Staying Connected During Social Distancing

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April 8, 2020
A Case for Socialization

- Study of older adults in the community from a longitudinal dataset (Harvard Aging Brain Study; Donovan et al., 2016)

- Higher amyloid burden (early brain changes in preclinical Alzheimer’s disease) is associated with feelings of isolation, lack of companionship

- In general, social contact is associated with increased quality of life, reduced stress, and lower risk for negative health outcomes

- Social vulnerability increases risk for cognitive decline and chronic disease
Latest Guidelines for Social Distancing

- Stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) from other people
- Do not gather in groups or host visitors
- If going out on a walk, keep at least 6 feet from others
- If you can:
  - Use mail-order for medications
  - Avoid public transportation

Social Distancing Scoreboard:
https://www.unacast.com/covid19/social-distancing-scoreboard
Can I Go Outside?

• Yes, but with consideration of social distance practices (6 feet away from others)
• Most parks, playgrounds, community spaces are closed for the time being
• Avoid picnics and gatherings of people
• Consider walks in less-trafficked areas
Those Darn Groceries...

- Limit the number of trips to the store
  - Plan several meals
  - Make a list
- Consider grocery delivery services or online ordering with curbside pickup
- Most grocery stores are offering special hours for seniors and people at greater health risk
- Wash your hands before and after you go to the store
- Use a sanitation wipe to clean the cart or basket
- Wash your hands again when you return home

Sanjay Gupta, MD explains how to wipe down your groceries at home:
Video Call Platforms

- FaceTime (iPhone/Apple)
- Google Hangouts (Android)
- Skype
- WhatsApp
- Zoom
Tips for Quality Video Calls

• Use a stand or a small book to hold your phone or tablet in place
• Avoid bright light behind you
• Arrange your camera at eye-level so it looks like you are looking directly at the person on your screen
• Use headphones if it is difficult to hear
You Can Do More Than Talk!

• Read a story
• Play a game
• Play music or sing
• Family “Talent Show”
• Teach a talent
• Gratitude sharing ([http://www.thegratitudejar.com/](http://www.thegratitudejar.com/))
• Host a Book Club or Poem Club

[https://www.thesofasingers.com/](https://www.thesofasingers.com/)
Group Activities Over Smartphone or Computer

Netflix Party – Watch content from Netflix with a designated group

Watch2Gether – watch YouTube videos with groups of friends

Caribu – App designed to connect with grandchildren for games and stories

HouseParty – Play games with friends
Low Tech/No Tech Options

• Write letters to family and friends
• Programs to write letters to active duty military and first responders
  • Example: Operation Gratitude
• Write poems or short stories and send them to friends
• Write a story together, one line or paragraph at a time
• Sharing music with others
• Creative Conversations: 
  https://www.timeslips.org/resources/creativity-center
Outside the Home

• Exercise with your neighbors from your porch or driveway
• Go for a drive
• Garden over videoconference with friends or family
• Visits through windows to see loved ones
• Volunteering from home (see VolunteerMatch.org for virtual opportunities)
Virtual Support & Social Groups

UW MBWC Community Programs: http://depts.washington.edu/mbwc/events/community-events-programs
  ◦ Informal “Virtual Coffee Chats”
  ◦ Virtual Community Wellness Talks
  ◦ Virtual Caregiver Forums


• ALZConnected Forum: https://www.alzconnected.org/

• Alzheimer’s Association Webinars for Caregivers and Family Members: https://www.alz.org/alzwa/helping_you/education
More Information

CDC Guidelines:

Alzheimer’s Association:
https://alzwablog.org/2020/03/19/covid-19-resources-for-you/

24-hour helpline: 1-800-272-3900
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