

Feeling Lonely or Socially Isolated?



Everyone needs social connections to survive and thrive. But as people age, they often spend more time alone. Being alone makes people more vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation. Studies show that loneliness and social isolation are linked to higher risks for serious health problems such as heart disease, depression, and cognitive decline.

Are You at Risk?

You or a loved one may be more likely to feel lonely or socially isolated if any of the following apply:

- Live alone
- Can't leave home
- Are a caregiver
- Have trouble hearing
- Had a major loss or life change, such as the death of a partner
- Live in a rural and/or unsafe neighborhood
- Feel a lack of purpose

If you are feeling lonely or isolated, talk with your doctor about your concerns.

Tips for Staying Connected

You can help protect against the negative effects of loneliness and social isolation by staying active and connecting with others. Consider these tips:

- Schedule time each day to contact family, friends, and neighbors in person, by phone, email, video chat, or social media.
- Restart an old hobby.
- Take a class to learn something new. Sign up for an online or in-person class at your local public library or community center.
- Volunteer to help others in your community.
- Adopt a pet if you are able to care for them.

For More Information

Find tips and resources at www.nia.nih.gov/CommitToConnect, or call the Eldercare Locator at **800-677-1116** to connect with resources and services in your community.

