



Social isolation affects nearly **1 in 5** older adults.

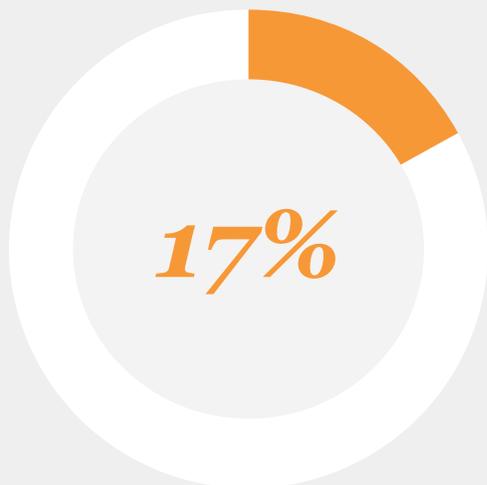
Learn more about staying connected. ►

Isolation is a health issue.

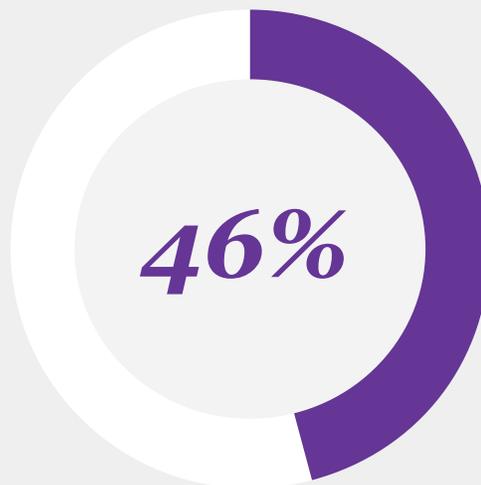
Research shows that the negative health effects of chronic isolation and loneliness, while harmful at any age, are especially dangerous for people over 50. Social isolation and loneliness are associated with:

- Higher blood pressure
- Increased susceptibility to the flu
- Greater risk of heart disease
- Earlier onset of dementia

Subjective feelings of loneliness can increase the risk of death by as much as **45 percent.**

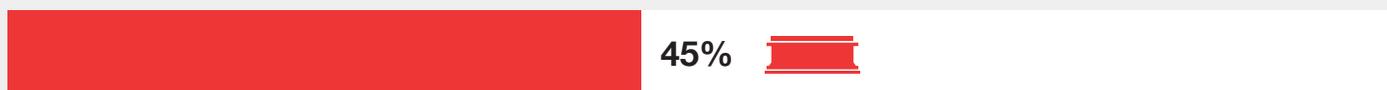
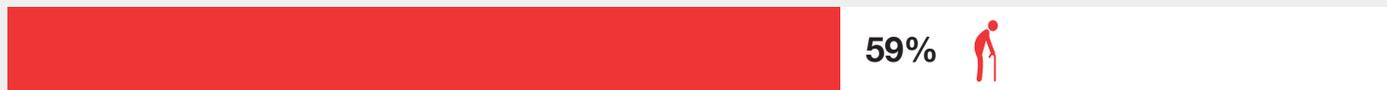


of adults age 65 and older are isolated.



of women age 75 and older live alone.

Older adults who describe themselves as lonely have a **59% greater risk of functional decline** and a **45% greater risk of death.**²



Isolation is more than being alone.

It's the result of being disconnected from support groups of family, friends and community. Risk factors* for isolation include:



Chronic health conditions



Hearing/vision loss



Psychological or cognitive challenges



Life transitions

(retirement, loss of a spouse, etc.)



Living alone



Limited mobility



Limited or unaffordable transportation options



A low income



Being a caregiver for someone with a serious condition



Rural, unsafe or inaccessible neighborhood



Societal barriers
(ageism or other forms of discrimination)

**Caregivers:*

These risk factors provide clues that can help you identify a family member or neighbor who might be isolated or lonely.

Evaluate your risk.

Are you at risk for isolation? Is someone you love? Consider these three questions:

Do you provide daily care or support to a family member or friend who needs help with everyday tasks?

Yes No

Is it hard to find transportation to get where you want to go?

Yes No

Have you experienced a major loss or change, like the death of a loved one or retirement?

Yes No

If you answered “yes” to any of the above, you may be at risk.

To evaluate your risk, or that of a loved one, please take the complete assessment at connect2affect.org. After completing the assessment, visit the “Find Help” page to find programs and services that make it easier to reconnect to your community.

Social isolation
is as bad for
health as smoking
15 cigarettes
a day.¹



Tips for getting and staying connected.

We can all take steps to maintain and strengthen our ties to family and friends, expand our social circles, and become more involved in the community around us.

- 1 Nurture existing relationships. Invite people over for coffee or to go see a movie.
- 2 Schedule a time each day to call a friend or visit someone.
- 3 Join a walking club to stay physically active. Include group exercise in the mix.
- 4 Take a class. You'll learn something new and expand your circle of friends.
- 5 Visit your local senior or community center to get involved in a fun group activity.
- 6 Volunteer to deepen your sense of purpose and connect with others who share your interests.
- 7 Say hello to your neighbors. Meeting new people in your community is a great way to connect with people of all ages.

Resources

Please see the resources included below:

N4A

The mission of n4a is to build the capacity of its members so they can better help older adults and people with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Visit www.n4a.org to learn more.

Area Agencies On Aging

Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) serve older adults in virtually every community in America and so chances are, there is one near you. AAAs provide a welcoming environment for older adults and caregivers interested in participating in social and health promotion activities, as well as a range of services such as meals, transportation and in-home services. To learn more about the AAA in your area, call the Eldercare Locator at **800.677.1116** or visit www.eldercare.gov to get connected today.

Eldercare Locator

The Eldercare Locator is a national information and referral resource to provide

support to consumers seeking assistance across the spectrum of issues affecting older Americans. **Through its National Call Center (800.677.1116), which operates five days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET, and website (www.eldercare.gov), the Locator serves as a trusted gateway for older adults and caregivers searching for information and resources which can be crucial to their health, well-being and independence.**

Connect2Affect

At connect2affect.org, you'll find national resources that provide an in-depth level of support for adults who are struggling with isolation and loneliness themselves or know someone who is. Please visit connect2affect.org to learn more.

¹Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Timothy B. Smith, Mark Baker, Tyler Harris, and David Stephenson, "Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality: A Meta-Analytic Review," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 10, no. 2 (2015), 227-37.

²Carla M. Perissinotto, Irena Stijacic Cenzer, and Kenneth E. Covinsky, "Loneliness in Older Persons: A Predictor of Functional Decline and Death," *Archives of Internal Medicine* 172, no. 14 (July 2012), 1078-84.

Partners in this collaborative effort include:



About AARP Foundation

AARP Foundation works to end senior poverty by helping vulnerable older adults build economic opportunity and social connectedness. As AARP's charitable affiliate, we serve AARP members and nonmembers alike. Bolstered by vigorous legal advocacy, we spark bold, innovative solutions that foster resilience, strengthen communities and restore hope.

AARP Foundation. For a future without senior poverty.

connect2affect.org

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