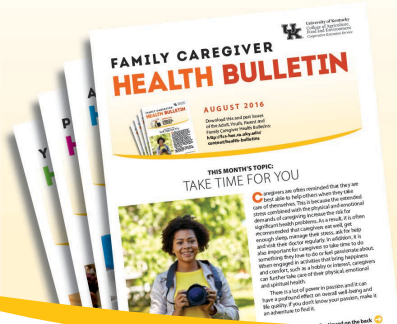




University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service

# FAMILY CAREGIVER HEALTH BULLETIN



**AUGUST 2017**

Download this and past issues  
of the Adult, Youth, Parent and  
Family Caregiver Health Bulletins:  
[http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/  
content/health-bulletins](http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/health-bulletins)

## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

# SOCIAL ACTIVITY AFFECTS HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND OVERALL WELL-BEING



**O**lder adults are more likely to report a sense of health and happiness if they are engaged in meaningful social activity, such as spending time with family, volunteering in the community or involved with intergenerational activity.

We encourage children to be social so that they can build friendships, learn how to interact in the world and so that they can help brains and bodies grow. For adults, social activity can counterbalance stress, keep us active and connected, help us learn new skills and stimulate the mind.

A wide range of social networks can help us build and maintain social networks.

**Continued on the back** ➔



**Cooperative Extension Service**  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
4-H Youth Development  
Community and Economic Development

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.  
LEXINGTON, KY 40546



Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

# Social engagement can enhance cognitive function and reduce the risk of cognitive decline and depression.

## ➔ Continued from page 1

Social activity is associated with multiple benefits that positively affect mental and physical health and overall well-being:

- Social engagement enhances longevity.
- Interaction with multi-generations provides a sense of purpose and a way to “give back”.
- Social engagement can enhance cognitive function and reduce the risk of cognitive decline and depression.
- Involvement in professionally-led community-based settings/programs improves life quality .
- Regular social activity boosts self-esteem and lowers reports of feeling lonely and dissatisfied with life.
- Social engagement reduces the risk of cardiovascular problems, arthritis and even Alzheimer’s disease.

*Older adults are more likely to report a sense of health and happiness if they are engaged in meaningful social activity, such as spending time with family, volunteering in the community or involved with intergenerational activity.*

Because of the known benefits associated with social activity, it is important to support social engagement among older adults and help them expand their networks and the reach of various aging networks to more effectively serve older adults.

#### REFERENCES:

- Antonucci TC. Social relations. (2001). In: Birren JE, Schaie KW, editors. Handbook of the psychology of aging. San Diego: Academic Press; 2001. pp. 427–453.
- Antonucci TC, Fuhrer R, Dartigues JF. (1997). Social relations and depressive symptomatology in a sample of community-dwelling French older adults. Psychology and Aging. 1997;12:189–195.
- Administration on Aging. (2017). Engagement and older adult resource. Retrieved June 7, 2017 from <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=291691> (HHS-2017-ACL-AOA-EECC-0211-Full Announcement)



- Cohen, GD., Perlstein, S., Chapline, J., Kelly, J., Firth, KM., Simmens, S. (2006). The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on the Physical Health, Mental Health, and Social Functioning of Older Adults. Gerontologist 2006; 46 (6): 726-734. doi: 10.1093/geront/46.6.726
- Cornwell, EY., Waite, LJ. (2009). Social Disconnectedness, Perceived Isolation, and Health among Older Adults. J Health Soc Behav. 2009 Mar; 50(1): 31–48
- Corporation for National & Community Service- The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research, April 2007
- Gruenewald, TL, Tanner, EK., Fried, LP, Carlson, MC., Xue, Q., Parisi, JM., Rebok, GW., Yarnell, LM., Seeman, TE. (2016). The Baltimore Experience Corps Trial: Enhancing Generativity via Intergenerational Activity Engagement in Later Life. J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci 2016; 71 (4): 661-670. doi: 10.1093/geronb/gbv005
- Qualicare. (2017). 5 benefits of social activities as we age. Retrieved June 7, 2017 from <http://qualicareottawa.com/5-benefits-of-social-activities-as-we-age>

**FAMILY CAREGIVER  
HEALTH BULLETIN**

**Written by:** Amy Hosier, Ph.D.  
**Edited by:** Connee Wheeler  
**Designed by:** Rusty Manseau  
**Stock images:** 123RF.com

