



HOW FRIENDSHIPS CREATE PATHS TO HEALTHY AGING

Good friendships are good for so much more than good company. We share all the benefits you might not have heard.

SOMETHING LIGHT AND ZESTY: BAKED COD

Here's some fresh spring thinking for you—a yummy seafood dish? This dish is sure to please.



THE MANY BENEFITS OF GARDENING

Plant a garden, and watch things grow. And we're not just talking about the plants! Read the many benefits, and how to plant one easily here.

NUTRITION: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR HEALTHY AGING

We separate nutrition fact from nutrition fiction in this insightful look into how to eat healthier.





YOU'RE THE BEST WITH GOOD COMPANY

Having a few good friends — or many — has always been golden. And as you age, those friendships may become even more important.

If you're in your sixties or beyond, friendships aren't just the social glue and glitz of life: As you get older, good friendships can dispel loneliness, improve your health, boost your sense of well-being, and even add to your years.

FRIENDS AREN'T JUST FOR FUN: THEY CAN BE LIFESAVING, TOO

Loneliness stemming from having too few friends doesn't just potentially spiral you into a state of depression: It could even shorten your lifespan.

For adults over 60, loneliness seems to increase the risk of dying earlier, according to a study in *JAMA Internal Medicine* that followed more than 1,600 men and women enrolled in the University of Michigan Health and Retirement Study.

Researchers defined loneliness as lacking companionship and having feelings of isolation or not belonging. Those who reported loneliness were nearly one and a half times more likely to die during the six-year follow-up. In addition, people who were lonely were less likely to be able to do simple daily tasks and activities, such as walking around the block, dressing and showering, and carrying objects as light as 10 pounds.

Other research suggests ways to alleviate loneliness, even in the second half of life. A study published in March 2018 in the *Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences & Social Sciences*, for example, found that adults age 51 and older who had lost a spouse through widowhood felt less lonely when they started volunteering more than two hours a week.

FRIENDSHIPS KEEP YOUR BRAIN SHARP

If you're not the type to have many friends, be assured that quality may be more important than quantity, says Rosemary Blieszner, PhD, an alumni distinguished professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, and an expert in human development and aging. If you have at least one person who understands you — a friend you feel you can tell anything — that's enough to contribute to your feelings of well-being, she says.

Other research suggests that the feeling or perception of loneliness, rather than isolation, may be the thing that increases risk of cognitive problems like dementia later on. Researchers from the Netherlands tested which had a greater impact on the risk of dementia: social isolation (defined as living alone, being unmarried, or without social support), and feelings of loneliness. The Dutch team found that those who felt lonely were about 1.6 times

more likely to get dementia, while those who were socially isolated but not lonely had no higher risk than others, according to the 2012 study published in the *Journal of Neurology, Neuropsychology & Psychiatry*.

A study published in October 2018 in the *Journals of Gerontology: Series B* similarly found that loneliness is associated with a 40 percent increased risk of dementia among participants in the ongoing Health and Retirement Study.

On the other hand, a study published in October 2018 in the *Journal of Aging and Health* found that social isolation, or a lack of contact with a social network, was associated with a steeper decline in cognitive function than feelings of loneliness.

In either case, though, the message is clear: having meaningful social connections is important for maintaining brain function.

Social interaction, regardless of how many friends are ideal for you, helps keep your thinking and cognitive skills sharp, Dr. Blieszner says. "People who are socially isolated and not stimulated are the ones who tend to have lower cognitive ability in old age."

Besides keeping your mind fit, friends can help with your physical health, too. "Friends encourage you to eat well, to get your checkups and exercise, and to go to the health club or play with your dog," Blieszner says.

"There can be a connection between the health habits you're making and how that might be influenced by friends," she says. If they're healthy and encourage you, you gain benefits.

FRIENDSHIPS MAY CHANGE WITH AGE

As the years go by, not everything stays the same. These three facts about friendships, and how they (and you) may change with age, can be helpful in navigating twists and turns along the way.

You may become more tolerant of quirks. If you've got longtime friends, Blieszner finds, you're likely to hang onto them. "Older people seem to be more tolerant of idiosyncrasies," she says. Suppose a friend has an annoying habit, like talking with her mouth full. Younger people might ditch that friend quickly, she finds, but older adults may be more likely to look at the whole picture, reasoning that that friend has many redeeming qualities, too.

You can expect to be dumped, or to dump. Norman Abeles, PhD, a professor emeritus of psychology at Michigan State University in East Lansing and a former president of the American Psychological Association, tells older adults to be aware that the friends who met your needs in your thirties, forties, or fifties may have different interests and needs now. "The other person may outgrow you," Dr. Abeles says. And that's okay. After all, you can draw on your by-now honed skills at developing friends. "You don't necessarily have to have all-lifetime friendships," he says.

Friendship is a two-way street. "It's important to maintain friends, but it doesn't have to be equal all the time," says Abeles. He warns against becoming overly invested without getting enough in return. Likewise, he says, it's crucial not to lean too much on one friend. "Reciprocity is a very important factor," he says. A big difference in the balance of give-and-take in the friendship is not ideal. "You can't be waiting for the other person to call you and they don't call you. Have a scope of friends," he recommends. "Don't depend on just one or two."

Ready to keep the good thinking going? Learn more about the community-focused lifestyle that residents at Henry Ford Village enjoy every day. Give us a call or schedule a virtual visit.

Source: <https://www.everydayhealth.com/news/healing-power-friendships-grows-with-age/>



BAKED COD WITH LEMON

Grab an apron! Let's make something delicious tonight.

INGREDIENTS

1 – 1 1/2 lbs cod – or sub black cod, halibut, sea bass... etc.

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon pepper

2 teaspoons fresh thyme

zest from one lemon

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 large fennel bulb, cored and thinly sliced
(or sub celery and more asparagus)

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven 400F

Cut cod into 4 pieces and pat dry. Place in a bowl, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper, thyme and zest and toss to coat well. Set aside.

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat in an oven-proof skillet, cast iron skillet or Dutch oven. Add fennel and sauté 5-7 minutes, stirring, cooking until just tender. Add leeks and garlic and continue cooking, stirring until leeks are golden and tender. Add preserved lemon (or lemon zest), fresh thyme, broth and white wine. Stir in salt and pepper, simmer on medium low heat until liquid has reduced by half, and fennel is nice and tender, about 5 minutes.

If fennel needs a bit longer, add another splash of broth and cover pan for a few minutes, letting it steam and get tender. Once fennel is tender, add asparagus, give a stir and cook for 2 more minutes- until asparagus turns bright green. If mixture seems dry, add another splash of broth- you want this slightly wet (¼- ½ inch liquid in the bottom of the pan).

Nestle in the fish in the pan, scraping out any excess marinade over the fish. Bake in the oven until fish is cooked through 10-15 minutes, depending on thickness. Divide among four bowls. Top with a sprig of thyme and lemon wedge.

Serve this on its own for a low carb dinner, or serve with basmati rice, everyday quinoa, or cauliflower rice.

For another deliciously good time, schedule a virtual visit at Henry Ford Village today!

<https://www.feastingathome.com/baked-cod-with-asparagus-fennel-leeks/>



GROWING OLDER, GROWING SMARTER

Being retired has its advantages: You have all day to spend in the garden, if you want to. But after a couple of hours, you're free to take a break. Getting holes dug, weeding flowerbeds, and tending a vegetable garden start to seem less urgent when you're 65, and not 35, and you really don't have to be back at work on Monday morning. But older people still have choices to make.

"I've had to adjust my attitude," says Dean Failor, 72, who lives in South Beach, OR, and has been gardening for half a century. He grows broccoli, sugar snap peas, and a few other crops, but he plants in raised beds now, not long rows, so the weeding is easier, and he buys produce at a local farmers' market to supplement his harvest. He grows roses, too, but he sticks to low-maintenance varieties that are suited to his climate. "There comes a time when you just have to say 'I'm not up to all that,'" Failor says. "'Easy-care' is the watchword."

Gardening is good for you, of course, and research confirms that the health benefits are striking for those who have reached the age of AARP eligibility. Routine activity — such as a little bit of gardening every day — reduces the risk of stroke and promotes a longer, healthier life, according to results of a study published last fall by the British Journal of Sports Medicine. The researchers studied a group of 4,000 60-year-olds in Stockholm, Sweden, for 12 years. Those with the highest level of daily physical activity had a 27 percent lower risk of heart attack or stroke, and a 30 percent reduced risk of death from all causes.

The challenges of gardening are complicated by physical limitations as we age, but "we accommodate these changes by adding some helpful tools or altering how we go about tasks," says Barb Kreski, director of horticulture services at the Chicago Botanic Garden, where the Buehler Enabling Garden is designed to inspire older gardeners and people with physical limitations to keep their hands in the dirt. Hanging baskets are rigged on pulley systems so they can be lowered to be worked on. Levers, not knobs, are used on gates and faucets. The plantings emphasize dwarf and low-maintenance trees and shrubs.

Kreski recommends raised beds and large pots and planters, which can be worked without bending over, and tools that make gardening easier. Soaker hoses and drip-irrigation systems eliminate the effort of dragging hoses around. A garden cart lets you haul tools and supplies easily.

Paying a little more for well-made, ergonomically designed tools should be part of everyone's retirement plan. Failor uses a garden fork instead of a spade for many tasks. "Not only is the fork lighter, but it doesn't cut stuff," he says. When it comes to weeding, his favorite is the Cape Cod Weeder, a hand-held tool with a sharp, hook-shaped blade.

Scaling back is also important. “Note what you enjoy most, as well as what you dread doing,” Kreski says.

Gardeners of all ages should wear a hat and sunscreen, Kreski says, and older gardeners, especially, should wear gloves. “Invest in a pair of really good gloves that you will keep on no matter what the task,” she says. “Cuts and abrasions in the skin of the hands are an invitation to infection.”

The late Jim Wilson, co-host of The Victory Garden for 13 years and author of more than a dozen gardening books, kept at his hobby for all of his 85 years. His book, *Gardening Through Your Golden Years*, is full of good advice for what he called “seasoned gardeners.” When he was 78, he described his approach as “slow, steady, safe, and thoughtful, ... not a bad approach to any task, and especially gardening.”

Wilson says that one of the things he learned was to recruit help for heavy garden jobs and mowing. He adapted his gardening style to suit his situation, and refined the plant selection in his garden.

“I would like to convince tidy gardeners that it is OK to slack off, to stop trimming shrubs into little green meatballs, to rely more on mulching and less on weeding,” Wilson said. His goal was not to talk anyone into giving up gardening as they grow older, but to convince them that they should, above all, keep it up.

**To Learn more about how Henry Ford Village encourages wellness of the mind, body and spirit,
give us a call or schedule a virtual visit.**

Source: <https://www.gardeners.com/how-to/gardening-at-any-age/8574.html>



NUTRITION: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR HEALTHY AGING

When it comes to healthy aging and your diet, there are plenty of mixed up “facts” that need to be unraveled, says Johns Hopkins registered dietitian Kathleen Johnson, M.A., R.D., L.D.N. Here, she separates nutrition fact from fiction.

MYTH: YOU SHOULD AVOID DAIRY AS YOU GET OLDER.

Truth: Only if it aggravates your stomach or digestive system.

Our bodies often become less tolerant of certain foods as we get older, says Johnson. Dairy is one of them because production of the enzyme lactase, which aids in the digestion of dairy, decreases as we age.

But unless you're not feeling well after having dairy products (symptoms such as gas and bloating), there's no need to start shunning dairy.

MYTH: YOU CAN ONLY GET CALCIUM FROM DAIRY.

Truth: Many other foods are surprisingly good sources.

If you can't tolerate dairy anymore (see above), you can still meet the daily recommended amount (1,300 milligrams to help prevent osteoporosis) by eating foods such as bok choy (79 milligrams per serving) and white beans (96 milligrams). Other foods with calcium: spinach (146 milligrams), salmon (181 milligrams) and sardines (325 milligrams).

MYTH: YOU SHOULD SWITCH TO A LOW-CARB, HIGH-PROTEIN DIET.

Truth: It's better to follow a well-balanced eating plan that helps you maintain a healthy weight.

Protein does help build muscle mass — something our body naturally loses after the age of 50 (thus the importance of resistance training). However, Johnson says, what's most important for those over 50 is achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

For that goal, she says, “practicing moderation, and making sure the largest food on your plate is a vegetable, followed by whole grains and protein” is important. One eating plan that most medical experts support for healthy aging is the Mediterranean diet.

MYTH: YOU SHOULD AVOID SATURATED FATS.

Truth: Some can be good for you. Instead, focus on eating more healthy fats.

“There is good nutrition science supporting the benefits of good monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats,” Johnson says — fats found in foods such as nuts and fatty fish.

“Just don’t make fats — of any type — the largest part of your diet,” she says. Bear in mind that fats help our bodies absorb many key vitamins and minerals for healthy aging.

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