

HomeTimes®

America's Choice In Home Care

Your resource for an at home senior lifestyle.



Isolation and Depression in the Elderly

Health and mobility issues may prevent seniors from socializing or engaging with others outside the home. For example, during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, many older adults avoided socializing due to their increased risk of developing severe COVID-19 complications. The lack of interaction may have increased the rate of health issues among the elderly.

Isolation is a big concern for seniors who live alone and can lead to an increase in depression, anxiety, dementia, and other health problems.

The first step to managing depression and isolation in the elderly is to know and understand the signs.

What are the Signs of Depression in the Elderly?

Feeling occasionally down, lonely, anxious, sad, or “empty” is normal. However, if these feelings persist for weeks or months, it could signify depression. Other signs of depression include:

- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness, or having trouble sitting still
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Moving or talking more slowly
- Difficulty with concentration, memory, or decision-making
- Changes in sleep habits, such as trouble falling asleep, waking up too early, or sleeping too much

- Changes in appetite, including eating too much or too little
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts

How to Reduce the Risk of Depression

Call or Video Chat

Regular contact with loved ones—through phone calls, FaceTime, or Zoom—can help an older adult maintain social connections. If your loved one struggles with technology, a professional caregiver can help with set-up and troubleshooting.

Make them Feel Needed and Valued

Depression in older adults can sometimes stem from feeling unwanted or not valued. Ask for input or assistance from your loved one — even if they live far away. They will thrive and appreciate the opportunity to assist.

Engaging in Activities Together

Find activities you both enjoy, and plan to participate in together. Stay connected through regular visits, weekend dinners, baking cookies, card games, evening walks, or grandchildren's sporting events. These activities can go a long way toward preventing isolation and depression.

Creating Opportunities for Companionship

Encourage your older loved one to safely engage in activities with community groups, religious organizations, and senior centers to provide opportunities to meet new friends and socialize. A Visiting Angels' caregiver can assist by providing transportation to social events and can also provide one-on-one companionship at home.

Visiting Angels Can Provide Companion Care

Professional companion care can help manage depression and isolation in seniors. Visiting Angels' senior care offers companionship at home to help your loved one maintain meaningful social connections. An in-home caregiver can also monitor and report any indications of depression.

Our care coordinators are available to discuss your loved one's home care needs via a free care consultation. Contact your nearest Visiting Angels office today or call 800-365-4189.



Manage Prescription Delivery Services for Senior Loved Ones

Prescription delivery services can help seniors receive doctor-prescribed medications without making a trip to the pharmacy — particularly if they are unable to drive or have mobility issues.

Pharmacy delivery services may be operated through a local pharmacy or a national pharmacy chain. The pharmacy receives the prescription from the doctor and packs the medication for delivery. Medications are usually sent via U.S. mail, a private shipping company, or a local delivery service.

Although the delivery methods are handy, it's important to ensure older adults use the services properly to prevent medication mistakes.

Benefits of Prescription Delivery for Seniors

Here are some benefits of using prescription delivery services:

Convenience

Receiving medications without leaving home is convenient for seniors and provides peace of mind for family members. Easy access to prescriptions can encourage seniors to take their medications as directed. Some delivery services provide medications in pre-sorted blister packs, which save seniors—or their caregivers—time and promote correct usage.

Online or App-Based Management Tools

Some pharmacies have websites or apps that help individuals to manage, monitor, and pay for medications. If a senior has trouble using the app or website, family members can easily step in to help.

Automatic Medication Refills

For older adults who have difficulty remembering to refill their medication, auto-refill services will ship it in pre-scheduled intervals.

Same-Day Delivery

Depending on the service you use, same-day delivery may be

available. Same-day service is useful if your loved one receives a new medication that needs to be started right away.

The Disadvantages of Prescription Delivery

Here are a few disadvantages that come with prescription delivery services:

Getting More Medication than your Senior Needs

If your senior's medications are on auto-refill and one of them is no longer necessary, your senior needs to remember to cancel the auto-refill to avoid paying for and receiving the additional medication. Also, if a physician reduces the dosage or frequency of your loved one's medication and the auto-refills keep coming, your loved one will have more medication than they need.

Increased Shipping Time

Although same-day delivery may be available from local pharmacies, mail-order prescriptions often take a few days to arrive. Lengthier delivery times can be problematic if your loved one needs to start medication right away or if their supply is running low.

Medication management challenges

When medications arrive via mail or delivery service, it might be challenging for your senior to figure out what medication has arrived and how to use it. Seniors should also store meds so they use the oldest ones first before expiration.

Tips for Managing Home Delivery Medication

If you're thinking about using prescription delivery for a senior loved one, consider the following to manage correctly:

Get Involved

If you suspect your older loved one needs help managing medications and using home delivery service, offer your help. It may be as simple as helping them set up an auto-refill or explaining how to save a credit card for auto-billing.

Set Up a System

Help your senior set up a system to store medications after they are delivered. Look for a pharmacy delivery service that pre-sorts medications and provides an easy-to-use blister pack. Make sure your senior unpacks the delivery right away. Also, ensure they understand how to store the medications, how to use them, and who to call if they have questions.

Hire a Professional

When medications arrive via mail or delivery service, it might be challenging for your senior to figure out what medication has arrived and how to use it. Also, seniors need to store medications so they use the oldest medication first before it expires.

Our Visiting Angels' care coordinators are available to discuss your loved one's home care needs—including medication management assistance—via a free care consultation.