

# Colonoscopy Or End-of-life Planning? Many Americans Would Prefer The Physical Examination

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EDWARDSVILLE - Many people, especially those 65 and older, postponed routine doctor appointments during the pandemic. As older adults are reconnecting with their communities, including addressing those overdue medical check-ups, aging experts are encouraging they add another “probing” exam to their to-do list: the Elderoscopy. Rather than a physical examination, this is a discussion. An Elderoscopy is a critical conversation between older adults and their loved ones, examining wants and needs, and

setting intentions for topics such as end-of-life plans, finances, relationships and more. Unfortunately, for some, making these tough decisions and documenting wishes can be just as uncomfortable as a medical procedure.

Research from Home Instead, Inc. and The Marist College Poll shows that 1 in 6 Americans would rather have a colonoscopy than simply talk to their loved ones about end-of-life plans. When factoring in age, nearly one-third of Americans over the age of 70 (29%) would prefer or are undecided when having to choose between a colonoscopy and discussing end-of-life plans.

“We see these conversations between loved ones happening every day, and rarely does someone say they wish they put it off longer,” Nikki Bishop, owner of the Home Instead office in Edwardsville. “To support families, our local office has resources available to ensure a smooth transition of care – regardless of whether it is needed now or in a few years.”

While these conversations can be daunting, there is good news coming out of the pandemic. The survey also revealed that while 45% of Americans report that they have not talked with their loved ones about how they would like to spend their final years, the pandemic has increased the likelihood of having these conversations. Nearly half (48%) of all adults report the coronavirus pandemic has made them more likely to talk about end-of-life plans.

To assist in navigating this process, Home Instead developed Elderoscopy, an educational program with tools to start the conversation between aging parents and loved ones about preparing for their later years. While an Elderoscopy is not an official medical procedure, it is an important step for older adults and their loved ones. Resources include conversation starters and guides. Home Instead Care Professionals also are available to facilitate uncomfortable talks between families.

An Elderoscopy can help families track their progress in planning for the future. Areas covered in the examination include: where you would like to live out your later years, what lifestyle you desire as you age, how you plan to stay healthy as you age, what to do if you find yourself single, what to do if you can no longer drive and what you want your final years to look like for you and your family.

Loved ones can start the conversation simply by asking a question such as “what things would you never want to give up in your forever home?” Or, “how would you feel if you had to give up driving?” As you move beyond the conversation, you will begin to map out a plan that works best for you and your family. For example, if an older loved one desires to age in their own home, you may consider aging pitfalls and updates needed such as adding a stair lift or upgrading lighting fixtures. If giving up driving will

be difficult for an older adult, you should be prepared with other solutions like rideshare apps or family members willing to step in as a driver.

To help plan your own Elderscopy, families can find resources at [www.HomeInstead.com/Elderscopy](http://www.HomeInstead.com/Elderscopy). For more information on personalized care provided by local Home Instead offices, visit [www.homeinstead.com/state/](http://www.homeinstead.com/state/) to find an office near you.