



Our Vision: Milwaukee County will be a national leader in the prevention of falls in the adult population through community education, collaboration, and innovation



Milwaukee County Falls Prevention Coalition Resource Series

Social Isolation During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Background

- Over half of adults over the age of 60 are at risk of social isolation.
- Stay-at-home and shelter in place orders throughout the country and particularly in Wisconsin have resulted in additional older adults being socially isolated.
- Social isolation leads to decreased physical activity which is linked to increased fall risk.
- Older adults are unable to participate in community-based fall prevention programs aimed at reducing both fall risk and social isolation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Practical Tips

- Make regular connections with older adult neighbors, clients and patients; emphasizing conversation
- Send letters, pictures and video messages from children or family members to older adults.
- Encourage older adults to write cards and letters to friends and family.
- Encourage physical activity and participation in daily activities and routine.
- Work with family and friends so that computers, tablets, and phones can be configured and used maximally to stay connected (Face Time, Zoom, SKYPE, etc.).
- Engage in normal routines whenever possible using technology to access church services, exercise classes, or even museum tours.

Electronic Resources for Social Engagement and Mental Stimulation

[Friendship Line \(Institute on Aging\)](#) – Crisis intervention and non-emergency hotline for emotional support calls

[Friendly Callers \(Milwaukee County Department on Aging\)](#) Friendly calls to older adults who feel isolated

[Happy](#) - Free app providing emotional support 24/7

[Lifetime Connections Without Walls](#)– Connects older adults to others in their community and the country through telephone-based activity programs

[Mutual Aid Groups \(AARP\)](#)-Connects older adults through conversation & connections to volunteer calls

[Well Connected](#) – Virtual classes, conversations and activities by phone. Available in English & Spanish

References

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Landeiro F, Barrows P, Nuttall Musson E, *et al* Reducing social isolation and loneliness in older people: a systematic review protocol *BMJ Open* 2017;7:e013778. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2016-013778