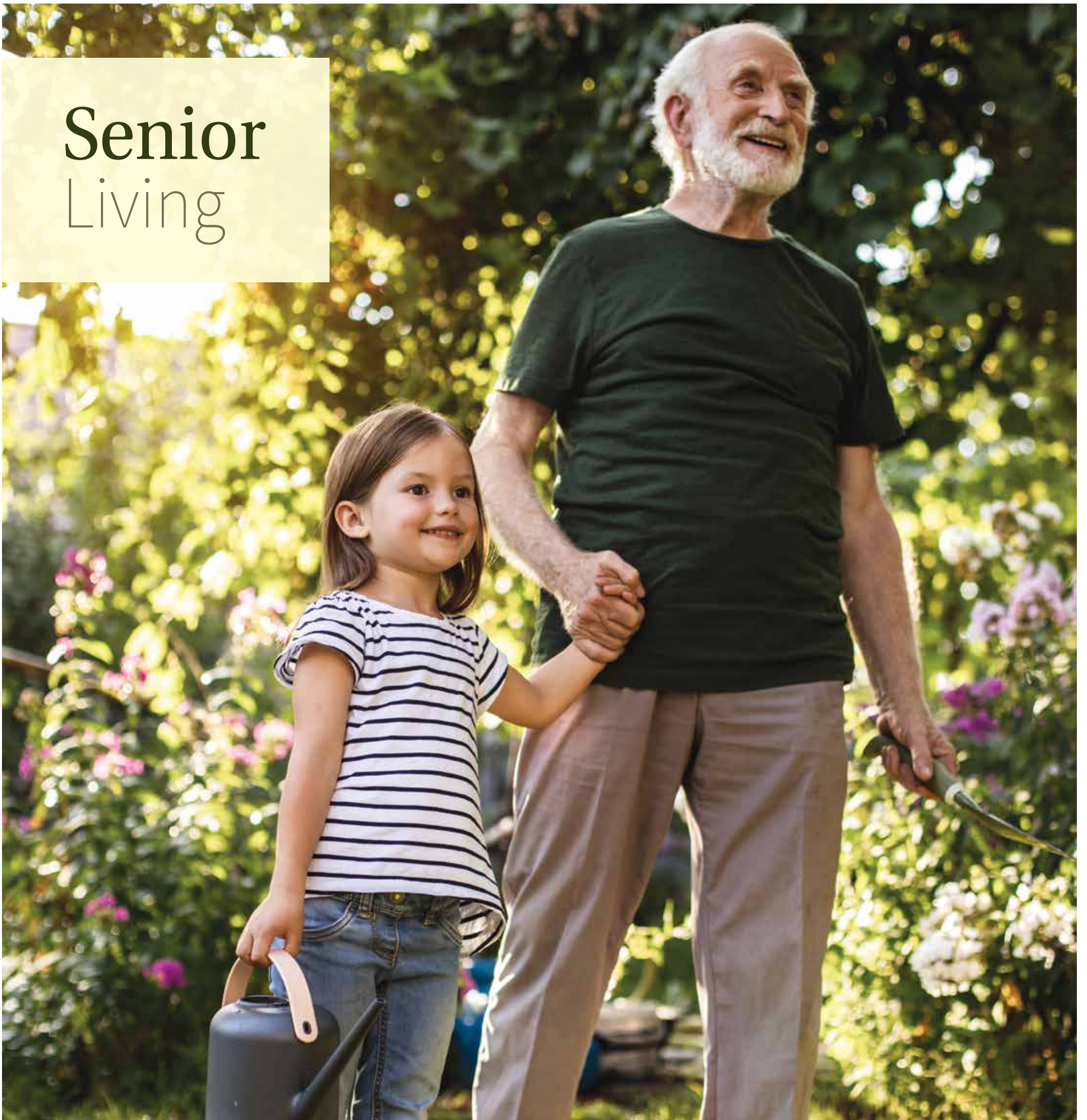


Senior Living



Stress and Seniors

Stress is the body's natural danger alarm.

When your body sense danger, your brain sends stress signals to you muscles and your adrenaline starts to pump.

Once your body sense the danger has passed, your body goes back to normal. Chronic stress can be harmful to your body and even more hazardous to the elderly.

EFFECTS OF STRESS

Stress changes your body in many ways. First, chronic stress can lower the power of your immune system, leaving you vulnerable to infections and disease. Adults are already more susceptible to illness due to age-related problems in the immune system. This, combined with chronic stress, can leave your body even more vulnerable to illness and disease.

Stress also cause heart problems. Stress raises your adrenaline, which in turn, makes your blood pressure and heart rate rise. Stress can cause seniors and adults to find relief in other activities such as drinking, smoking or eating, which can cause even more harm over time.

In all, stress can make your body and health change quicker than you can anticipate, so it's important to



© ADOBE STOCK

know how to regulate and cope with stress.

COPING WITH STRESS

An increase of stress over time can result in seniors losing loved ones, their independence and their health more quickly than they want to. It's important to know how to

cope and deal with stress in healthy ways. Here are some tips to help you manage your stress in a healthy way.

Working out has been shown to relieve stress in a healthy way as well as making you more healthy.

Picking up a new hobby, such as painting or walking in

your local park with your dog, can be a healthy way to get you out of the house and away from work life or what ever is stressing you out.

Getting involved in causes you care about and volunteering your time can help manage your stress while also making you feel good and

making an impact in your town or society.

Focus on things you can control and not on things about life or your day that you cannot change. Learning to manage stress can be as simple and as difficult as learning to manage your mind.

Get Active

There are a lot of preventative measures you can take to stay healthy as you get older. One of those is staying active as you get older.

Here are some tips from health.gov to keep you moving and active.

BEFORE YOU START

Physical activity is great for people of all ages. But, before you start, there are some things you should know. If you have a health problem such as diabetes, heart disease or obesity, talk to your doctor before getting out and getting active. Your doctor should help you determine what exercises and activities would be a good starting point.

START SLOW

If you have never been very physically active and are looking to begin, there are some steps you should take to ease yourself into being active. Begin by aiming for two and a half hours of moderate activity a week. See how working out fits into your weekly schedule and what you can take. You can always add more time of exercise a day as your body adjust to the workouts.

Choose aerobic activities such as walking fast, dancing, swimming or raking leaves outside. What matters is doing activities that will make your



© ADOBE STOCK

heart beat faster. Talk to your doctor if you have shortness of breath, chest pain or unplanned weight loss.

ANYTHING IS A WORKOUT

Working out doesn't necessarily have to be running or

lifting weights. Household chores can be a good workout for you. Raking leaves, cleaning the house or even doing some simple balance exercises can be good workout for you. As long as it gets your body moving and active.

A good workout can be as

simple as tossing the ball around with grandchildren or swimming in a pool.

Health.gov does recommend doing muscle-strengthening activities at least two days a week.

These kinds of workouts can be anything such as using

bands or hand weights. If you don't have bands or weights available you can also use bottles of water or food as weights.

You can find some inexpensive weights at local outdoor stores or even your local grocery store.



A young body can fight off most infections pretty easily but, just like everything else as you get older, it becomes harder for your body to keep up and fight off illnesses.

Luckily, there are some things you can do to prevent the spread.

EAT IMMUNE-BOOSTING FOODS

Your diet directly effects your immune health and the foods you eat can increase its efficiency. Eating a low-fat, plant-based diet may help give the immune system a boost.

Your immune system relies on white blood cells to combat bacteria,

viruses and other invaders. People who eat more plants have been shown to have more effective white blood cells when compared to non-vegetarians.

Foods high in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants boost immune health. Studies have shown fruits and vegetables provide nutrients that can boost immune function.

It's because they are rich in antioxidants and nutrients such as beta-car-

otene, vitamin C and vitamin E.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR REGULARLY

As you get older, there are more reasons for you to get out and go see your doctor. It's important to get regular scheduled check ups with your doctors to make sure you monitor your health. Your body changes day by day and anything can happen overnight. You may be wondering how often "regular" is exactly. There are a few things to consider when asking yourself this:

- On your last visit, did your doctor advise a return date for you?
- Did you go back on the return date?

- Have you noticed any health change since the last time you visited?

SLEEP AND THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Your body needs sleep to function and sleep is especially important for your immune system. Sleeping issues are linked to health problems such as heart disease, Alzheimer's disease and obesity.

Lack of sleep can harm immune system by weakening it's defenses and making it easier for your body to catch sickness or colds. Add more fruits, vegetables, grains and beans to your diet to help yourself get better, deeper sleep.

Rest Is Important

Rest is not only important for your body but it's also important for brain and emotional health.

Sleep.org says getting good rest and relaxing your muscles and brain can help restore a sense of calm during times of exhaustion, illness or overexertion.

BENEFITS OF SLEEP

Sleep.org says our brains are dependent on quality sleep, which helps remove toxins that accumulate during the day. Without sleep, our bodies can't recover or recharge.

Getting good quality sleep has a positive effect on your brain, emotions and body. Getting good sleep helps your body's immune system and can help protect your body from disease. Sleep can have a direct effect on how you feel during the day. If you aren't sleeping well at night, you won't be able to tackle the day effectively.

Sleep.org says deprivation is linked to lower immunity and increases inflammation, which makes us more susceptible to depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses. Sleep also effects your weight and heart health. Getting enough sleep helps your body regulate appetite and burn more calories.

GETTING MORE SLEEP

If you aren't getting good



© ADOBE STOCK

sleep during the night on a regular basis, there are tips and tricks you can try to get you feeling sleepy quicker and sleeping longer.

Sleep.org shares the following tips on how you can get more sleep during the night.

- Avoid using phones, computers or other devices right before you go to bed.

- Adopt a relaxing pre-sleep ritual to help get your mind and body ready for sleep.

- Exercising during the day will help you feel more tired at night.

- Avoid caffeine or tobacco products before bed.

- Nap less during the day; it can have a direct effect on your sleep schedule.

GET MORE REST

Resting during the day can be as beneficial as getting good quality sleep. Adopt a rest routine to help you find a consistent way to feel more sleepy.

Sleep.org says listening to music, reading or taking a relaxing bath will help you sleep better.

Getting away from your

stressful work during the day is also beneficial for you. When work becomes overwhelming, take a few minutes to go for a walk or listen to music away from your desk.

Sleep is so important for all aspects of your health. It's important to prioritize it and make sure you get the sleep you need to get.



© ADOBE STOCK

Choosing Healthy Meals

Eating healthy begins at home with you. As you get older, you need to be mindful of the food you put in your body. You don't have to begin a crazy diet or crazy workout routine to be healthy.

Being healthy can be as simple as eating better food and maintaining a healthy weight.

KNOW YOUR PLATE

Healthy eating changes as you get older. As you grow older, your metabolism slows down, so you need to take in fewer calories than you did in the past. Your body also needs to take in as much nutrients as it can. This means eating the best and healthiest foods that will give you the best nutritional value.

A part of this is knowing your plate and knowing what you take in every day.

Everyone remembers the food pyramid and what it contains, but the United States Department of Agriculture has began a new simpler way for people to see what they should eat each day called MyPlate.

The program helps people find out what they should be eating and about how much of a certain item they should each at a time, making it easier for you to head down to your local

grocery store with confidence knowing you have a list of what you need and how much of it.

EAT IN MODERATION

Eating healthy all the time can be tiring and, after a while, all the healthy foods you can become tasteless and aggravating. It's OK to eat out at your favorite fast food place or even have a burger and some fries. Just remember to eat those types of food in moderation, maybe once every week or two.

It's important to also monitor how much of an unhealthy food you eat a day. Don't spend a whole day eating unhealthy foods that will break your diet.

Begin the day off with a healthy oatmeal and fruits for breakfast and eat the burger for dinner or you can switch it up with a pancake, sausage and egg breakfast and a wholesome salad for dinner.

You don't have to drive yourself crazy to be healthy and you can still eat all the foods you love, just in moderation.

Bladder Health

Your bladder changes as you get older. You can't control everything that happens with your bladder, but there are precautions you can take to prevent issues such as infections and other problems.

Here are some tips from the National Institute on Aging to keep your bladder healthy as you get older.

DRINK WATER

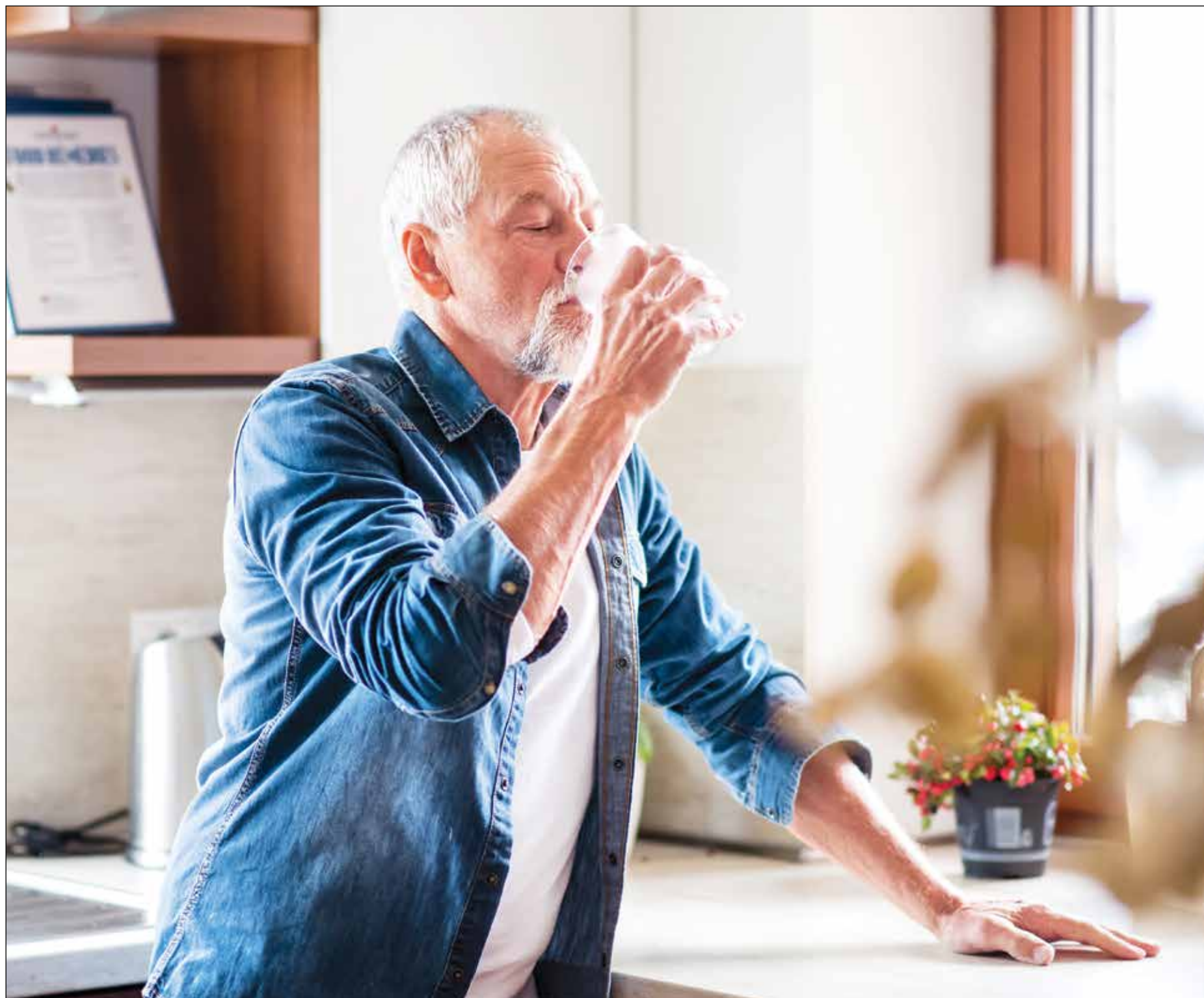
Water is the liquid of life and this is especially important for your bladder. Water is the best fluid for bladder health. The NIH says most healthy people drink six to eight 8-ounce fluid glasses of water each day. Water should be at the least half of your fluid intake.

For some people, this amount of water can be harmful, so it's important to speak with your health care provider about how much water you should be drinking a day.

If you drink a lot of sodas, caffeinated drinks or alcohol, you are not getting the amount of water intake a day that you should.

USING THE RESTROOM

If you're drinking plenty of water in a day, that means you will be using the restroom plenty of times. It's important



© ADOBE STOCK

to use the bathroom often and when needed. NIH suggests you should urinate at least every three to four hours. Holding urine in your bladder for too long can weaken your bladder muscles and make a

bladder infection more likely. It is important to take your time in the restroom to make sure you fully empty your bladder. If urine stays in your bladder for too long, you can increase the chances of get-

ting a bladder infection.

Using the restroom can be stressful for some seniors. It is important to make sure you are as relaxed as you can be when using the restroom. Relaxing the muscles around

your bladder will make it easier to empty the bladder.

NIH says hovering over the toilet for women can make it hard to relax your muscles, so it is best to sit on the toilet seat.

Take Supplements

As you get older, you may need to add dietary supplements to your daily diet to add extra nutrients to your diet or lower your risk of health problems.

Dietary supplements come in many different forms such as pills capsules, powders, gel capsules or liquids. Many dietary supplements contain different vitamins, minerals fiber, amino acids, herbs and other enzymes.

It is important to understand supplements are not intended to prevent to treat, diagnose or prevent disease or sickness. Unlike drugs, you don't need to see a doctor to take dietary supplements nor do you need to a prescription to take supplements.

It is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that you see a doctor if you are unsure of what supplements to take.



© ADOBE STOCK

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Just like everything else you take or put into your body, there are some risks to taking supplements, especially for older consumers of vitamins.

There are certain products that may do more harm than good and create unexpected risks. Many supplements contain some ingredients that triggers effects in your body. If you are taking prescription or

over-the-counter medicine, extra supplements may cause unexpected results.

Another circumstance to take into account is if you are planning surgery. Talk to your doctor about any and all supplements you may be taking. The Federal Drug Administration says supplements may have an effect before, during or after your

surgery. Your doctor may ask you to cease taking the supplements two or three weeks before your surgery.

Too much of a good thing can be bad for you. You have to consider your age, health status and what you are taking. Taking too much of different vitamins and supplements may cause the effects of each supplement to inter-

fere with each other and harm your health.

TALK TO YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

The FDA says you and your health professionals are a team working toward a common goal, a developed and personalized plan for you.

That being said, it is important to let them know

everything you are taking or are planning to take. Your doctors and other health care professionals will help professionals monitor your health and how certain supplements affect your body. It is important to understand they may not have every answer for your questions and concerns but they can consult other professionals that may.