



# Senior Living



# Finding an In-Home Care Match

One of the realities of living with impairments and the health conditions associated with old age is that it can become increasingly difficult to care for oneself.

It's why assisted living facilities exist, but many people want to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. One solution is hiring an in-home caregiver.

You're not alone in this need. According to the University of California's Institute for Health & Aging, nearly 12 million Americans are unable to live independently and around 41 million of them have a chronic health disease. According to PHI, a nonprofit advocacy group, there are more than 2.4 million U.S. workers who provide in-home personal and health care for seniors and those with disabilities. This number has doubled since 2010 in part because more people want to stay in their own homes.

## TYPES OF CAREGIVERS

This outside help can assist with household care, personal care, or even healthcare. They can help with tasks that used to be easy — eating, dressing and bathing. A qualified person can help administer medicine, encourage mobility and run errands.



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AARP lists several kinds of in-home caregivers:

- **Personal care aides:**

These workers are not licensed and serve as helpers and companions.

- **Home health aides:** These workers can monitor a person's health conditions, check vital signs and help with basic

life activities.

- **Licensed nursing assistants and certified nursing assistants:** These workers perform medical-related tasks as directed by a registered nurse or nurse practitioner. They help with personal care and domestic chores.

- **Skilled nursing providers:**

Also known as licensed practical nurses, these professionals are licensed by states and can evaluate, manage and observe a person's care and provide direct medical care such as administering IV drugs, tube feedings and shots; change wound dressings; or provide diabetes care.

- **Registered nurses:** These degreed and licensed professionals can provide direct medical care from all the things that skilled nursing providers do to operating medical monitoring equipment and assisting doctors in medical procedures.

## CHOOSING A CAREGIVER

You want to make sure you have the right caregiver for your needs. Elderlaw recommends the following tips:

- Assess your needs.
- Write a job description.
- Develop a contract.
- Identify prospects.
- Prepare for and interview applicants.
- Check references and do a background check.

## FORM CONNECTIONS

Once you have hired a caregiver, you're going to need to form good connections with that person to get the best care and to make sure your expectations are met. Ideally this person will become a good companion, one with whom you form an authentic relationship.

AgingCare recommends ways you can form relationships including exchanging stories, connecting through music, and sharing hobbies and activities.

If a caregiver is not providing the care that you need or your personalities clash, then find a new one. It's important that you form good bonds so that you can enjoy remaining in your home and all the comforts that it provides.



# Meaningful Gifts for Seniors

Many seniors are at a point in their life where they are downsizing, making it difficult to know what to get them as gifts.

Here are some ideas of what you can get the older people in your life that they are likely to treasure and appreciate.

## EXPERIENCES

Give the seniors in your life tickets to movies, musicals, music, dance performances or symphonies. Better yet, buy a block of tickets and make it a group outing that will build memories. If there is a nearby community theater that does work the senior in your life enjoys, get them season tickets.

Consider buying them classes at a local pottery or painting shop.

Buy two samplers of teas — one for you and one for them — and have tea parties over Zoom or in person.

Gift tickets to a local sporting event. Have they always wanted to learn to golf? Buy them golfing lessons.

Pickleball is popular among seniors; buy a set of lessons.

You can also provide your favorite senior with a day of indulgence. Consider getting a gift certificate for a mani/pedi or a day at the spa. Buy them a gift certificate to their favorite salon.



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## CONSUMABLES

Food and beverage can make great gifts for seniors, though you'll want to be aware of what they can and cannot eat and if they are on a restricted diet.

These gifts can range from a basket of specialty sauces and jams to a coupon for a home-cooked gourmet meal that you will come and prepare in their home. There are also many companies that will deliver monthly boxes filled with a variety of surprises from pasta to wine to chocolates to smoked meats.

## HEALTH-RELATED ITEMS

Gift a session with an aging-in-place specialist who can do a safety inspection of the senior's home and make suggestions that can help them stay in their home longer.

Fitness trackers and step counters aren't just for the young. Pick out a model that is compatible with the recipient's phone and comes with an app that provides workout programs.

## SAFETY AND LOCATION ITEMS

A practical gift idea is to

invest in tracking or location technology for seniors. Personal location devices can help people find their keys or other essential items.

If you are willing to make a monthly investment, medical alert systems are a great gift that can help a senior stay in their home safely for longer.

Home modifications can also help to achieve that goal. You can gift a senior such things as the installation of grab bars and rails.

## NOSTALGIA

Other oft-beloved gifts are

those that tap into nostalgia, that bring back memories of beloved moments.

There are several services that will arrange interviews, sometimes in the form of several questions a month for a year. They will then gather up the answers and photos and create an autobiographical book.

Consider giving a photo-related gift. Digitize the senior's collection of photos. Gift them with a digital photo frame that you've loaded with shared moments. Order a blanket that has been printed with photos or create a calendar.



# Plan for Furry Friends

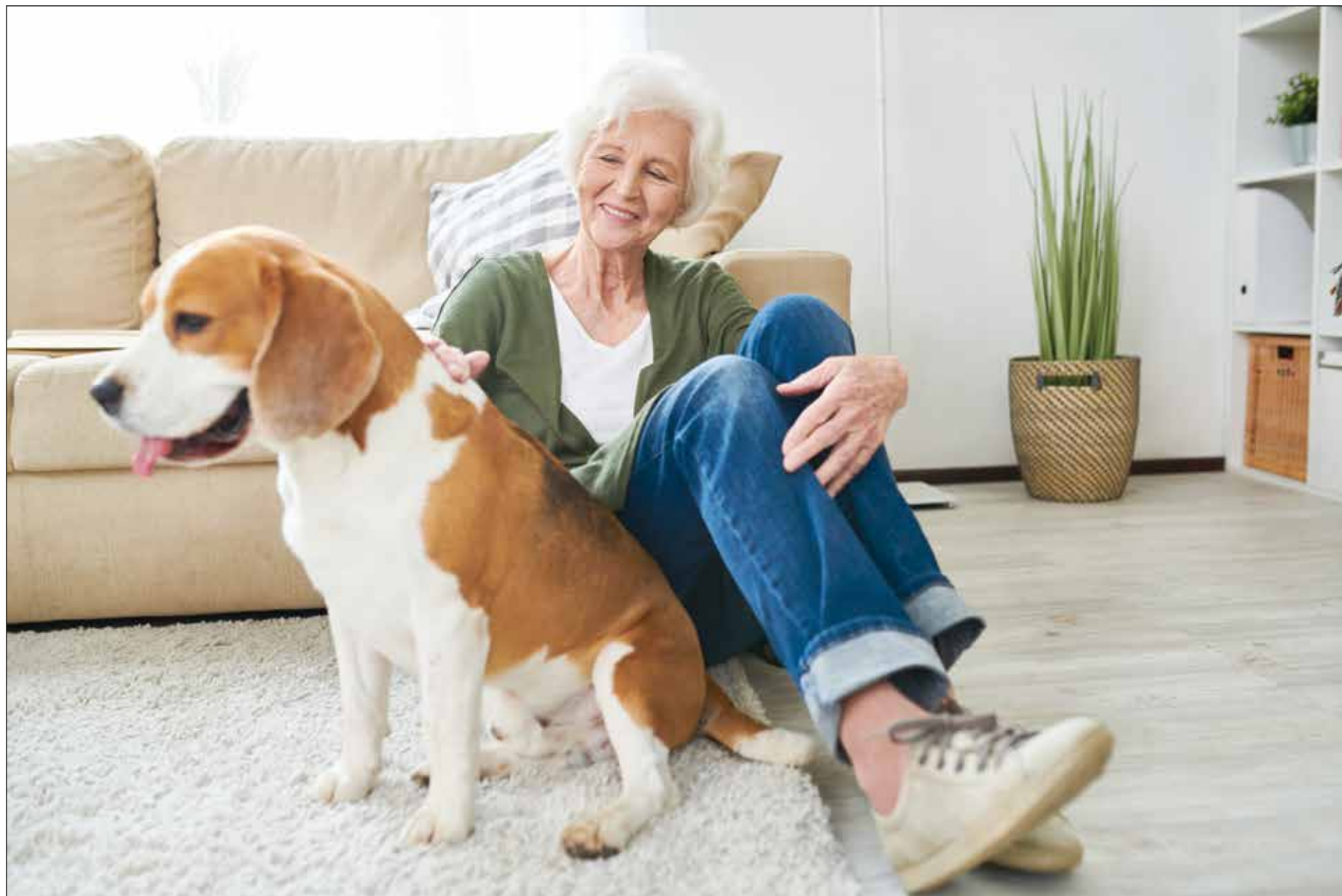
Pets play an important role in helping people stay healthy. This becomes even more true as we age.

Studies abound showing that seniors with pets have healthier hearts, more structured lives and suffer less loneliness and depression. A National Poll on Healthy aging co-sponsored by the AARP and the University of Michigan found that 88% of pet-owning adults aged 50 to 80 said their pets helped them enjoy life and 86% said their pets made them feel loved. Of the surveyed seniors who lived alone and were not in great health, 72% said their pets helped them cope with the symptoms of their ill health.

However, there is a danger that pets will outlive their owners or that their owners will have to move to a rehabilitation center or a long-term community or assisted living facility. Dogs live 10 to 12 years on average and cats live 10 to 14 years on average. So, it is important to make plans for one's pets, especially the older one gets.

## ESTATE PLANNING FOR PETS

When you are doing your estate planning, make sure that your pets are cared for. Cheryl Sanford Aston, a volunteer and board member with Westie Rescue of Missouri,



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told APlaceForMom.com that needs can change unexpectedly, which is why it is a good idea to include a guardian for your pet in your estate planning or enough money to fund veterinary care, boarding and expenses related to finding an animal a new home.

Talk to your lawyer or estate planner about the possibility of setting up a trust for your pet. This lets you legally designate money, assets or property to pay for the cost of car-

ing for a pet. A trust can also let you express your wishes about the type and level of care you want your pet to have.

## SUPPORT FOR PET CARE

With all the benefits of having a pet — and with the bond formed with a pet — you want to be able to keep the pet for as long as possible. It can be heart-breaking to have to separate from them. It's why pet services can prolong the time

you have with your pet, especially if you start to lose some of your mobility and flexibility.

Look into local dog walking services and services that will come to your home to perform grooming or scoop up the poop in your yard. Use online delivery services to order pet food or cat litter.

## FINDING A NEW HOME

If you have to find a new home for your pet, first turn to family members. These are

the people who are most likely to bond with your pet and can arrange for you to visit them.

Research a good match for your pet and make sure the home is one that your pet will be compatible with. Consider reaching out to professional rehoming services such as Rehome by Adopt-a-Pet or Rehome with Love. You might also be able to get help from a breed-specific rescue organization or a no-kill shelter.

# Reading in Retirement

One of the joys of retirement is that you finally have a chance to catch up on all that reading you've been wanting to do. Now you just have to figure out what to read.

Some of the best places to get recommendations for books to read are your family and friends, a local librarian, book clubs or online websites like Goodreads that help you find new books that match your past reading preferences. And while there are plenty of online bookstores, a great place to find treasures and get good reading suggestions are your local, privately-owned bookstores.

Or, to get you started, try some of the books recommended below.

## SOMETHING OLD

Do you enjoy nostalgia? Something slightly historic and written in the style of bygone days? While doing research for his historical fiction series on Nellie Bly, author David Blixt uncovered her previously unpublished novels. The lost novels of Nellie Bly include:

- “The Mystery of Central Park”
- “Eva the Adventuress: A Romance of a Blighted Life”
- “New York by Night: A Female Reporter Tracking a \$500,000 Robbery”
- “Alta Lynn, M.D.: The Romance of Two Girls Who Married for Fun”
- “Wayne’s Faithful Sweetheart”
- “Little Luckie”
- “In Love with a Stranger”
- “The Love of Three Girls”
- “Little Penny, Child of the Streets”
- “Pretty Merribelle”
- “Twins and Rivals”

## SOMETHING POWERFUL

Perhaps you are one of those people who in 2020 committed to reading more books about social justice. If so, here are some that have come highly recommended:

- “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks” by Rebecca Skloot
- “She Came to Slay” by Erica Armstrong Dunbar
- “Black Fortunes” by Shomari Wills
- “The Warmth of Other Suns” by Isabel Wilkerson
- “Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent” by Isabel Wilkerson
- “Hidden Figures” by Margot Lee Shetterly
- “March Trilogy” by John Lewis

## SOMETHING TRUE

Do you enjoy the exciting stories of things that actually happened, whether

little-known events or the ones that have shaped our world? Here are some readable books about history:

- “Between Hope and Fear: A History of Vaccines and Human Immunity” by Michael S. Kinch
- “The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present” by David Treuer
- “The Guns of August” by Barbara Tuchman
- “Guns, Germs and Steel” by Jared Diamond
- “1776” by David McCullough
- “Assassination Vacation” by Sarah Vowell
- “A Short History of Nearly Everything” by Bill Bryson

## SOMETHING IN THE MIRROR

Everyone likes to be able to see themselves in what they read. If you are look-

ing for books with older protagonists, start with this list:

- “A Man Called Ove” by Frederick Backman
- The Ivy Malone mystery series by Lorena McCartney
- “Prime of Life” by P.D. Bekendam
- “The Little Old Lady Who Broke All the Rules” by Catharina Ingelman-Sundberg
- “Call It a Gift” by Valerie Hobbs
- “The Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen” by Hendrik Groen
- “Mr. Loverman” by Bernadine Evaristo
- “Live a Little” by Howard Jacobson
- “These Foolish Things” by Deborah Moggach
- “The Buried Giant” by Kazuo Ishiguro
- “The Thursday Murder Club” by Richard Osman



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# Going Back to Work

While millions of older Americans retired during the pandemic, 2022 has seen them returning to work in much faster rates than other age groups.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics said that in 2022, the participation rate for people aged 55 to 64 has returned to pre-pandemic levels with an estimated 1.5 million of retirees going back to work.

AARP lists several reasons why older people are coming out of retirement to return to work — most often to part-time jobs:

- Inflation during 2022 was at rates higher than what has been seen since 1981.
- The stock market has been very volatile, which causes 401(k)s to shrink.
- More workers can now work remotely which appeals to older people tired of commutes or concerned about catching COVID-19.

• Many older people need health insurance coverage as medical costs rise.

• Loneliness has become a bigger problem since the pandemic.

## POPULAR JOB OPTIONS

While many seniors face age discrimination or are unable to find jobs that pay as much as they used to make, there are a few industries and occupations



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that welcome older workers.

The Urban Institute performed a health and retirement study and found the following occupations are most common for college graduates who are hired at age 62 or older:

- Teachers and college instructors.
- Administrative assistants.
- Nursing jobs.
- Real estate agents.
- Sales jobs.
- Driving jobs such as delivery drivers, truck drivers, taxi drivers, bus drivers and chauffeurs.
- Clergy.
- Child care providers.
- Management consultants.
- Financial managers.
- Writers.

- Electrical and electronic engineers.
- Musicians.

## PLANNING FOR RETURN-TO-WORK SUCCESS

Often retirees find that the workplace has changed since they were last in it. To make a successful return to work, you'll want to upgrade your

skills and manage your resume to avoid age discrimination.

Computer skills are no longer optional. In fact, more than 70% of employers, according to PureMichigan Talent Connect, only accept online applications. So to even get your foot in the door, you need basic computer literacy. For those who can go beyond that, IT jobs are always in high demand so pursuing training or a certification in that field can open up many opportunities.

Pay close attention to your resume, which is the first impression you make with a potential employer. You want to showcase your skills, but you don't want to emphasize your age. Remove any dates from your education. Don't feel you have to show every job you've ever done. Just show the work relevant to the position you are applying for.

The Balance Careers website offers several ways to “age-proof” your resume. Use a functional or combination resume rather than a chronological one. Only include work from the past 10-15 years. Don't say that you have 20-30 years of experience. Instead, say you have 10+ years.

Highlight your skills and show that you are connected by giving a link to your LinkedIn profile and — if they will hold up to professional scrutiny — provide your social media handles.

Network online at LinkedIn, which is an important way to stay connected and be alerted to potential job opportunities.



# Health Benefits of Yoga

Yoga is a form of fitness and meditation that is a low-impact activity, one that helps improve balance, flexibility, muscle strength, aerobic fitness and mobility. It's an easy-on-the-joints activity.

It is why yoga is great for seniors, even if you're a complete beginner and have never done it before.

According to the most recent Yoga in America Study, conducted in 2016 by Yoga Journal and Yoga Alliance, more than 14 million people over the age of 55 practice yoga.

## BENEFITS OF YOGA FOR OLDER ADULTS

In an article for Medicare Advantage, Christian Worstell, a Medicare and health expert, lists several important benefits for older adults who practice yoga. These include:

- Reduced risk of a fall because yoga improves balance and stability.
- Greater flexibility and joint health, which can help manage osteoarthritis in older women.
- Improved respiratory health and ability to tolerate physical exertion.
- Lowered blood pressure.
- Reduced anxiety, stress



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and improved mindfulness and relaxation.

- Pain management, especially pain in the back or arthritis-related pain.
- Improved posture.
- Better digestion as yoga acts as an internal massage and stimulates the muscles needed for an effective digestive system.
- Strengthened bones as 10 minutes of yoga per day can increase bone density in the spine and hips.
- Improved circulation.

## THINGS TO AVOID

In 2022, Duke Health released an article about the many benefits of yoga for senior adults, but it also issued a few warn-

ings for adults who are new to the practice. When done incorrectly, yoga can cause injuries, which is also why people are encouraged to have an instructor rather than just learn from a video. Duke Health's warnings include:

- Avoid straight-legged forward bends.
- Avoid seated postures on the floor.
- Avoid head-below-the-heart inversions.
- Keep the breath flowing and comfortable.
- Keep twists in the mid-range with a fluid quality of motion.
- Avoid extremes of movement and breathing.

The organization Yoga for Seniors certifies yoga practi-

tioners in the specific needs of older adults.

## YOGA POSES FOR SENIORS

So what are some good poses for seniors? That's where a yoga instructor certified in working with older adults comes in. Yogiapproved.com suggests five gentle poses to start with:

- Mountain pose.
- Cobra pose.
- Tree pose.
- Corpse pose.

## CHAIR YOGA

While many seniors are physically fit and have few restrictions to the type of yoga they practice, there are others

who have mobility impairments, balance issues or simply lack the confidence to do regular yoga.

It's why chair yoga has been created. Healthline.com says that chair yoga has all the benefits of regular yoga, but it is also able to help with joint lubrication, balance and age-specific issues like menopause and arthritis.

Chair yoga is practiced while sitting in a sturdy chair (one without wheels). Poses focus on warm-ups, strength- and flexibility-building and cool downs. Like any other form of yoga, you'll want to listen to your body and if you find it hard to breathe, back out of the pose.



# Benefits of Sex for Seniors

Sex is not a past-time reserved for the youth. On the contrary, many seniors report they are having the best sex of their life.

Sex isn't necessarily the same; older bodies are different than younger bodies. There are challenges that seniors face that they didn't when they were younger.

However, many seniors report that sex is now more creative, involves more touching and, without the worry of getting pregnant, is associated with less stress.

## ADVANTAGES

Dr. Lindsay Wilson is a geriatrician with the University of North Carolina Hospitals Geriatric Specialty Clinic. In an article she wrote for UNC, she said that sex can lead to increased emotional health and self-esteem. It also helps people build connection and intimacy with their partner.

Physically, sex encourages seniors to move their body and be active. For women, it can help strengthen their vaginal tissue and pelvic floor muscles, which aids in fighting incontinence and prolapse.

## CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

All of which is not to say sex for older people doesn't come with some difficulties. Men are more likely to experience erectile dysfunction. Vaginas shorten and narrow and the vaginal walls stiffen and thin. It can take more time for the vagina to lubricate naturally and there is usually less lubrication.

The National Institutes of Health lists the following issues that can compro-



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mise or complicate the enjoyment of sex among older people:

- Too much alcohol.
- Arthritis.
- Chronic pain.
- Dementia.
- Depression.
- Diabetes.
- Heart disease.
- Incontinence.
- Medications.
- Obesity.
- Peyronie's disease.
- Stroke.
- Surgery.

## SAFE SEX

Just because you can't get pregnant doesn't mean you can ignore safe sex practices. Sexually transmitted diseases are a real thing. According to

HealthinAging.org, older adults are more vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases than younger people are. They recommend doing four things to enjoy safe sex.

First, do a background and body check. Talk about each other's sexual history and then explore your partner's genitals for sores, abnormal discharge and odors.

Next, get yourself tested for AIDS/HIV and STIs as some of the symptoms for these diseases are also associated with aging.

Third, use a condom and water-based lubricant every time you have any sort of sex (oral, vaginal or anal) — even during foreplay. Keep this up until you know your partner's history and are in a sexually exclusive relationship.

Finally, talk to your health care pro-

vider about how to protect yourself and whether you have any conditions that will interfere with safe sex.

## SEX TIPS

Recognizing that sex is different as an older person, the Mayo Clinic has provided some tips on how to maintain a healthy and enjoyable sex life. These include:

- Talk with your partner about sex.
- See a sex therapist.
- Expand your definition of sex. It doesn't just have to be intercourse.
- Adapt your routines by having sex when you have the most energy and when you have more time.
- Don't give up on romance.
- Stay healthy by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, limiting your use of alcohol and not smoking.