



Aging Well

Planning with Wisdom,
Living with Dignity

Health • Care • Communication • Preparation

Opening Message

- Aging is a blessing
- Planning for the realities of aging avoids confusion and rushed decisions
- Goal: dignity, independence, readiness

What Does Aging Well Mean?

THE PICTURE:

- **Positive aging focuses on three core pillars:**
 - **Health & wellness**
 - **Financial and legal security**
 - **Care and lifestyle planning**

Organizations like the National Council on Aging emphasize that staying healthy, financially stable, and socially connected are key to maintaining independence and quality of life.

Health & Wellness

Physical Health and Prevention

- **Get annual checkups and screenings**
- **Exercise regularly (walking, strength, balance, agility and aerobic exercises) (Consult your doctor!)**
- **Nutrition and hydration**
- **Manage chronic conditions (diabetes, blood pressure, etc.)**
- **Keep a current medication list**

Regular exercise improves energy, reduces joint pain, and supports heart health.

Health & Wellness

Brain & Mental Health

- Stay socially engaged (church, groups, volunteering)
- Watch for signs of depression, anxiety, or memory changes
- Challenge your brain... never too old to learn
- Prioritize sleep and stress management
- Don't believe the hype about aging (the negative beliefs about aging)

Planning for Support/Care

- **Family support (rides, groceries)**
- **In-home care (help with bathing, meals)**
- **Assisted living (supportive housing)**
- **Nursing care (24-hour medical care)**
- **Plan before crisis (choose, don't be forced)**
- **Address fears and anxieties**

Financial & Legal Planning

- **Trust and Will (distribute assets)**
- **Power of attorney (manage finances if needed)**
- **Healthcare directive (medical decisions)**
- **Organize finances (accounts, insurance list)**

Build a Care Circle

- **Family (regular check-ins)**
- **Friends & church (support, visits)**
- **Doctors (primary & specialists)**
- **Trusted advisors (legal, financial)**
- **Neighbors**

Important Conversation

- **Talk early (before health declines)**
- **Discuss expectations (who does what)**
- **Avoid waiting for critical situation (plan ahead)**

The Reality of Aging

- **Health may decline (chronic illness)**
- **Independence may change (stop driving)**
- **Needs for support may increase**
- **Preparation reduces stress**

Common Family Challenges

- **Avoiding conversations (“we’ll deal with it later”)**
- **Unrealistic expectations (one person does all)**
- **Sibling disagreements (decisions, finances)**
- **Waiting for emergencies (hospital decisions)**

A Hard Truth

- **Love alone is not a care plan**

What Families Must Discuss

- **Health conditions (diagnosis, outlook)**
- **Living preferences (home vs facility)**
- **Financial resources (affordability)**
- **Care responsibilities (who helps)**
- **End-of-life wishes (clear decisions)**

What NOT to Do

- **Don't assume (everyone agrees)**
- **Don't avoid (ignore warning signs)**
- **Don't delay (act early)**
- **Don't wait for crisis (be proactive)**
- **Do not deny reality because of FEAR**
- **CAREGIVERS – do not neglect YOURSELF!**

Shared Responsibility

- **Seniors: express wishes clearly**
- **Family: listen and plan realistically (ACTIVE LISTENING!!)**
- **Communication brings clarity**

Common Challenges Families Face

- **Avoiding difficult conversations**
- **Unrealistic expectations: “Mom can stay home forever”, “Dad will never need help”**
- **Disagreements between siblings**
- **Waiting until a crisis forces decisions**

Take Action Now

- **Schedule checkups**
- **Review medications**
- **Review finances and insurances**
- **Create or update legal documents**
- **Talk with family about future care (set meeting)**
- **Build a list of trusted helpers/resources**
- **Start planning today – refer to “Senior Wellness & Care Planning & Resource List” handout**

Closing Message

- **Aging well doesn't happen by accident—it requires early, intentional planning across health, home, finances, and support systems.**

The goal is simple:

- **Plan early (while healthy)**
- **Talk honestly (be open)**
- **Prepare wisely (put plans in place)**
- **Age with dignity, confidence, peace of mind**