

# HomeTimes

**America's Choice In Home Care**

Your resource for an at home senior lifestyle.



## How Can Home Care Help Seniors with Chronic Pain?

Chronic pain is an unfortunate part of daily life for many older adults. The National Institute of Health (NIH) estimates two-thirds of people over 65 are dealing with chronic pain. Some older adults experience pain from conditions, including arthritis, diabetes, nerve disorders and cardiovascular diseases. Others struggle with persistent symptoms related to injuries from a fall or accident or from recovery after surgery.

Although common in seniors, chronic pain can disrupt daily life and lead to a decreased ability to sleep, focus, and manage stress. It could contribute to memory problems in some older adults. Chronic pain may also cause older adults to stop engaging in activities they previously enjoyed and become isolated from family, friends, or community.

### ***In-Home Caregivers Can Be a Welcome Relief for Seniors with Chronic Pain***

Many seniors with chronic pain have difficulty safely caring for themselves, handling their day-to-day affairs, and properly managing their health. Visiting Angels® in-home care workers are available to help your elderly loved one comfortably age in place through the following:

#### **Medication and Exercise Reminders**

Our in-home caregivers will remind older adults to perform prescribed exercises as well as supervise their regimens. An in-home caregiver will alert an older adult to take their medication.

#### **Watching for Symptoms and Side Effects**

Pain medications can sometimes have unexpected side effects. An in-home caregiver can inform your loved one's care team when this happens, which could make a huge difference in comfort and safety. In-home caregivers will observe worsening symptoms, such as reduced mobility. They'll also suggest when additional safety measures – such as installing railings to help prevent a fall – could be necessary.

#### **Emotional Support and Socialization**

Senior care can offer emotional support your loved one needs on a bad day or just be someone to help pass the time more pleasantly. Home companion services may help your elderly loved one begin socializing again. This could be especially important for older adults with limited mobility or those homebound because of chronic pain.

#### **Help Around the Home**

In-home caregivers can assist with a variety of light housekeeping duties, including cleaning and meal preparation. For older adults with more seriously impaired mobility, in-home caregivers can assist with personal care tasks, including transferring, toileting, and dressing.

#### **Transportation and Scheduling Assistance**

An in-home caregiver can help your loved one keep track of their appointments and provide transportation to and from the destination. Transportation assistance can include helping your loved one get to the grocery store or going for a walk to a local park they enjoy.

#### **Respite care for Primary Caregivers**

Caring for a loved one can be rewarding but also exhausting. In-home caregivers can provide respite care to help primary caregivers take time for themselves. They can also reduce the strain in family relationships.

***If your senior loved one struggles with chronic pain and needs help at home, contact your nearest Visiting Angels location at 800-365-4189 for support. Coordinators are available to discuss how our caregivers can make a difference during a free home care consultation.***



## Social Media Impact on Seniors

Seniors are doing their best to stay connected to those they love in this digital age – but this effort comes with risks. Social media is a powerful tool for interacting with loved ones and peers, but without proper guidance, seniors could find themselves victims of online fraud or manipulation.

### *Seniors Staying Connected Online*

Loneliness and isolation are destructive forces in the lives of the elderly and can contribute to various mental and physical conditions. Social media platforms can keep seniors engaged with family and friends, including those who have moved across the country or have drifted from contact over time.

Social media also enables seniors to follow local and community developments and make their voices heard.

### *Social Media Dangers for Seniors*

Social media does have its fair share of downsides. Seniors can be vulnerable when they're trying to navigate a new and complicated digital world. A tech-savvy helper, such as a family member or professional caregiver, can provide necessary instruction and supervision to minimize threats and maximize benefits.

As digital viruses, spam, and hoax e-mails increase, people of all ages need to understand and identify them. Seniors who are learning to use and enjoy social media should be leery of the following:

#### ***Financial Scams***

Seniors are at a high risk of falling for a message, e-mail or advertisement asking for money, particularly if it pretends to be from a family member. Easy access to anyone's personal info on social media makes such frauds all the more convincing.

#### ***Anxiety and Lowered Self-Esteem***

Social media platforms, like Facebook, can cause seniors to have false illusions that other people are happier or more fulfilled than them. For seniors who may be alone and have low self-esteem, this phenomenon can further exacerbate depression and loneliness.

#### ***Misinformation and Propaganda***

With "fake news" a permanent addition to the American lexicon, seniors should be aware that certain headlines can be false or inaccurate. Major news networks and political figures can send information to support their respective causes and beliefs, but individuals need to determine between news that is helpful and objective versus biased and deceitful.

#### ***A Helping Hand***

A great way to protect seniors from social media risks is via a home care provider who can monitor online activity and risk factors. Some ways to safeguard seniors include:

#### ***Enable Privacy Settings and Ad Blockers***

Social media platforms track activity for advertising purposes, but these settings can be disabled on computers and other devices.

#### ***Supervise and Approve Financial Transactions***

If your senior loved ones need to make money transactions online, make sure approval processes are in place. This extra step could prevent them from becoming victims of financial scams.

#### ***Provide Personal Interaction***

Social media can be a wonderful tool to stay in contact with people, but it shouldn't replace direct interaction with others. The presence of a home care provider, if no one else is available, can help diminish the social media need for interaction.

Many organizations offer programs that teach seniors how to use and navigate social media and the Internet safely and wisely. Visiting Angels® provides a "Silver Surfers" program which teaches interested seniors how to call, text, Skype, use Facebook and send photos with a smartphone, and more.

With knowledge and supervision, these digital tools can effectively combat senior loneliness and isolation.