

Parenting your aging parents through Coronavirus



How do you get aging parents to cooperate with taking coronavirus seriously when they don't think they are old?

It's happening nationally but especially noticeable in Florida with an older population. Baby Boomer parents, (*people born between 1945 and 1964*), who don't feel 'old' even when their driver license says otherwise. Even though AARP and the Centers for Disease Control have warned certain populations are at higher

risk for this disease, some youthful senior citizens don't want to heed this life-saving medical advice.

Is this bravado and courage from the boomer generation who have seen global wars, recessions terrorist attacks and natural disasters; or simply a fear of admitting getting older? It doesn't matter - greater exposure to coronavirus will set your parents up for the disease. Social distance and aggressive infection control are necessary to stop the spread.



Not pulling back from crowds of people is unsafe for all ages, particularly for those over the age of 60.

Many experts, including Jay C. Butler, M.D., deputy director for infectious diseases at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta

urge senior adults to take bold action to protect their own health in this interactive AARP tele-town hall meeting.

<https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2020/tele-town-hall-coronavirus.html?intcmp=AE-HP-LL1> Perhaps share the link with your relatives to open a conversation about disease prevention.

What can you do to help your aging relatives?

Stop arguing about opinions and focus on facts. Find relevant data on the harsh realities of this pandemic at www.Coronavirus.gov or www.worldometer.info to have a fact based conversation.

Coronavirus risks are not about age; it's about protecting health and wellness. Instead of 'proving' that someone is or isn't old focus on responsible action to add more productive years of living. Yes, there is such a thing as '*young at heart*' or '*you're only as old as you feel*' but a positive attitude cannot change actual age.

Avoid getting drawn into the conversation that other viruses like SARS or MERS or even the seasonal flu is just as dangerous as COVID_19. University of Texas Medical immunologist Vineet Menachery says it's about multiple factors beyond age, such as immunity, preexisting conditions or chronic health factors. The more of these variables, the more susceptible to disease and risk of death.



He said, "During the original SARS outbreak the lethality rate for the overall number of cases was ten percent, but that lethality rate jumped to over fifty percent in people over the age of fifty." Why? Dr. Menachery went on to explain, "As you get older your lungs are not as elastic or as resilient as when you're younger. Those kinds of things coupled with any kind of health issue you might have trend toward a loss of airway function and respiratory function."

Coronavirus is an immediate threat, but remember, the seasonal flu remains at elevated levels across much of the country, affecting an estimated 36 million people so far this season and resulting in at least 370,000 hospitalizations, most among those 65 and older, plus 22,000 deaths. The greater the risks of any infection or disease, the greater the risk to your aging family

members as hospitals may become overwhelmed with COVID_19 patients.

Disease spreads quickly in denial



Finding courage to speak boldly might shatter the denial of age to urge your aging parents to take social distance seriously. Perhaps laughter can open up a conversation

with your aging family member. Author Max Brooks took that conversation viral with this Twitter post, advising people not to kill his father Mel Brooks, Dick Van Dyke and Carl Reiner

<https://twitter.com/maxbrooksauthor/status/123962435230530355>

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Even though they may not listen to their adult child, it's unlikely they would be willing to kill #MelBrooks #DickVanDyke #CarlReiner Show how withdrawal from crowds for a few weeks could be the way to keep 250 years of comic genius alive. If they won't do it for you as their adult child – maybe they will do it for Mel. We will laugh again better if we all stay healthy. Pass it on.



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