

Keeping your Elderly Relatives Top-of-Mind this Winter (*Interview Transcripts*)

Rasha Atallah, M.D., Family Medicine Physician, OSF HealthCare

“It’s definitely very important to limit your personal circle and other people’s circles if you know that they are going to be in contact with your elderly relative. Sometimes monitoring yourself for a good 10 to 14 days before making that visit because that could be the incubation period – you may not have noticed that you have symptoms but you may have been in contact with somebody who may have been in contact with somebody else with the virus. So unfortunately it does spread very quickly.” (:25)

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“Not only do we want to check in on them, but we want to make sure that they have their essential needs. Whether it’s food, household supplies, and even making sure that they have proper heat, proper water running. So checking in on them can be by phone, by video – and if you do need to make an actual visit, make sure that it is limited to very few people going in and out of the house. And if you do have to go inside, make sure that you are washing your hands, covering your face, and staying a safe distance.” (:29)

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“Another great idea might be to make sure that you drop off some groceries for them to limit their exposure to the grocery store and making sure that you are FaceTiming with them or video chatting with them if possible for them. Just using those technologies that we have available to maximize contact in a safe manner.” (:24)

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“I think one of the big things that is going under-discussed within a household is the emotional effect that this pandemic is having on people, especially the elderly population who have probably been able to go out to their community centers prior to this, maybe go to their churches or their mosques or their synagogues and socialize with their friends that now they can’t do anymore. So realizing that depression and anxiety is a real thing.” (:30)