

Older People & Suicide

- The suicide rates for men rise with age, most significantly after age 65
- White men over 50 who make up less than a quarter of the population are responsible for almost 40% of all suicides.
- The suicide rates for women peak between the ages of 45-64 years old, and do so again after age 75.
- Most elderly patients who die by suicide see their physicians within a few months of their death and more than a third within the week of their suicide.
- 8-20% of older Americans and up to 37% in primary care settings experience symptoms of depression.
- Alcohol or substance abuse plays a diminishing role in later life suicides compared to younger suicides.
- One of the leading causes of suicide among the elderly is depression, often undiagnosed and/or untreated.



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- Although older adults attempt suicide less often than those in other age groups, they have a higher completion rate. For all ages combined, there is an estimated 1 suicide for every 25 attempts.

- Among the young (15-24 years) there is an estimated 1 suicide for every 100-200 attempts. Over the age of 65, there is 1 estimated suicide for every 4 attempts.

- The act of dying by suicide is rarely preceded by only one cause or one reason. In the elderly, common risk factors include:

- The recent death of a loved one
- Physical illness, uncontrollable pain or the fear of a prolonged illness
- Perceived poor health
- Social isolation and loneliness
- Major changes in social roles (e.g. retirement)
- Mental illness - especially depression
- Availability of a firearm in the home



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For more information visit our website at
www.sjsuicideprevention.com
or call (574) 220-6381.

Crisis and Suicide Intervention

National HOTLINE

1-800-273-TALK

Local Help: Emergency Services

(877) 234-0061 toll free

(574) 234-0061 local

(operated by Madison Center)