

# HABITS FOR SENIORS

FAMILY CAREGIVERS



Habits for Seniors

## 7 Habits Every Senior Should have in 2020

*Start new habits this year for better health. Seniors can change their lifestyle and start practicing these 7 new healthy habits this year.*

A new year is the perfect time to start putting new habits in place. New year's signify fresh starts, rebirths, and second chances. So what better time to help older adults change their lifestyle and start practicing new habits than in the New Year?

Here are seven habits every senior should have in 2020.

### 1. Focus on prevention

Seniors can be proactive in their health by getting regular checkups. Having regular doctor appointments to check on things like cholesterol, heart problems, blood pressure and more can alert seniors of problems early on and make them more manageable. Getting regular screenings for things like colon, prostate and breast cancer can catch problems early so that treatment can be given immediately.

Even when individuals feel fine and healthy, they should visit their healthcare provider on a regular basis to help avoid problems in the future. Caregivers can help make appointments, provide transportation to appointments and help with any necessary follow up.



### 2. Get social

Doing activities with others and being social can help seniors' mental and physical health. ([www.greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://www.greatergood.berkeley.edu)) Since health and social activities tend to decline with age, it can be especially beneficial for seniors to get involved in social activities. Many studies are showing how being involved in a community can help maximize sharing, friendship, health and happiness later in life. Caregivers can help older adults find bingo nights, book clubs, church events or other activities that they can attend. Find out what they like doing and take them to different events to see what is most enjoyable.



### 3. Keep your mind sharp

Doing mental activities that stimulate the brain will help ward off decline in mental health and keep seniors' minds sharp. Activities like crossword puzzles, bingo, board games, painting, arts and crafts, storytelling and computer activities are all things that seniors can participate in and can be beneficial to their health. A [study](http://seniors.lovetoknow.com) by the New England Journal of Medicine ([seniors.lovetoknow.com](http://seniors.lovetoknow.com)) suggests that it doesn't matter what activities seniors participate in, as long as they are doing new and different ones that encourage them to use their brains.



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## 4. Be physically active

Mobility can be more difficult with age, but it's important for seniors to continue to exercise as they age. Regular exercise can help improve balance, flexibility, is good for your heart, and can even improve the health of people who are frail or who have age-related diseases. ([nih.seniorhealth.gov](http://nih.seniorhealth.gov)) Being physically active can even potentially prevent or delay disease and help ward off diseases such as Alzheimer's and dementia. ([www.time.com](http://www.time.com)) Caregivers can go for walks with seniors, do strength training exercises at home, or provide transportation to and from local exercise classes.



## 5. Pay attention to eyes and ears

Getting annual eye exams and biannual dental exams can help seniors' overall health. Having the proper prescription can help reduce a senior's chances of falling. The risk of cavities also increases with age, so getting a dental checkup every six months is important. Many mouth infections can be linked to other health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke. In fact, new research suggests good oral health is essential to good overall health and quality of life. ([www.deltadentalins.com](http://www.deltadentalins.com))



## 6. Make healthy food choices

Making healthy food choices is important at any age. As people age, making healthy choices becomes increasingly important. Eating well can help maintain good bone health, weight, and can reduce the risk of stroke, heart disease and diabetes. Meal planning and cooking for one can be difficult, so it can be helpful for caregivers to go grocery shopping with seniors and help them with some of the meal prep. Adding herbs and spices to food can enhance the flavor as some foods lose flavor as people age.



## 7. Manage medicines

As people age, they often find themselves on more and more medications. Caregivers can regularly go over medications with physicians to find out any drug interactions. Caregivers can also watch seniors for new symptoms from medications such as drowsiness, loss of appetite, or allergic reactions. Paying close attention to how these medications affect seniors can impact their overall quality of life.



### Home Care Tip:

Accountability can be a great way for seniors to stay on target. Pair them up with a friend or neighbor who is committed to healthy lifestyle habits as well so they can keep each other accountable.