



Embrace the beauty of autumn

Engaging activities for seniors

In most areas of the country the leaves change color and a crispness fills the air, autumn brings with it a world of opportunities for seniors to enjoy the season's natural beauty and engage in meaningful activities. Whether it's connecting with nature, exploring creative endeavors, or fostering connections with loved ones, there's something for everyone during this enchanting time of year.

Warm weather states such as Florida and southern California, don't miss out. Fall months can be relatively mild and pleasant. This time of year is characterized by slightly

cooler temperatures, lower humidity, and a notable decrease in the intensity of the summer heat. This allows for enjoyment of outdoor activities without the dangers of the heat, especially for seniors.

Nature walks and scenic drives. Take in the vibrant colors of fall by embarking on leisurely walks through local parks or on nature trails. If your mobility is a factor, look for parks with accessible trails that allow your participation by wheelchair, or with your walking aid. Enjoy the

sights and sounds of the rustling leaves beneath your feet. Alternatively, plan a scenic drive through the nearby countryside for a larger view of the changing foliage. Don't forget to bring along a camera so you can capture the beauty.

Festivals and harvest events. There is a bounty of fall festivals, and many celebrate the harvest season and various cultural traditions. These events often feature food, apple picking, pumpkin patches, wine tasting, music, and arts and crafts. Plan a special outing for you and your loved one. Pick a pumpkin, or two, and plan on carving or decorating them together afterward!



Arts and crafts. Autumn is an inspiring season for creative expression. Engage in crafting activities like making seasonal wreaths, painting landscapes with fall hues, or creating personalized greeting cards for upcoming holidays. Crafting not only boosts your creativity but also provides a sense of accomplishment, and it's something you can enjoy with your loved ones.

Gardening and harvesting. For those with green thumbs, fall presents an opportunity to tidy up gardens and prepare them for winter. Harvest the last of your homegrown produce and enjoy the satisfaction of your efforts. Planting fall flowers and bulbs can also set the stage for a color-

ful spring. If you live in warmer areas of the country, fall is a good time for gardening, as the cooler temperatures make it more comfortable to work outside. Gardeners can plant winter vegetables and flowers in these zones as well.

Cooking and baking adventures. Embrace the flavors of autumn (Pumpkin spice latte, anyone?) by trying your hand at seasonal recipes. Freshly baked apple pies, zucchini bread – not to mention hearty stews and roasted vegetables from the final fall harvest, let the kitchen be your creative playground. Cooking and baking with your senior loved one are not only enjoyable activities, but also offer a chance to share memories and savor the comfort of a homemade meal together.

Book clubs and other discussion groups. Cooler weather provides a cozy atmosphere for indoor activities. Join or start a book club focused on reading and discussing novels, memoirs, or other literary works. Engaging in thoughtful discussions can be intellectually stimulating and foster new friendships.

Volunteer. Consider volunteering at local food banks, shelters, or community events. Contributing to your community not only brings a sense of purpose but also strengthens the bonds between neighbors.

Exploring virtual activities. If mobility is a concern, don't worry – there's a wealth of virtual activities to enjoy from the comfort of your home. Attend online classes, virtual museum tours, or even live-streamed concerts to stay engaged and entertained.

Family gatherings. Autumn often sets the stage for family gatherings. Plan a picnic or a cozy get-together with loved ones, complete with traditional fall treats. Sharing stories, memories, and laughter can create cherished moments.

Mindfulness and relaxation. Don't forget to prioritize self-care. Engage in mindfulness activities such as meditation, gentle yoga, or simply go for a walk with your Assisting Hands Caregiver to take in the sights, sounds, and scents of autumn.

This season offers a bounty of activities that can be tailored to your interests and, more importantly, your abilities. Embrace the beauty of autumn, seize the opportunities it brings, and create lasting memories that warm your heart throughout the year.

Empowering seniors

Fall Prevention Month

Every year, the month of September is observed as Fall Prevention Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of preventing falls among seniors. Falls are a significant concern for older adults, as they can lead to serious injuries, reduced quality of life, and increased healthcare costs. This observance serves as a reminder to seniors, their caregivers, and the community to take proactive steps to reduce the risk of falls and ensure the safety and well-being of our older population.

While it's not a given that falls are going to happen to all older adults, it is a common enough occurrence for everyone as we age. It's important to understand your risk factors:

- **Physical changes:** Age-related changes in muscle strength, balance, and vision can affect an individual's stability and coordination.
- **Chronic health conditions:** Conditions like arthritis, osteoporosis, and diabetes can impact mobility and increase the risk of falls.
- **Medications:** Certain medications may cause dizziness, drowsiness, or other side effects that affect balance.
- **Environmental hazards:** Clutter, poor lighting, throw rugs, uneven surfaces, and lack of handrails can all contribute to falls within the home.
- **Lifestyle factors:** Sedentary behavior, lack of exercise, and poor nutrition can weaken muscles and bones, making falls more likely.

But while falls are something to be concerned about, there are many steps you can take to guard against them and help mitigate any injury you could receive should you have a fall. One of the best things you can do to prevent falls, is to be active. Exercise regularly. Engage in as many activities as you safely can in order to keep and improve your strength, mobility, and balance. These things will go a long way in keeping you safe from having a fall.

Have regular health check-ups. Especially eye exams. Eye health is critical for being able to keep things like clear vision and good depth perception. By keeping up with



these you can more easily spot any obstacle or pitfall that could be in your path and so avoid what could be an injurious fall before it happens.

Make sure your home is in tip top shape as that is where many falls occur. Make sure you have no loose flooring or carpet that can trip you up, and that floor clutter is greatly limited as is anything that could be a trip hazard. Make sure your walkways and hallways are well lit and not overly dim so you can see something ahead of time that might cause a spill. Assisting Hands Home Care can provide an in-home assessment to help you address your concerns.

Using mobility aids like canes or walkers, if necessary, can provide additional support and stability. It's also important to make sure you wear proper-fitting, supportive shoes with non-slip soles. This can greatly reduce the risk of you slipping inside (and outside) your home.

Falls among seniors are cause for serious concern since it can be a common occurrence in the aging. Fall Prevention Month serves as a reminder that through awareness, education, and proactive measures, seniors can take control of their safety and well-being. By following the recommendations, and making necessary changes, we can work towards reducing the risk of falls and ensuring that you continue to do the things you love, enjoying a better quality of life, and keep your mobility and independence.

Simply Delicious



Hearty Butternut Squash Soup

Prep Time: 20 min; **Cook:** 40 min; **Yield:** 12 servings

Ingredients

- 1 pound bulk Italian sausage
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium sweet red pepper, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 large butternut squash (about 5 pounds), peeled, seeded and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 package (16 ounces) frozen corn, divided
- 4 cups water
- 1 tablespoon chicken base
- 2 cans (15-1/2 ounces each) great northern beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 cans (14-1/2 ounces each) fire-roasted diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Optional: Heavy whipping cream and minced fresh parsley

Instructions

- In a stockpot, cook sausage, onion and red pepper over medium heat 9-11 minutes or until sausage is no longer pink and onion is tender, breaking up sausage into crumbles. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside; discard drippings.
- Add squash, 1-1/2 cups corn, water and chicken base to same pan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, covered, 15-20 minutes or until squash is tender.
- Remove soup from heat; cool slightly. Process in batches in a blender until smooth. Return to pot. Add beans, tomatoes, salt, pepper, sausage mixture and remaining corn; heat through. If desired, drizzle servings with cream and sprinkle with parsley.

– courtesy of tasteofhome.com

Pumpkin Whoopee Pies

Prep/Total Time: 30 min + chilling; **Bake** 10 min/batch + cooling; **Yield:** 3 dozen

Ingredients

- 1 cup shortening



- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1-1/2 cups canned pumpkin

FILLING:

- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- Dash salt
- 3/4 cup 2% milk
- 1 cup shortening
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 400°. Cream shortening and brown sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. In another bowl, whisk the next 6 ingredients; beat into creamed mixture alternately with pumpkin.
- Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart onto greased baking sheets; flatten slightly with the back of a spoon. Bake 10-11 minutes. Remove to wire racks to cool.
- For filling, combine flour and salt in a small saucepan. Gradually whisk in milk until smooth; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium; cook and stir until thickened, about 2 minutes. Refrigerate, covered, until completely cooled.
- In another bowl, beat shortening, confectioners' sugar and vanilla until smooth. Add chilled milk mixture; beat until light and fluffy, about 7 minutes. Spread on the bottoms of half of the cookies; cover with remaining cookies. Store in the refrigerator.

– courtesy of tasteofhome.com