Mental health and emotional well-being are as important in older age as at any other time of life.

- Approximately 15% of adults aged 60 and over suffer from a mental disorder.
- The most common neuropsychiatric disorders in older adults aged 60 and over are dementia and depression.

Causes and Risk Factors for Senior Mental Health

- Physical disability
- Long-term illness (e.g., heart disease or cancer)
- Dementia-causing illness (e.g., Alzheimer’s disease)
- Physical illnesses that can affect thought, memory, and emotion (e.g., thyroid or adrenal disease)
- Change of environment, like moving into assisted living
- Illness or loss of a loved one
- Medication interactions
- Alcohol or substance abuse

Look for these signs:

- Sad or depressed mood lasting longer than two weeks.
- Social withdrawal; loss of interest in things that used to be enjoyable.
- Unexplained fatigue, energy loss, or sleep changes.
- Confusion, disorientation, problems with concentration or decision-making.
- Increase or decrease in appetite; changes in weight.
- Memory loss, especially recent or short-term memory problems.
- Feelings of worthlessness, inappropriate guilt, helplessness; thoughts of suicide
- Physical problems that can’t otherwise be explained: aches, constipation, etc.
**EXERCISE ACTIVITY**

**Side Arm Raise**

This exercise will strengthen your shoulders and make lifting groceries easier.

1. You can do this exercise while standing or sitting in a sturdy, armless chair.
2. Keep your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
3. Hold hand weights straight down at your sides with palms facing inward. Breathe in slowly.
4. Slowly breathe out as you raise both arms to the side, shoulder height.
5. Hold the position for 1 second.
6. Breathe in as you slowly lower your arms.
7. Repeat 10-15 times.
8. Rest; then repeat 10-15 more times.

**TIP**

As you progress, use a heavier weight and alternate arms until you can lift the weight comfortably with both arms.

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**RECIPE FOR THE MONTH**

**SIMPLE SPAGHETTI AND MEAT SAUCE**

**MAKES ABOUT 4 SERVINGS**

**Ingredients**

- 4 cups cooked spaghetti (about ½ pound dry)
- Nonstick cooking spray
- ½ cup onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 ½ cups canned beef, drained
- 1 can (about 15 ounces) low-sodium tomato sauce

**Directions**

1. Cook spaghetti according to package directions. Drain well.
2. In a medium-size skillet coated with nonstick cooking spray, cook the onion and garlic over medium heat until soft.
3. Stir in beef and tomato sauce, and cook 10 minutes.
4. Spoon beef and sauce mixture over cooked spaghetti.

**Nutritional Information for 1 serving (about 1 ½ cup) of Simple Spaghetti and Meat Sauce**

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<th>Sodium</th>
<th>Total Carbohydrate</th>
<th>Total Fat</th>
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<th>Protein</th>
<th>Vitamin A</th>
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<td>3 g</td>
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