

A bi-monthly publication for Senior Citizens published by The Wayne Herald
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GOLDEN YEARS

Providence Medical Center recognized as an Age-Friendly Hospital

According to Age-Friendly Health Systems, ten thousand adults turn 65 every day, and US Census data show that the population ages 65 and older is expected to nearly double in the next 30 years. Older adults are also expected to experience increased life expectancy. As the US population ages and life expectancy increases, the growing number of older adults, particularly those with multiple chronic conditions, pose challenges to the current health care system. For older adults and caregivers, the current health care system can be difficult to navigate to find the right care at the right place at the right time.

For those reasons, Providence Medical Center felt it was vital to partner with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement - IHI, The John A. Hartford Foundation, American Hospital Association, and The Catholic Health Association of the United States to become nationally recognized as an Age-Friendly Health System. Becoming an Age-Friendly Health System entails reliably providing a set of four evidence-based elements of high-quality care, known as the "4Ms," to all older adults in your system: What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility.

Age-Friendly Health Systems is one in which every older adult's care is:

- Guided by an essential set of

See RECOGNIZED, page 2



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Recognized — Using diet to combat age-related bodily changes that can affect your health

(Continued from page 1)

evidence-based practices (4Ms).

- Causes no harms.
- Is consistent with What Matters to the older adult and their family.

“The goal of the Age-Friendly 4Ms is to focus patient care on what matters most to them. For example, grandma is in the hospital with confusion and weakness due to dehydration and urine infection. What matters- grandma wants to get back to her assisted living apartment. Medication- can we reduce medications that cause dehydration and stress the importance of taking all her antibiotics for her infection, so that grandma can improve and stay at her assisted living apartment. Mentation- can we keep grandma hydrated to keep her brain sharp and can we use non-medication interventions in case grandma becomes combative with her confusion, so that she can get back to her assisted living apartment. Mobility -can we encourage being up for meals and ambulation to preserve the mobility that grandma must be able to keep her in her assisted living apartment.” Explains Director of Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement, Valerie Hangman.

For more information on Age-Friendly Health Systems, visit ihi.org and search Age-Friendly Health Systems.

The human body is a marvel. How the body transforms over the course of an individual's life is one of its more remarkable qualities, and those changes never cease, even as individuals near retirement age.

The changes associated with aging include physical transformations but also more subtle shifts the naked eye cannot see.

For example, metabolism slows as individuals grow older, and aging also can lead to a decrease in bone density and muscle mass. These changes affect how men and women at or nearing retirement age should approach their diets in recognition of the various ways their nutritional needs change at this point in their lives.

Any modifications to a diet should first be discussed with a physician, but the following are some ways aging adults can use diet to combat age-related changes to their bodies.

- **Prioritize protein.** The authors of a 2010 study published in the journal Current Opinion in Nutrition and Metabolic Care recommended that older adults consume between 25 and 30

grams of protein with each meal. The researchers behind the study concluded that such consumption could limit inactivity-mediated losses of muscle mass and function.

- **Overcome reduced production of vitamin D.** WebMD notes that people over 65 typically experience a decrease in natural production of vitamin D. Vitamin D is not naturally found in many foods, so aging men and women may need to rely on supplementation to ensure their bodies get enough of it. Vitamin D helps with anti-inflammation, immune system support and muscle function, among other benefits. So it is vital that aging men and women find ways to get sufficient vitamin D.
- **Consume ample dietary fiber.** The National Resource Center on Nutrition & Aging notes that fiber plays an important role in the health of older adults. Fiber has been linked with heart health, healthy digestion, feeling full, and preventing constipation, which the online medical resource Healthline notes is a common health problem among the elderly.

Though the NRCNA notes that older

adults need slightly less fiber than their younger counterparts, it is still a vital component of a nutritious diet. The feeling of fullness that fiber consumption can provide also is significant, as it can ensure adults who aren't burning as many calories as they used to aren't overeating in order to feel satisfied. That can make it easier for such adults to maintain a healthy weight.

- **Monitor intake of vitamin B12.** The NRCNA notes that vitamin B12 is involved in a host of important functions in the body, including nerve function and the formation of red blood cells.

Vitamin B12 is most easily found in animal products, which many aging men and women must largely avoid due to other health concerns. In such instances, men and women can discuss supplementation with their physicians as well as alternative food sources of B12, such as fortified cereals, salmon and other items.

Bodily changes related to aging increase the likelihood that men and women will need to alter their diets in order to maintain their overall health.



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What to do after being diagnosed with high blood pressure

Hypertension, a condition marked by abnormally high blood pressure, is more common than many people may recognize.

A 2021 report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicated that nearly half of adults in the United States, or roughly 116 million people, have hypertension.

And hypertension is not exclusive to Americans, as the World Health Organization notes that the number of people living with the condition has doubled to 1.28 billion since 1990.

Despite its prevalence, hypertension is not normal, nor is it something to take lightly.

In fact, the American Heart Association notes that, if left undetected or uncontrolled, hypertension can lead to an assortment of serious, and potentially deadly, conditions, including heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney disease.

Since the threat posed by high blood pressure is so significant, it is imperative individuals know what to do upon being diagnosed with hypertension.

The AHA notes that individuals diagnosed with hypertension can try various strategies to get their number down to a normal, healthy range.

First, eat a healthy, low-salt diet. A diet that's rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, skinless poultry and fish, nuts and legumes and non-tropical vegetable oils ensures people are getting ample nutrition from healthy sources.

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan is designed specifically to help people manage their blood pressure and emphasizes

limiting salt, red meat and foods with added sugars, including sweets and sugary beverages.

It is important that all people, and



especially those with high blood pressure, limit their salt intake, as sodium is known to increase blood pressure.

Next, avoid excessive alcohol consumption. The AHA notes excessive alcohol consumption can raise blood pressure.

In addition, despite what popular misconceptions may suggest, there is no evidence to suggest that red wine consumption is good for heart health.

Like other alcoholic beverages, red wine should be consumed in moderation, if at all. The AHA urges individuals to limit their alcohol intake to no more than two drinks per day for men and no one more than one drink per day for women.

Also, remember to exercise regularly. Routine exercise benefits the heart in myriad ways, including helping people control high blood pressure.

Individuals recently diagnosed with high blood pressure who are unaccustomed to physical activity should work with their physicians and a personal trainer to design an exercise regimen that's within their abilities.

As their bodies get used to increased physical activity, people can then work

with the same individuals to tweak their routines so they can keep making progress toward their fitness goals.

Routine exercise also helps to reduce stress, which the AHA notes is another step people with hypertension should take to lower their blood pressure.

Finally, work to shed extra weight. Each of the aforementioned strategies can help people shed extra weight, which is another step the AHA recommends for people with high blood pressure.

The AHA notes that losing as few as 10 pounds can help to manage high blood pressure. Maintaining a healthy weight also reduces strain on the heart, thus lowering the risk for high blood pressure and the conditions that can arise from it.

More than 1.2 billion people across the globe are currently living with high blood pressure. Taking steps to reduce hypertension is a great way to promote long-term health and overcome this often silent killer.



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What seniors can do to safeguard their mental health

No one is immune to issues that can adversely affect their mental health, including men and women nearing retirement age and those who are already retired.

Though the term "golden years" suggests life in retirement is one sunny day after another, many individuals 60 and older are dealing with mental health issues.



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According to the World Health Organization, approximately 15 percent of the world's adults aged 60 and over suffer from a mental disorder.

What makes that statistic even more troubling is that the WHO acknowledges it likely does not paint the most accurate picture of seniors and mental health, as depression is often undiagnosed among older men and women and untreated because it co-occurs with other issues affecting seniors.

In the past, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has acknowledged that late-life anxiety was not readily understood.

However, much progress has been made in recent years thanks to a heightened awareness of the problem of seniors and mental health. That means seniors now have ample resources they can look to as they seek to learn what they can do to safeguard their mental health.

The National Institute of Mental Health notes that recognizing the signs of mental health issues is the first step to getting treatment.

Mental health issues vary, and individuals with anxiety will likely experience different symptoms than those with depression.

But the NIMH notes that the following are some of the warning signs of mental health issues: noticeable changes in mood, energy level or appetite; feeling flat or having trouble feeling positive emotions; difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much; difficulty concentrating, feeling restless or on edge; increased worry or feeling stressed;

Anger, irritability or aggressiveness; ongoing headaches, digestive issues or pain; misuse of alcohol or drugs; sadness or hopelessness; suicidal thoughts; engaging in high-risk activities; obsessive thinking or compulsive behavior; thoughts or behaviors that interfere with work, family or social life; engaging in thinking or behavior that is concerning to others; seeing, hearing and feeling things that other people do not see, hear or feel.

As noted, a growing awareness of mental health issues and how they affect seniors has translated to more available resources for aging men and women who need help.



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Within the United States, seniors can visit the NIMH Help for Mental Illnesses webpage (<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help>) to access contact information for various groups that help people in times of mental health crises.

The National Institute on Aging notes that most cases of depression cannot be prevented.

However, the NIA also notes that healthy lifestyle changes can have long-term benefits of seniors' mental health.

Such changes include: being physically active; eating a healthy diet can reduce risk for diseases that can bring on disability and depression; getting adequate sleep, which for seniors is between seven to nine hours per night; remaining socially active, including regular contact with friends and family; participating in activities you enjoy; sharing mental issues or concerns with friends, family members and your physician.

Research indicates that seniors are vulnerable to mental health issues. More information about how to combat and overcome such issues is available at [nimh.nih.gov](https://www.nimh.nih.gov).

Travel opportunities for retirees

Retirement provides individuals with ample time to engage in activities they enjoy. Many seniors spend that newfound free time relaxing and seeing the sights.

Seniors are a travel-friendly demographic. The World Tourism Organization says that, in 1999, more than 593 million international travelers were age 60 years and older.

Seniors are projected to take two billion trips annually by 2050. As Baby Boomers and Generation Xers continue to retire, a larger portion of the overall population will have time to travel.

When seniors plan trips, they have many ways to get around in style.

First, cruising can be an ideal way for older adults to travel. Cruise ships depart from ports across the world and travelers can choose from an array of itineraries. People can travel on cruises that are at sea for as few as three to five days to others that are out for weeks at a time.

One reason seniors enjoy cruises is because they are all-inclusive with little



extra planning required. Step aboard a cruise ship and enjoy a floating hotel complete with food, lodging, entertainment, shopping, gambling and much more. Organized excursions at ports of call can add to the thrill of cruising.

Escorted tours are another option seniors may want to consider.

By working with reputable tour operators, seniors can engage in affordable, safe and comfortable tours via bus, train

or other modes of travel. Tour companies take the work out of the trips by handling the details and showcasing the best locales. Tour experts know when to schedule meals and sightseeing to avoid the crowds so that everyone can sit back and relax on their adventures.

Next, RV excursions are great way for individuals with time on their hands to see the sights up close and personal.

When RVing, the time spent traveling is the adventure, and the destination is simply the cherry on top.

The RV industry exploded during the pandemic because it provided a safe way to enjoy a vacation and get away from home.

MARVAC Michigan RV & Campgrounds says currently more than nine million households own an RV in the United States. There is no age limit to buying an RV, although the RV Industry Association says the average owner is 48-years-old and married.

RV-friendly campsites and parks enable travelers to mingle with each other, providing affordable and fun ways to travel.

Next, seniors who got in on the time-

share bandwagon early in life can choose to enjoy their travel years even further.

The timeshare model enables buyers to purchase the right to use particular homes, condos, hotel rooms, resorts or other accommodations for specific periods of time.

For example, some timeshare agreements are for one week each year in a designated location.

Seniors with more time on their hands may want to revisit timeshare agreements to increase the frequency in which they can use properties or to find timeshare companies that enable swapping properties with others so that different locales can be enjoyed.

Finally, seniors can choose to travel to visit family and relatives.

Retirees may aspire to spend more time with family members who do not live nearby. Families may want to consider mother-daughter residences or properties with small guest houses so that seniors can stay in the residences when visiting but have some privacy at the same time.

Seniors have many travel options, and retirement is the ideal time to get out and enjoy time away from home.

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Staying healthy while being stuck indoors

Though winter has come in full force, leaving many to opt for staying indoors instead of facing the cold, isolating inside has harmful effects, especially for older adults. Andera Trautman, who owns Norfolk’s Home Instead, explained these negative consequences and how to avoid them.

“The impacts of isolation and loneliness are a real concern, particularly for the aging population,” Trautman said.

Social isolation describes an absence of necessary human interaction, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Being stuck at home alone for extended periods of time leads to lessened social connections with others.

“Most aging adults want to remain in their homes as they age,” Trautman said. “Those of us in the home care industry have heard this time and time again, and

it’s an opinion confirmed by research.

Many reasons exist for why older populations stay home, Trautman said. Some of these include the cold winter, diminishing circle of friends, loss of interest in social outings, lack of transportation and/or mobility issues.

“Another final reason that we encounter is seniors who are facing the effects of dementia, who might find it increasingly difficult or uncomfortable to interact with people or to engage in social activities outside the home,” Trautman said.

-Difficulty concentrating: When engaging in a conversation, the individual may seem distracted or restless. They also may have trouble keeping up with certain details.

-Varying moods: This shows itself in unexplained changes in attitude or bouts of sadness or irritability.

-Memory loss: Difficulty remembering names or events can greatly affect the life of an older adult. Trautman also recommends checking up on household chores, bills and medications.



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Through early recognition of the signs of social isolation, help “can increase the likelihood that an aging adult can continue to age safely at home for the future.”

Home Instead offers a list of the warning signs of social isolation:

-A lack of communication: This may look like a loss of interest in socializing, even over the phone through texts or calls. They also may struggle with speaking, repeat themselves or forget their point mid-sentence.

-Changes in appearance: Any glaring changes may be a symptom of social isolation including unwashed clothing, a change in weight or disinterest in self-care.

See HEALTHY, page 7

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How seniors can engage with their communities

Though a significant percentage of individuals report desires to retire later in life, many people stop working around the age of 62.

The desire for a later retirement may stem from financial concerns or because some people wonder just what they will do when they are no longer working.

Retirement is a time for hardworking individuals to enjoy themselves and their newfound free time.

Interacting with the community can keep the brain engaged and foster ben-

Healthy

(Continued from page 6)

senior's weekly routine.

The following are a few recommended at-home exercises for seniors.

-Walking: Though the colder months make it harder to walk, seniors may still exercise by walking in their homes. Watches, pedometers and even some phone apps can track the distance and number of steps.

-Yoga: Yoga offers countless great benefits both physically and mentally. By focusing on balance, flexibility, strength and mindfulness, this form of exercise is one of the best ways to stay limber. There are even options for chair yoga for those with limited mobility.

-Pilates: Pilates follows the same line of movement as yoga, with added strength training and coordination.

-Aerobics: Getting the heart pumping promotes cardiovascular health. For workouts specifically designed for older populations, look toward DVDs or videos on YouTube.

-Resistance bands: These can be used during most other exercise routines. They help strengthen muscles, improve balance, increase mobility and reduce stress on the body.

-Lightweight training: A two-pound weight or even objects around the home, such as cans of food or a water bottle, can be used for curls, arm raises and shoulder presses. Building muscle mass helps with bone density and light weights limit the amount of stress placed on the body.

Before starting any workout regimen, seniors should consult with their doctor.

To improve overall health, Trautman said older adults should also focus on mental health. Positive changes they can make to improve mental health include prioritizing relationships, taking up a new hobby or journaling.

"As we step into the new year, I find it to be a perfect opportunity for older adults to make commitments that promote healthy mental aging," Trautman said. "This could be committing to eating healthier by engaging in meal healthy planning and preparation that involves fellowship and conversation time with a family member, friend or neighbor that you invite to eat."

eficial social connections. In recognition of the value of staying engaged, the following are a few ways for seniors to become more involved in their communities.

- **Join a club or group.** Identify an activity you find interesting and determine if there is a way to get involved with it in your community. Senior centers or adult activity providers may sponsor local programs.
- **Participate in worship.** Many older adults find they want to reconnect with their faith at this point in their lives, even if attending services had not been a top priority earlier in life. Reach out to your local house of worship and find out when services take place and which activities they offer.
- **Read to children.** Volunteer your services at the library by reading to youngsters. Interacting with other generations can be inspiring.
- **Volunteer at a soup kitchen or food pantry.** Times continue to be challenging for many people who may find it hard to cover their expenses. Soup kitchens and food pantries can be a saving grace for those who might otherwise miss meals. Volunteering some hours at these organizations can do worlds of good and help you make a difference.
- **Befriend neighbors.** A passing "hi and bye" wave may have been the norm when you were busy working a job. Now that you have free time, you can get to know neighbors better and even take turns hosting get-togethers. Moving to a retirement or active adult community with others in similar positions may facilitate such friendships.
- **Become a substitute teacher or para-professional.** Many schools are experiencing shortages of qualified staff. You may find your place helping to shape the

minds of youngsters by volunteering at schools or taking on part-time jobs in the classroom.

Seniors can be more engaged in their communities, thus strengthening their

"social capital," the term scientists often use to describe the strength of their social relationships and the extent to which people feel physically and emotionally supported by their communities.



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