 888-713-3495) and hosts free online classes for older adults on topics including an introduction to social media, how to use Zoom, and virtual social gatherings.
- [Cyber-Seniors](#) provides free technology support and training for older adults.
- [Oasis Everywhere](#) offers classes on a variety of topics such as how to get connected to technology, history, art appreciation, exercise, and environmental sustainability.
- [GetSetUp](#) is a place for older adults to learn, connect, and share with peers in small class settings. They also work with organizations to offer customized learning programs.
- Generations on Line provides free tablet and smartphone training through [their website](#) or app "Easy Tablet Help for Seniors," available for free in the Apple, Google Play, and Amazon app stores.

## 10. Where are the in-person classes held?

Most classes are offered in locations such as senior centers, area agencies on aging, churches, libraries, hospitals, or other community settings. Visit the [Eldercare Locator](#) for information on classes near you.

## 11. Is transportation available?

Transportation may be available.

## 12. Who funds these programs?

CDSME programs receive support from federal government sources, including the Administration for Community Living, Older Americans Act, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Some programs also receive funding from local sources.

## 13. How can I learn more about classes near me?

Visit the [Eldercare Locator](#) for information on classes near you.