

Aging Well for LGBTQ+ Seniors

MENTAL WELL-BEING

Aging can be worth celebrating. For members of the LGBTQ+ community, getting older can come with many unique emotions and challenges, and also triumphs.

Although getting older can be a positive experience, it does require you to be more thoughtful about your health and habits. This can be as easy as making small changes in your health care routine.

Here are five suggestions that can help you age well.

See Your Doctor Regularly

If you haven't seen a primary care provider in a while, that's OK. And if you're nervous about seeing your provider because of uncomfortable or even biased experiences in the past, that's OK too.

Although as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, you may have had bad experiences with health care before, you may have a better experience in the future. Many providers are now educated on how to support LGBTQ+ people — and many are LGBTQ+ themselves.

With technology, it's becoming easier to find providers who will support and welcome you. If you live in New York City, check out the NYC

Health Map to find LGBTQ+ friendly providers in your area. Or call 311 and give your ZIP Code.

Making appointments for your annual wellness visits might not seem like a big deal, but they can have a big impact. Your annual wellness visits allow you to:

- Receive any necessary screenings (which can catch health concerns early)
- Discuss any changes in your health with your provider
- Learn more about preventive health measures

Tip: Bring a list of all the medications you take, as well as any questions you want to ask.


Get More Help to Age Comfortably at Home

As you age, you may find that you need more support around the house. Ask your health care provider if they can recommend some kind of home care to help you live safely in your own home as you age.

Home care doesn't just have to be a one-time thing — like a visiting nurse while you recover from an illness or surgery, for example. Home care can mean [home health aides](#) to help with daily tasks, or physical therapists to work with you to make sure you can live safely in your home.

Letting someone into your home can be nerve-wracking, and you might worry about how they will treat you. But more home care providers, just like other providers, are now trained and ready to support LGBTQ+ people. VNS Health team members

have completed LGBTQ+ cultural competency training and will promote a safe space for your care.



If you or your loved one identifies as LGBTQ+, VNS Health can provide care that supports your physical and emotional needs.

**Learn More About
LGBTQ+ Support**



Stay Connected

Getting older can sometimes mean that you spend more time alone. But staying connected with other people — including your loved ones and other LGBTQ+ seniors — is a key part of aging well. In fact, being lonely can negatively impact your physical and mental health — for example, by increasing your risk for heart disease and depression.

Keep up with your relationships in whatever way works best for you. You might call a friend you haven't talked to in a while or plan a meal with your loved ones. If you're able to, you might even choose to volunteer at a neighborhood nonprofit.

In the New York City metro area, organizations like [GMHC](#), [Griot Circle](#), [Pride Center of Staten Island](#), Queens LGBT Senior Center, and [SAGE](#) — the world's oldest and largest organization dedicated to supporting older LGBTQ+ individuals — can help you connect with other LGBTQ+ seniors.

Learn Something New

It's never too late to learn a new skill or pick up a new hobby — and doing so can actually be good for your health. A new hobby might help you meet new people, and learning a new skill can give your brain a workout.

You can start by:

- Watching an online video about something you want to try, like gardening or crocheting
- Taking a class in a subject you've always wanted to learn about, like history or photography
- Joining a local group of enthusiasts, like a birdwatching club or a tai chi group
- Checking out your local library for upcoming events like book clubs, writing groups, or computer basics classes

It doesn't matter what you choose, as long as it encourages you to try something new!

Create a Healthy Routine

When it comes to aging well, one of the best things you can do is create a healthy routine that works for you. A routine can mean [going to bed and waking up at the same time](#) every day. It can mean eating three nutritious meals filled with fruits, veggies, and protein. It might also mean trying to quit unhealthy habits, like smoking cigarettes.

Your routine should include time for [self-care](#). Self-care means dedicating time and energy to focusing on your mental and physical well-being. This might include activities like spending

time in nature, getting more movement into your day, or simply slowing down and practicing mindful breathing.

When you focus on your well-being, you might notice that your outlook on aging improves. By making time for your health, you can age with grace — and pride.



**Choose VNS Health for your loved one's
care.**

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