



# McLean Minute

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## Take Care of Yourself First This Year

Managing good health goes beyond taking your medicine and going to the doctor. The things we do daily are just as important to our long-term health. Self-care may be the latest buzzword, but it certainly has its proven benefits - especially for seniors.

### What is Self-Care?

To start, it is not selfish or indulgent. It's about taking small, daily steps to protect your physical and mental well-being. Creating a self-care routine is a holistic way to care for your health and improve your quality of life.

### Here are some self-care tips for aging adults:

**Stay hydrated:** Seniors are at a higher risk of dehydration because they don't feel thirst as often, may forget to drink or are dependent on others to provide liquids, or are affected by illness or medications. Dehydration can lead to more serious complications like reduced kidney function, muscle tone loss and delayed reaction times. Try to drink small amounts frequently, and consume foods like fruits, popsicles, and smoothies to ensure proper hydration. As a guideline, you are well hydrated if your urine is clear by lunchtime. Avoid too much caffeine and alcohol and remember, by the time you feel thirsty, your body may already be dehydrated.

**Eat a balanced diet:** Our bodies and nutritional needs change as we age. Typically, your metabolism and digestive system slow down, making it harder to maintain a healthy weight and absorb nutrients like B12 without the support of a balanced diet. Also, depression and certain medications may reduce your appetite making it challenging to eat. A well-balanced diet is crucial as we age and can support longevity and good health. Try to incorporate the following into your daily diet: protein-packed foods like lean meats, fiber-rich fruits and vegetables, calcium-rich foods like yogurt and spinach, whole grains including vitamin-fortified cereals, and healthy fats found in fish, nuts and olive oil.

**Join us at McLean on January 23rd at 5:30 pm, for a Free Seminar: "Dinner with the Doc: The Blue Zones Diet - Nutrition for Health and Longevity," presented by Eric R. Secor, ND, PhD, LAc, Chief of Integrative Medicine at Hartford Hospital. Registration is required; call 1.855.HHC. HERE/1.855.442.4373.**

**Don't skimp on skincare:** Seniors are more prone to serious skin infections and excessive dryness as our skin thins and become less supple with age. Skin also takes longer to heal when injured, so proper skin care is essential to staying healthy. Avoiding hot baths, using only mild soaps, regularly applying sunscreen, placing humidifiers in your home and staying hydrated will help you care for your skin.

**Make sure you move/exercise:** The benefits of regular exercise like walking are overwhelmingly positive for individuals over the age of 65. According to the CDC, physical activity helps maintain the ability to live independently and wards off the development of diseases like colon cancer and diabetes. It also reduces the risk of falling, broken bones, heart disease fatalities, and high blood pressure. Studies also show that exercise can help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.

**Socialize:** Visiting with friends and family regularly can help with loneliness and ward off depression. Social groups and regular outings can also bring purpose to long days. Socialization has health benefits too. According to the National Institute on Aging, it can also lower the risk of age-related disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, cardiovascular disease, and some forms of cancer.

*Are you doing everything you can to support your health? This year, make self-care a priority and take the time to support both your mind and body. Check the McLean website at [McLeanCare.org](http://McLeanCare.org) for free workshops being offered or call 860-658-3723 for more information, including our Healthy Brain series, presented by Hartford HealthCare Center for Healthy Aging, Monday evenings beginning March 4th.*