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Maintaining wellbeing during senior isolation

As we all prepare to keep our homes and families safe during this COVID-19 outbreak, it's important to consider the needs of the seniors in our lives and in our communities.

State and local health agencies are taking steps to ensure that seniors are physically protected from the virus, including directives for those 65 and older to stay home including shelter in place orders and quarantines directed at seniors. Many families are searching for guidance and solutions to ensure their loved ones are best taken care of.

This isolation can take a toll a senior's mental and physical health, and it's important to remember that there are things we can all do to foster connection, hope, purpose, and support for seniors during this difficult time.

Families, caregivers and health professionals should work with seniors to develop a plan that allows them to take part in activities they love, follow the self-isolation recommendations of health agencies, and maintain positive mental health.

This can include:

- **Ensuring basic needs are being met.** Caregivers, loved ones, and volunteers considered low risk (those under 65 without preexisting medical conditions) can help seniors by running errands, grocery shopping, picking up prescriptions, helping with online orders of delivery of food and supplies, and taking care of other tasks outside of the home. With self-isolation guidelines in place, seniors should remember that there are people willing to help them stay safe.
- **Connecting with others whenever possible.** Spending time with loved ones doesn't have to happen in-person to be meaningful. Video calls, Facetime, texts and emails can help seniors stay in touch with loved ones when they can't be together. Get the whole family in on connecting with loved ones.
- **Enjoying the things they love.** Life doesn't stop when staying at home, talk to your senior about what they enjoy – uncovering old favorites can lead to new memories like an at home spelling bee, a spirited game of cards, or a renewed love of art. For any activity and hobby, there's a virtual version available. For those that love art, museums are offering online tours for those that can't visit. There are a host of music options available on streaming services and singing and dancing is just as fun in the living room! And, podcasts on any topic can be streamed on a phone, website or through a virtual assistant.
- **Get some exercise.** It's important for seniors to continue movement and motion through exercise, even during a period of isolation. Ensuring a senior's range of motion is still intact through daily stretching or yoga is a great way to keep moving. Keep moving by getting steps in when you can or turn up the tunes and have a dance party in the living room! Lifting light weights at home can help keep muscles strong when getting out of the house may not be an option. Many gyms and fitness





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professionals are offering free virtual workouts to do at home, for those with permission from their physician to exercise.

- **Maintain a healthy diet.** When we spend a lot of time at home it's often easy to bite anytime we pass the kitchen. It's important to keep in mind healthy choices when snacking – avoid too many salty or sweet snacks. And, when mealtime comes, remember the food pyramid – fruit, veggies, calcium, grain, and proteins.
- **It's a great time for spring cleaning!** Not only is disinfecting surfaces in the home a recommended step to avoiding Coronavirus, it's also a good time to consider a larger spring-cleaning project. And, a spring refresh doesn't have to be a chore – seniors can make housework fun by playing upbeat music or using the time to look at photos and mementos with loved ones.
- **Spring serves up holidays that are pure fun.** Seniors and their loved ones should make it a point to celebrate occasions like Cinco de Mayo, Mother's Day, Easter and the first day of spring. Whether it's making a special meal, dressing up or sending cards to loved ones, holidays offer lots of opportunities for connection – even when families aren't together.
- **Find joy in everyday activities.** Take time to enjoy the small things – card games, baking projects, a good cup of coffee, a phone call with a friend, eating your favorite food. There are always opportunities for meaningful moments and joyful days with a little planning, conversation and intentional action.

For those in need of a little extra help at home, Comfort Keepers can help. Our professional caregivers are well-trained and have the right protective equipment to provide loving and safe in-home care. Find out more about our uplifting in-home care services at ComfortKeepers.com.

Here's a list to get you started. You can do these activities with the senior in your care or even share in the activity remotely

1. Read suspense or romance novels out loud
2. Order an herb garden online, and watch it grow
3. Order supplies to garden in a pot
4. Send your senior a coffee or tea of the week.
5. Order supplies from an online crafts store for your loved one's favorite hobby or something fun and new
6. Have your senior narrate parts of their life for you. Write down the memories and create a booklet with photos for you all to cherish
7. Picnic in the backyard or inside
8. Have a fashion show at home
9. Watch favorite classic movies
10. Watch classic TV shows from childhood together and talk about it
11. Have fun with adult coloring books
12. Paint by numbers
13. Read your horoscope every day

14. Try Wii sports
15. Make a Sundae bar at home
16. Gather items to donate
17. Organize a room, a drawer or closet
18. Phone or Video calls with family
19. Look at old albums and yearbooks
20. Try scrap booking
21. Watching the Travel Channel or History Channel
22. Voice journaling/journaling
23. Create a recipe book for the family
24. Have fun with Snapchat filters
25. Learn a language online
26. Watch documentaries
27. Have a culture day: Watch a foreign film and cook a meal
28. Visit a virtual museum, go to a virtual concert, ballet and opera
29. Play online Bingo
30. Put together a collage
31. Play Charades
32. Have a formal tea
33. Make origami
34. Press flowers
35. Make greeting cards
36. Order supplies and paint rocks
37. Plan a dream vacation
38. Try a new food
39. Watch old music videos
40. Start corresponding with a pen pal
41. Listen to music favorites; make a playlist
42. Download a new podcast
43. Make a family tree
44. Make a time capsule
45. Have a spelling bee; really challenge yourself

Let us be a resource during these difficult times. Learn more at ComfortKeepers.com.