

FLOURISH

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Guiding Seniors to Live Well and Be Happy

Issue 24

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ASSISTED LIVING

Signs it could be time to move to an assisted living facility

The following are some indicators that the time might be right to move oneself or an aging loved one into an assisted living facility.

Assisted living facilities provide a vital service to families across the globe. In fact, more than 800,000 people in the United States are currently living in assisted living facilities, according to a 2023 report from Zippia, an online recruitment service that gathers information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and its own internal data.

The decision to move oneself or an aging relative into an assisted living facility is complicated. Though such facilities typically offer an excellent standard of care, it can still be bittersweet for an individual to leave his or her home. It also can be difficult to identify when is the best time to make such a transition. Though each individual case is unique, the following are some indicators that the time might be right to move oneself or an aging loved one into an assisted living facility.

• Emotional challenges: The National Council on Aging notes that certain emotional challenges may indicate the time is right for an individual to move into an assisted living facility. The NCOA encourages individuals making such a decision independent of others to ask themselves if they are experiencing feelings

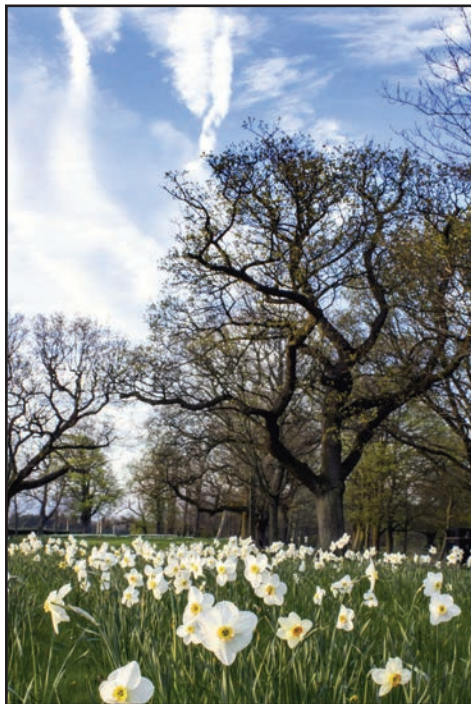
of loneliness or depression. Assisted living facilities can provide much-needed social interaction that seniors may not be getting at home. If feelings of loneliness or depression are present, then the time might be right to make the move to an assisted living facility.

• Physical challenges: Many individuals move into assisted living facilities because the physical challenges of daily life have become too significant to handle alone. The NCOA notes that individuals who are feeling overwhelmed by tasks such as buying groceries, cooking and cleaning may benefit from moving into assisted living facilities that handle such tasks for them.

• Issues with hygiene: The presence of additional challenges related to hygiene also may suggest a move to an assisted living facility may be beneficial. Staff at assisted living facilities can help adults who are struggling to bathe, dress themselves or use a restroom on their own. Family members can look for signs that a loved one's personal hygiene has taken a turn for the worse. Issues with hygiene can be a byproduct of depression, and poor hygiene also can increase risk for infection and illness.

• Injuries: The NCOA notes that falls or near-falls are another potential sign that a person can benefit from moving to an assisted living facility. Falls can hurt anyone, but they can be especially damaging to aging adults.

Continued on page 2...



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For example, the National Institutes of Health report that falls may result in loss of independence, chronic pain and reduced quality of life. Assisted living facilities are often equipped with features to reduce risk of falls, such as grab bars in showers and bathrooms and even along corridor walls. In addition, assisted living facilities may be housed in single-story buildings or equipped with elevators,

which means residents won't be forced to navigate potentially dangerous staircases at any point during the day. Staff also can respond quickly if residents experience a fall, providing much-needed assistance that seniors living alone or with an aging spouse may not get at home.

Various signs may indicate that the time is right for individuals to move into an assisted living facility so they can more safely navigate daily life.

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HEALTH & WELLNESS

Start preventing osteoporosis now

Osteoporosis is largely preventable, and proper bone health that begins early and lasts throughout life can help.

million Americans have the condition. Osteoporosis affects women more often than men, particularly because women have lower bone density than men. Loss of estrogen in the later years of life can increase a woman's risk for osteoporosis.

The good news is that osteoporosis is largely preventable, and proper bone health that begins early and lasts throughout life can help.

- Sufficient calcium intake: Women age 50 and younger should consume 1,000 mg of calcium each day (1,200 mg of calcium each day is recommended for women over the age of 51). Calcium can come from foods, beverages and supplements.

- Proper protein intake: Protein also is a necessary nutrient for bone health, says the International Osteoporosis Foundation. Choose lean protein sources.

Osteoporosis is a condition that weakens bones weakened to a point of making them brittle. It may only take a small bump or fall for bones affected by osteoporosis to fracture. The National Institute on Aging says osteoporosis is a "silent disease" because people who develop it may not notice any changes until a bone breaks. Typically a hip, spine or wrist are the areas of the body where these fractures occur.

Johns Hopkins Medicine says that 50 percent of women in the United States age 50 or older will break a bone due to osteoporosis, and about 55



- Get enough vitamin D: Vitamin D is made in the skin after exposure to the sun, but the average person does not get enough. Supplementation often is the answer to ensure healthy levels of vitamin D and by eating foods rich in vitamin D, such as eggs, mushrooms and fortified dairy foods or juices.

- Keep active: It is important to engage in regular weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening activities, which also helps to strengthen bones.

- Maintain a healthy weight: Maintaining a healthy weight also is important, as being too thin or having a BMI under 19 is

harmful to bone health.

- Prevent falls: Take steps to reduce falls. This includes removing slippery rugs and installing grab bars in the bathroom. In addition, engage in activities that can improve balance, posture and coordination to prevent fall risk.

- Get screened for bone density: A bone mineral density test is a special X-ray capable of detecting bone loss.

Women who are concerned about osteoporosis are urged to speak with their doctors to learn more about prevention and treatment.



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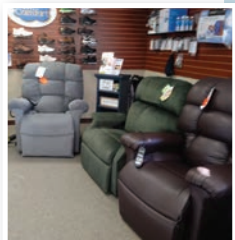


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