

I HOPE I CAN KEEP LIVING LIKE NOW

Sae (75) from a provincial city, widow, lives in a detached house with her daughter and grandchild

EXERCISE AND SHOPPING

I was invited to join the preventive exercise and shopping club when I was around 70 or so, by a local welfare commissioner. I go to the program twice a month. I enjoy it.

At the club, we would take a minibus to a shopping mall and do exercise, eat, shop and come home by the same bus. We would come to the bus stop a little earlier and enjoy talking until the bus leaves. All the members are women. I don't go to any other clubs. I worked for a fish paste maker until my late 60s, and my husband died 4 years ago. I used to go out to eat with my neighbors some years ago, but we don't do that anymore. We all have some family issues and all.

HESITANT TO VISIT PEOPLE

Now the club is closed, it's hard to stay in touch with other members. Since we live in a small town, we tend to feel hesitant to visit each other now, feeling like, maybe we shouldn't cause any problems by contacting them. We used to visit each other quite often though. When I really need to visit someone, I would wear a mask. I always wear a mask when I go out. And when I come home, I wash my hands, every time. I make sure to follow these basic rules.

MY DAUGHTER DOES THE SHOPPING

My daughter leaves home for work by 6:30 in the morning. Then, my grandchild leaves before 8:00. So I help them prepare for that. During the day, I clean up the house, cook, and do other things. Then, I prepare dinner. That's how I spend my days.

Shopping? My daughter works at a supermarket. So, she buys things almost every day and brings them home. On her days off, we sometimes go shopping together, but not as often as we used to. She used to take me to places on her days off, but since the COVID outbreak, we tend to stay at home. We used to talk about where we would like to go in the spring, but then the COVID outbreak has stopped everything.

WATCHING MY HEALTH

I get information on COVID-19 through TV and newspapers. Also, I sometimes listen to the radio. Do I make masks? No, I'm clumsy with my hands. Rather, my younger daughter made some for me. She's married and lives close by, takes about 20 minutes by car. She used to come over often, but she didn't during the stay-at-home period.

I go to the hospital regularly. My daughter would drive me to and from there on her days off. To stay healthy, I put on an extra layer of clothing when it's colder, like in the morning and evening, so I don't catch a cold. When it gets warmer, the other way around. I always do things like that.

BODY TEMPERATURE

Since my daughter works at the supermarket, she checks her body temperature every morning. We watch over each other. So far, I don't feel any changes in terms of my physical or mental health since the COVID outbreak.

CLOSE TO THE OCEAN

I hope I can keep living like now, like taking a short walk or something. I live close from the ocean, and I used to take a walk around there. But I've stopped doing it because it's got too warm. I guess my lifestyle will stay the same for a while. But I tend to do less and less recently.

I don't really have any hobbies, so I create my own rhythm in daily life, doing housework and other things. Once the exercise and shopping club restarts, I'd like to start going there, but I'll be careful.

Sae's story was shared with us by [International Longevity Center \(ILC\) Japan](#) – 国際長寿センター, member of the ILC Global Alliance, an international federation researching and advocating the vitality and the societal and economical position of older people. In the Netherlands, the ILC network is represented by Leyden Academy.