



SOCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR SENIORS

Oaks
SENIOR LIVING

INTRODUCTION

As we age, it is essential to try and live a healthy lifestyle, this can relate to various aspects of your life. It is important to eat healthy, that means colorful food that is nutrient dense. Another aspect of a healthy lifestyle is to stay physically active and exercise regularly. That does not mean you have to run marathons; you can merely walk daily or swim a few laps every other day. Most people know that other aspects of a healthy lifestyle include getting enough sleep, having proper hygiene habits and avoiding carcinogens, such as smoking or drinking. But did you know that social activities are also part of a healthy lifestyle?

More and more research has been showing just how crucial it is for seniors to remain socially engaged. According to Harvard Medical School, (<https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/strengthen-relationships-for-longer-healthier-life>) a long and healthy life is directly linked to strong social connections.

People who have satisfying relationships with family, friends, and their community are happier, have fewer health problems, and live longer.



BENEFITS FOR SOCIAL SENIORS

Seniors who remain engaged in social activities can reap a multitude of benefits associated with that engagement. As we age, our brain chemistry physically changes, making it harder to remember items or to learn new information. These changes in brain chemistry can lead to cognitive impairment so severe it eventually develops into dementia. In helping your elderly loved one to interact with their fellow peers and keeping their mind stimulated, it can actually help them slow down or possibly prevent the progression of dementia. According to the National Institute of Health, seniors that are highly social have a 70% lower chance of intellectual decline!



OTHER BENEFITS OF SENIORS PARTAKING IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES COULD BE;

- Reduce the chances of depression or feeling lonely
- Lower blood pressure (i.e. physical, social interaction such as hand holding)
- Reduce risk of Alzheimer's Disease
- Improve gut functions
- Reduce risk of cardiovascular problems
- Regulate insulin production
- Reduce risk of rheumatoid arthritis
- Reduce levels of stress
- Reduce risk of osteoporosis
- Reduce risk of some cancers



There are various ways that these benefits play a key role in you or your loved one's health. [Oaks Senior Living](#) knows how important it is for seniors to remain social and reap these benefits. Now that we have a better grasp of what being social can do for the senior in your life, it is also essential to understand what happens when there is no effort to them being socially engaged.



SOCIAL ISOLATION

It is essential to understand the effects of social isolation and how it is a genuine threat to our senior population. This issue affects seniors more often than the younger generation due to the rapid advance in technology. Young adults can text an emoji or type a few clicks and be connected with someone on the other side of the world. Most seniors do not utilize or fully understand all the forms of social media or other technology that are available nowadays.

Other factors that put seniors at a higher risk for social isolation is the death of loved ones. It is inevitable that as we age, we lose people close to us and if no one reaches out, it can result in withdrawing from society. That is why friends, caregivers and especially family members of seniors need to be extremely aware of seniors facing social isolation.



social isolation,
noun, Sociology.

“A state or process in which persons, groups, or cultures lose or do not have communication or cooperation with one another, often resulting in open conflict.”

Source: [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com)



DANGERS OF LIVING ALONE

When seniors do not participate in social activities and face social isolation, various vulnerabilities can arise. The physical dangers of living alone can be exemplified if an emergency situation arises. If a senior is at home alone and they slip or fall, it could be a very long time before someone knows they are in danger. Some seniors also face medication overdose if they become confused or have issues correctly reading medication instructions. Other accidents could also arise from being unable to maintain housekeeping or proper meal preparation.

When your loved one faces loneliness, their health can also be at risk. As discussed earlier, there are various health benefits from remaining social but what happens when the opposite sets in.

BEING ALONE, SOCIALLY ISOLATED, OR FEELING LONELY CAN ALL LEAD TO:

- Mental Issues such as dementia, depression or Alzheimer's
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Overeating
- Malnutrition
- Other serious health issues



All of these issues and more can arise when a senior lives alone or is not participating in activities that are socially engaging. Luckily there are ways to combat the dangers of social isolation.



WAYS FOR SENIORS TO STAY SAFE AND SOCIAL

One way to keep your older loved ones physically safe is to provide various types of medical alert systems such as motion sensors, to check for movement daily, or emergency call pendants for those who live alone. You can also have your older loved ones move in with you or other family members. However, the safest and best way to ensure seniors are safe and participating in social activities is to move them into a senior living community.

1. Senior Living Community

Transporting your elderly loved one is the number one solution to all issues a senior may face with isolation. Oaks Assisted Living Communities offer seniors a chance to live an energetic and social lifestyle with like-minded individuals. They also strive to ensure all residents are living a balanced lifestyle full of social interaction in group outings and activities. If the senior in your life is experiencing any cognitive impairments, an Oaks Memory Care community may be better suited to their needs.

2. Respite Care

If your loved one is not ready for the transition into senior living, respite care is the next best thing. Respite care is a temporary service to help care for loved ones to help eliminate isolation dangers. There are activities that are planned for social interaction and mental stimulation all while having the care of your loved one being attended to. Respite is also a great solution for caregivers who are burnt out and need a break from caring for their loved one.

Highly trained staff at Oaks Senior Living communities ensure residents are safe and adequately cared for, eliminating the dangers of living alone.

3. Nurture The Network

Just because your loved one does not utilize social media does not mean that they cannot learn. Help them nurture their social network by teaching them how to use various platforms such as Facebook. In an Oaks award-winning blog, *5 Reasons Your Parent Should Be On Social Media*, it explains how helping your loved one get on social media stimulates them to learn new things, connect with other family members, to share memories, have a sense of community, and be more social in general.



4. Volunteering

Help your loved one sign up to volunteer, feeding their social hunger and their heart. This gives seniors a sense of purpose which also helps combat negative mental issues such as depression. Great ideas for seniors to volunteer is rocking babies at a local hospital, reading at a local elementary school or lending a helping hand at an animal shelter. There are also volunteer programs specific for retirees and seniors like the program at Global Volunteers or the National Senior Corps.



5. Join a Club

There are various options for social clubs for seniors to participate in. Sports clubs such as golf, croquet, tennis, and exercise groups like yoga and dancing are great ways to keep your older loved one mentally engaged, exercising, and social. Other clubs that are less active but still rewarding socially such as helping your loved one join a book club, garden club, or a crochet club.



6. Education

A lot of people have an incorrect notion that education is for the young. You are never too old to learn something new. Your loved one can learn a new language in a French class or learn how to bake a pie in a cooking class. There are even formal education programs available for senior citizens as well! Finishing or even starting a formal education does amazing things in protecting your brain against Alzheimer's and other dementia-related diseases.

7. Spiritual Groups

Religious services and spiritual groups are another excellent way to keep a senior involved in a social activity. No matter which one they choose, for the most part, they are welcoming and encouraging for believers of any age to come together and be a part of something bigger than themselves. If a religious service is not right for your loved one, there are some more straightforward spiritual groups such as prayer club or bible study.



NOW WHAT?

So, whether your loved one is rediscovering an old hobby or trying out an entirely new one, there is a social activity out there for everyone! They can also join a senior center to find a lot of options readily available to them locally. Help them with the research and find the options available to them. Assist with signing them up and offer transportation to ensure they are receiving social engagement. However, just because they sign up for a class does not mean that they will commit to staying social. The only way to help your loved one be safer from the dangers of living alone, social isolation, and the adverse health reactions of being lonely is if they are active in a senior living community.





Help your loved one find
the right senior living
community today!

If they already live in a senior living community, introduce them to the Lifestyle Director to ensure they will be invited and made aware of any social activities happening. Staying social as you age can be challenging, so help your loved one today!



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