

Older Americans in senior housing have better health than those living at home, study finds

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Independent living is important for seniors, but a new study shows it might not be the best thing for their health.

Older adults living in senior housing tended to have better health than those who remain in their own homes, researchers found.

People in senior housing are less vulnerable to illness and accidents, receive more health care at home and live slightly longer than [older adults](#) who remain out in the community.

Overall, aging folks who move into seniors housing are less likely to need hospitalization, particularly for injuries, hip fractures, wounds, COPD, dehydration or urinary tract infections.

"Senior housing residences can be a center for wellness and healthy aging for older adults, with [positive outcomes](#) for those who call it home," said Ray Braun, CEO and president of the National Investment Center (NIC) for Seniors Housing & Care.

For the [study](#), researchers with NORC at the University of Chicago tracked common high-cost health problems among seniors.

They compared older adults who moved into senior housing communities starting in 2017 to a similar group of seniors who kept living out in the community.

"Senior housing operators effectively manage residents' health and lower adverse patient safety events, particularly when older adults move in and are more vulnerable, but more can be done to keep residents healthy while reducing health care spending," Lisa McCracken, NIC's head of research & analytics, said in a news release.

The researchers did find that senior housing residents were more likely

to visit an ER, "which may be driven by regulatory requirements or being overly cautious in response to an incident such as a fall," McCracken noted.

Further, both groups had similar rates of hospitalization due to [falls](#), [high blood pressure](#), pneumonia and uncontrolled diabetes.

[Other research](#) from NIC and the University of Chicago have found that older adults who live in senior housing communities are less frail after moving into a supported setting. They also receive more care from specialty providers like podiatrists, cardiologists and psychiatrists.

Further research aims to estimate the [cost savings](#) to Medicare of senior housing, as well as identify the [best practices](#) from some of the top senior housing communities.

"With thousands of aging older adults expected to move into senior housing in the near future, there is a substantial opportunity for senior [housing](#) to partner with health care payers and providers to improve the lives of older adults," Braun said.

More information: HumanGood has more about the [advantages of senior living communities](#).

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