

[IMAGE]

The Upside to Social Media?

By Editorial Staff

We hear about social media every day, and it's often in a negative context – as in excessive screen time, dependence on technology, and the psychological problems attributable to the platforms themselves, including a constant need to check one's accounts, high levels of stress based on what one reads online (even potential bullying scenarios or spreading of untrue information), and constantly comparing one's life to those of others. But there's an upside to social media, particularly for seniors.

Older adults, particularly seniors experiencing pain, may actually benefit from social media. In fact, research suggests seniors with pain are at lower risk for depression than seniors without pain. Why? The researchers speculate that because pain is often associated with reduced function and thus, greater isolation, which can lead to depression, social media can keep seniors connected with their friends and loved ones. Greater connection means less sense of isolation (and perhaps more empathy from others as to what the senior is experiencing in terms of their pain).

social media - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark The study, published in the *Journal of Gerontology*, included more than 3,400 seniors, all age 67 or older and all living in the community (not a senior home or care-giving facility). More than half said they'd been bothered by pain in the previous month. While 15 percent of seniors with pain who didn't use social media reported experiencing symptoms of depression, only 6 percent of social media users reported depression symptoms.

Whether you're a senior, a young adult or any age in between, your doctor can tell you more about the impact of pain, the link between pain and depression, and how you can address both with natural, drug-free, conservative care.

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