

# Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults

Created by Zoe Fagan

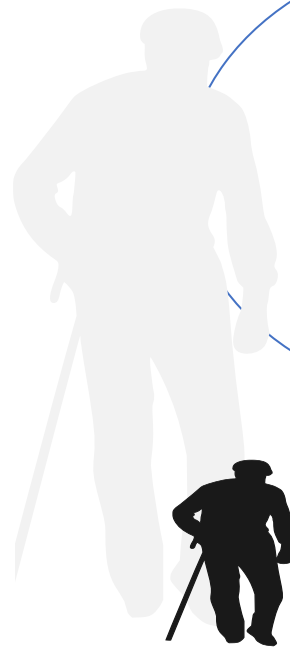


## Health Risks

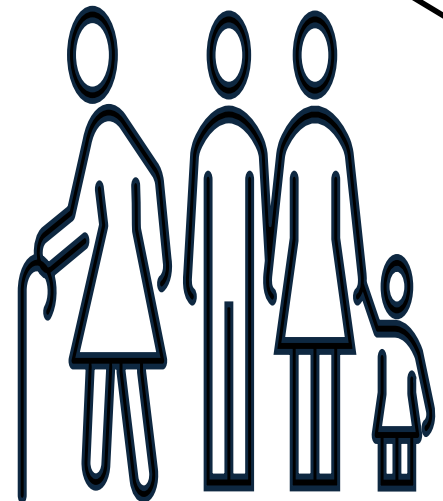
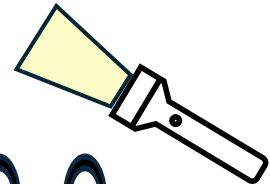
- Lack of social connection is associated with poorer mental and physical health outcomes.
- Social isolation and loneliness increase risk of illnesses such as high blood pressure, depression, Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and others (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019).
- Recently losing a spouse or visiting children and/or grandchildren less than yearly puts older adults at risk of loneliness (2019).

## Why?

- Older adults who are lonely or isolated may become physically inactive.
- Isolated and lonely older adults are also more likely to engage in health-risk behaviors, like smoking or drinking (Shankar A. et al., 2011).



Social Isolation is an objective measure of social connection. Loneliness is perceived as lack of social connection. Social connection is important for well-being!



## How to Help



- Spend time with a loved one.
- Bring out the board games or deck of cards!
- Plan a social activity with members of a nursing home.

## References

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2019, April 23). *Social isolation, loneliness in older people pose health risks*. National Institute on Aging. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/social-isolation-loneliness-older-people-pose-health-risks>

Shankar A, McMunn A, Banks J, Steptoe A. Loneliness, social isolation, and behavioral and biological health indicators in older adults. *Health Psychol.* 2011 Jul;30(4):377-85. doi: 10.1037/a0022826. PMID: 21534675.