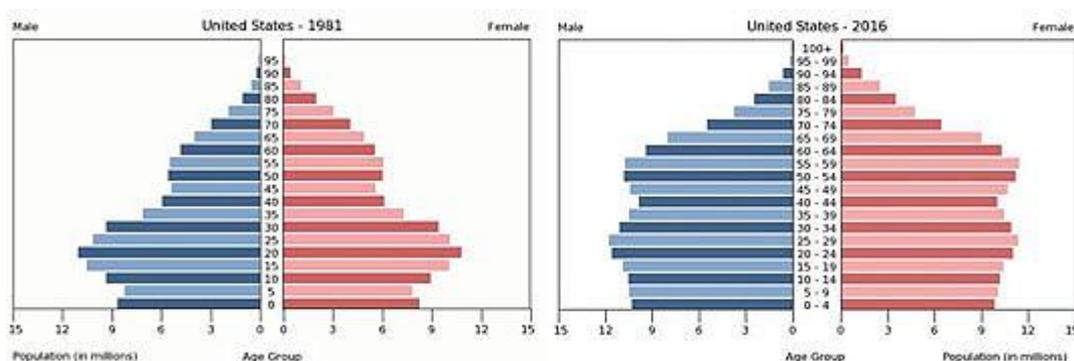




## Fighting the Grumpies

As if we didn't have enough to worry about as we age, from medical costs to fears of outliving our money and more, it turns out there is yet another threat ahead - grumpiness.

If you have noticed a lot more grumpy people about and particularly grumpy older men you are not alone. One reason is that there are a lot more older men and women around. Men over 65 now number in excess of 21 million in the U.S., while women have topped 27 million. The grumpy bulge shows up in the ballooning of the over 60 crowd in the 35 years from 1981 to 2016.



SOURCE: CIA World Fact Book

Grumpiness has become so widespread that it is actually the subject of considerable research as well as numerous books ranging from "How Not To Murder Your Grumpy" to "You Can Heal Your Life."

The good news is that there is typically a reason for increased grumpiness, and it may well be fixable.

### (1) Those Darn Hormones

Women and teenagers aren't the only ones suffering hormonal swings. It turns out that men also experience hormonal changes as they age with testosterone levels dropping as they approach 60 and into their older years. Lower testosterone levels can cause mood swings, depression and plain old grumpiness. Because testosterone levels decrease gradually, grumpiness may also increase gradually, muffling its onset. In addition to age, a number of factors can lower testosterone including stress, a poor diet with too many bad fats, autoimmune diseases, some drugs, and abdominal fat, which produces estrogen, neutralizing testosterone and causing levels to drop further.

### (2) Health issues.

Grumpiness and irritability also tend to increase if you are dealing with wearisome health problems, chronic pain, fatigue, or sleep problems.

### (3) Emotional issues

Emotional issues dramatically impact our outlook on life and inclination to experience irritability or just plain grumpiness. Stress or loss of partner; changes in living situations; fear of losing control, looking foolish, being in trouble, or maybe even getting hurt, can all contribute to frustration or a sense of powerlessness. Realizing one is no longer young and running out of time, and may never achieve dreams and ambitions can increase negativity. As can fear of running out of money.

### (4) Retirement

Retiring can be a cause of grumpiness in successful individuals who feel they have no aspirations or goals left to achieve. Without work, one can lack a sense of purpose or self-worth. Getting older also makes us more aware of our own mortality as friends and loved ones die. We worry about the future.

Curing the grumpies starts with making certain there is not a hormonal or health reason. Once those issues are considered, you need to start looking at what in particular makes you grumpy. Rather than indulging in more of that irritant, it helps to avoid problem sources. Sometimes, simply turning off the news can work wonders. Getting away from grumpiness may require an activity you enjoy that involves you with other people. Volunteering can restore a sense of purpose and make one appreciate the good fortune in one's life.

There are also times when a little therapy will not go amiss. Grumpiness may be a way of avoiding an issue you don't want to deal with, or of keeping people at arms' length. If you genuinely enjoy being a curmudgeon, grumpiness may be a tool to perfect your persona. But grumpiness can also be a form of depression that takes joy out of life. Given we may be around a lot longer than earlier generations, it doesn't make sense to let grumpiness take the fun out of life and push people away from us.