



Brookdale Senior Living Solutions Newsroom

Brookdale Gives Tips to Maximize Independence While Aging Key Factors Include Staying Safe, Being Active and Eating Well

PR Newswire

BRENTWOOD, Tenn.

BRENTWOOD, Tenn., Aug. 20, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Brookdale understands the importance for seniors to maintain and maximize their independence as they age. There comes a time when seniors look to others, including their adult children, for guidance and support, and Brookdale is here to help find solutions to the needs in their lives. There are a few key things seniors can do to help keep themselves independent for as long as possible.

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"What's good for your heart is also good for your brain as you age," said Dr. Kevin O'Neil, Brookdale's chief medical officer. "Keeping healthy, fit and safe is how you maximize your ability to remain independent for as long as possible. Genetics do play a part in your health, but you make lifestyle choices that can influence how well you age, choices that directly affect your ability to live long and maintain an enriched and full life."

According to the United States Census Bureau, this year the youngest baby boomers turn 50 and people over the age of 65 are expected to represent 20 percent of the population by 2030, nearly a two-thirds increase in percentage from 2010. That means more and more seniors are going to look to their children for support in making choices. Many will face the decision of remaining in their homes, referred to as "aging in place," or moving to a retirement or assisted living community. According to AARP, most seniors want to stay in their homes as long as they can, but that comes with challenges, specifically safety.

Living in an environment that decreases the chance of a fall is an important part of keeping a senior safe and independent. Limiting the use of narrow doorways, steep staircases and loose banisters can help minimize the hazards at home. A fall can contribute to a decrease in mobility

and independence. Knowing and understanding physical and cognitive limitations, but also staying active is important to maintaining balance and coordination and avoiding a fall.

Fear of falling can contribute to seniors living a sedentary lifestyle but, actually, resting and avoiding activity can increase the likelihood of falling. Simple ways to get exercise, such as walking or stretching for a short period of time several times a day, can help to loosen stiff joints and muscles and give the immune system a boost to help keep sickness away. Those over the age of 60 should get 30 minutes of mild to moderate physical activity daily such as walking, biking, dancing or gardening.

"Movement is medicine," said Dr. O'Neil. "Fitness needs to be fun for us to do it and exercise releases hormones that act as a natural pain reliever and a natural anti-depressant. Physical activity can help improve focus, concentration and brain health."

Brain health, like physical health, can be influenced by nutrition. Dr. O'Neil says that research has shown the risk of developing Alzheimer's and related dementias can be reduced by a healthy diet. A Mediterranean diet that promotes eating whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and fish high in Omega-3 like salmon, sardines and mackerel are good for your heart and your brain. Brain and thinking games, along with staying socially active, can also help keep the brain healthy.

"A good sense of humor doesn't hurt, either," said Dr. O'Neil.

For more information about Brookdale, visit brookdale.com.

Brookdale Senior Living Inc. is a leading owner and operator of senior living communities throughout the United States. The Company is committed to providing senior living solutions within properties that are designed, purpose-built and operated to provide the highest-quality service, care and living accommodations for residents. Currently Brookdale operates independent living, assisted living, and dementia-care communities and continuing care retirement centers, nearly 1,150 communities in 46 states and the ability to serve approximately 110,000 residents. Through its ancillary services programs, the Company also offers a range of outpatient therapy, home health, personalized living and hospice services.

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