

Healthy Aging in a Pandemic World:

What Older Adults and Caregivers Need to Know Now



Connecting You to Community Services

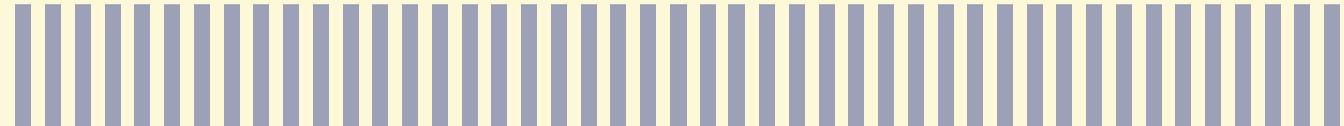
1 (800) 677-1116
eldercare.acl.gov

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted every aspect of our lives. This is especially true for older adults who are at highest risk if they contract the virus. As we look at healthy aging in a pandemic world, we need to assess the changes that the past nearly two years have had on our lives, our health and our relationships—and find new ways that community resources can help us continue to adapt, reset and reconnect.



When reconnecting with our families and friends after time apart, it is important that we take stock of the physical and emotional changes that may have occurred during the pandemic. Some of these changes, especially those that reduce our health and well-being, may require extra attention to resolve, so it is important to know where to begin. The **Eldercare Locator** helps older adults, caregivers and families find local services that can help address changes that may have gone unnoticed or untreated during the height of the pandemic.

The Eldercare Locator is a public service of the U.S. Administration for Community Living that connects people to local resources, including **Area Agencies on Aging** and **Title VI Native American Aging Programs**, that provide support across the spectrum of issues important to the lives of older adults. By providing information about local transportation, meal services, home modification and repair services, and so much more, the Eldercare Locator helps ensure older adults, caregivers and families are connected to tools that help older adults age well and live independently in their homes and communities.



Recognizing Changes

Reconnecting with family and friends after time apart due to COVID-19 can bring joy but can also highlight changes in our overall well-being and theirs. When interacting with older loved ones and friends for the first time in a while, it is important to look for physical and emotional changes that may have developed in the time since you last saw one another.



Changes to Physical Condition

Physical changes include those that affect vision, hearing, mobility and, ultimately, the ability to care for oneself. If you notice that you or an older loved one is walking more slowly, or having more difficulty seeing, hearing or reading, it may be time to act. Depending on how significant any changes you notice may be, a trip to the doctor's office may help determine the full impact and provide next steps. The Eldercare Locator also provides information about medical services, ways to help older adults afford items such as hearing aids and dental care, and how to connect with local services that can provide further assessment and assistance.

Changes Needed in the Home

Take a look at your home or the home of an older family member or friend. Are there any rugs or other items on the floor that may cause a fall? Is there enough lighting to safely navigate the home at night when it is dark? Look with an eye toward safety concerns and consider whether you or the person you are concerned about is willing to make simple modifications such as adding light fixtures, replacing doorknobs, or installing grab bars in the bathroom or railings along stairways. Other changes such as repairing a leaky roof or installing an entryway ramp may require support from licensed professionals. The Eldercare Locator can help find local programs and resources that can assist older adults with modifying their homes.

In-Home Support

Are you or the older adults in your life finding it harder to keep up with daily tasks? An older adult's ability to perform simple chores in the home, prepare nutritious meals, manage medication or handle their finances may have changed during the pandemic. As a result, many older adults have developed a need for in-home support such as housekeeping, meal preparation and personal care activities such as bathing and dressing. The Eldercare Locator can connect you to local home and community-based services that can address these needs and help you continue to age well at home.

**Contact the Eldercare Locator at
eldercare.acl.gov and 1 (800) 677-1116.**



Changes in Social Connection

A lack of in-person interaction, especially for older adults, can lead to a loss of social connection, loneliness and isolation which can result in a wide array of negative health outcomes.

Fortunately, programs exist to help older adults get and stay connected to others. Whether it is volunteer opportunities, online cooking and exercise classes, virtual museum tours or a pen pal program, many local organizations offer programs to encourage social connection. Looking for local social engagement opportunities? Contact the Eldercare Locator.

Changes that Impact Safety and Security

The National Center on Elder Abuse reported that about one in 10 older adults experienced some form of elder abuse, including physical abuse, neglect and financial exploitation. A lack of social connections may open the door for older adults to be taken advantage of by perpetrators of scams, which have only grown in number during the pandemic. If you suspect that you or an older loved one have been taken advantage of by a scam, contact the Eldercare Locator to find local resources that can help address the situation.

Identifying Needs Among Ourselves and Our Loved Ones

Asking ourselves or the older adults in our lives the questions below can help identify possible issues that may need attention, including those that relate to physical needs, emotional well-being, nutrition and overall wellness.

- When was the last time you saw your doctor? The dentist?
- How did you get to your last medical appointment? To the pharmacy?
- Have you gotten your flu shot this year? What about your COVID-19 vaccine and booster shot?
- When was the last time you talked to a family member, friend or neighbor?
- What was the last meal you cooked? How often do you eat alone?
- Are you able to clean your home? Do you need help taking out the trash or doing yard work?

Support for Caregivers

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people took on a new role: caregiver. And for those who had already been caring for a loved one, the pandemic caused a significant shift in the caregiving role they had already been playing. If this sounds like you or someone you know, it is important to ask the following questions.

- Are you taking the time you need for yourself?
- Do you have the information you need to make sure you are supporting your loved one and yourself?



The Eldercare Locator's Caregiver Corner answers commonly asked questions from caregivers to help them support their loved ones. Topics include medication management, elder abuse prevention, accessible transportation options, falls prevention, preventing financial exploitation and more.

Resources

The Eldercare Locator's website, eldercare.acl.gov, is home to a wealth of resources that provide information to help older adults and caregivers find transportation to medical appointments, make repairs or modifications to their homes, receive in-home assistance, get meals delivered to the home, identify whether elder abuse is taking place and more. The Eldercare Locator also has several publications that can help older adults cope with COVID-19. Consider reading these and sharing them to help ensure that you and the older adults in your lives learn about programs that can help address their needs. Visit eldercare.acl.gov to find these resources and more.

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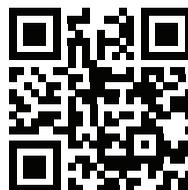
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Eldercare Locator

1 (800) 677-1116 (Monday–Friday, 9:00 am – 8:00 pm ET)
eldercare.acl.gov

Launched in 1992, the Eldercare Locator is the only national information and referral resource to provide support to consumers across the spectrum of issues affecting older Americans. The Locator was established and is funded by the U.S. Administration for Community Living and is administered by USAging.

SCAN
to learn more
about the
Eldercare Locator



USAging
USAging.org

USAging is the national association representing and supporting the network of Area Agencies on Aging and advocating for the Title VI Native American Aging Programs. Our members help older adults and people with disabilities throughout the United States live with optimal health, well-being, independence and dignity in their homes and communities.

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