

Taking Care!

Help A Disadvantaged Senior Enjoy The Summer!

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Many people look forward to the mild temperatures and increased daylight of summer, which can positively affect their mood and allow new opportunities for enjoyment. Unfortunately, though, seniors who are chronically ill, disabled or physically frail, may find it difficult to reap the benefits of the season on their own.

The good news is that there are numerous ways to help a relative in this situation partake of summer's pleasures. The following tips could also apply to a friend or neighbor, as well as a senior in your life who is relatively well but has limited social support.



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Provide Practical Help

- Prepare extra foods or beverages to share with them – for example, iced tea, pasta salad, sliced watermelon or strawberry shortcake.
- Offer to help with gardening or lawn care.
- Take them out to the mall for shopping and lunch. If they can only walk short distances, park in a designated “handicapped” space and arrange to borrow a wheelchair at the mall. If they use a wheelchair for mobility, investigate accessible taxi options or help them register with the local accessible transportation service.
- Let the person know when you are heading out to the grocery store or on other errands, and ask what you can drop off or pick up to make things easier.
- If they don't drive (or you don't think they should be driving), offer the person transportation so they can get their hair done, do banking or attend a special event.

Do Some Pampering

- Share fresh fruit, vegetables or flowers from your garden or the market. Include a vase with the latter, so they're ready to display.
- Buy them some toiletries or home fragrance products in a summery scent.
- Get them a box of favorite ice cream treats the next time you're at the grocery store. Or take them out to the local dairy for an ice cream cone or sundae.
- Buy a seasonal outdoor gift for them to enjoy – for example, wind chimes, a hanging plant, decorative flower pots, a bird feeder or solar garden accents.

Ideas For Activities

- The following are some ideas for enjoying quality time together, as appropriate:
- Invite them over for a barbecue or to watch a favorite summer-themed movie.
- Have a picnic in their backyard or yours, or at a nearby park.
- Go for a stroll around the neighborhood.
- Take them to the local farmers' market for fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as favorite meat, cheeses and baked goods.
- Go to a park or other outdoor public space and people-watch.
- Take them to an outdoor concert or summer arts festival.
- Go for a drive in the country.
- Take turns reminiscing about summers from your youth.

Heatwave Hints

- Make daily checks during heatwaves to ensure the person is eating and especially drinking sufficiently. Buy them precooked foods that only require warming, and arrange for more groceries as necessary. Seek emergency medical attention if you have concerns about their physical or mental state.
- If they don't have central air conditioning, ensure they have in place – or help them to obtain – fans or window air conditioners. Encourage them to stay on the lowest possible floor of their home, preferably on the shaded side, and to open windows in the evening if there's a breeze.
- If their cooling system breaks down, arrange during a heatwave for them to stay with you, a relative or a friend whose home is climate controlled. If they decline, offer transportation to a cool public place – such as a seniors' center – so they can get some relief during the hottest part of the day.

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