

Holidays can be hard on lonely seniors

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(HealthDay)—More than one in three elderly Americans describe themselves as lonely, and the holidays can be especially isolating for them, geriatric experts warn.

"Loneliness is a significant issue among older adults, robbing them of their ability to live vibrant, independent lives as they age," said Dr. Sonja Rosen, chief of geriatric medicine at Cedars-Sinai Medical Group in Los Angeles. "But it doesn't have to be this way."

Rosen and her colleagues said [health care providers](#) often neglect to proactively raise the question of loneliness with their [elderly patients](#). And such patients often fail to raise it themselves, either out of pride or embarrassment.

But younger family members can help break the ice and ease the isolation by making contact with their older relatives, stopping by to spend time, sharing a meal or engaging in any number of hobbies.

Getting seniors involved in accessible (and often free) local programs is another way to help reconnect them with their community. Libraries, museum outings, religious centers and exercise facilities are ideal venues for such efforts, Rosen's team suggested in a Cedars-Sinai news release.

Geriatricians are another resource waiting to be tapped, both for elderly medical advice and for tips on activity resources targeted to seniors.

One geriatrician, Dr. Elizabeth Whiteman, said in the news release, "We want our [older adults](#) to maintain mobility and have more momentum in their lives. We want them to preserve their independence and continue living where they want to live."

More information: There's more on aging at home at the [U.S. National Institute on Aging](#).

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