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# EMBRACING CHANGE

Serving Boomers, Seniors & Caregivers in Wilmot, Wellesley & Woolwich Township

VOL 4 ISSUE 12 AUGUST 2022

[www.embracingchange.ca](http://www.embracingchange.ca)

Feature Business of the Month

**Guardian**  
COOK'S PHARMACY



Community resource guide to help you and your loved ones age in place!





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## On The Cover

Health First Dental Hygiene was honored to give back to the community of Wilmot by providing no-cost dental cleanings during the national Gift From the Heart Day on June 25th, 2022.

Read the full story on page 8.

### Cover story written by:

Kelly Durst

### Cover Photo Credits:

LeeAnne Wraith of Gadshill



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The summertime heat has arrived. I hope you're enjoying the sunny skies and warm temperatures while you take in all of the wonderful activities that are once again happening in and around our communities. It is so refreshing to be able to attend the many events that we have missed out on the past two summers.

If you decide to go on a road trip or pack a bag and go on an adventure, I hope your travels are safe, fun and memorable. Be sure to read the article from Community Care

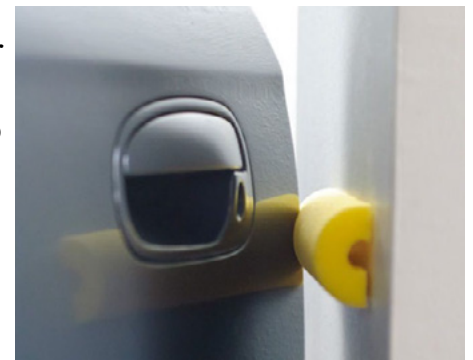
Concepts on ways to help prevent a heat-related emergency while enjoying your summer ventures!

## Life Hack Tip of the Month ~ You can use a pool noodle to protect your car door from slamming against the garage wall

Bolt a half of swimming pool noodle to your garage wall to avoid scratching your car doors."

If you don't have the space to fully open your car doors in your garage and sometimes hit the wall you may want to consider cutting a swimming pool noodle in half and bolting it to the wall.

This should avoid scratching your car doors as long as you don't hit the bolt heads. I'd recommend taking a bit of leftover pool noodle material and gluing it to the bolt heads to prevent scratches from that surface.



As always, thanks for picking up this issue, and for your ongoing support.

Truly grateful,

Tara



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*Embracing Change is proud to be a Community Voice. We hope to foster connections within the community in a positive way. The expressed or implied opinions of authors and advertisers are not necessarily those held by the publication, it's editor or publisher.*





# FLASHBACK PHOTO



In 1957, a grand centennial parade was held in New Hamburg. The festivities were centered around the Canadian Pacing Derby which turned out to be the last one to be held in New Hamburg.

A crowd estimated at 5000 spectators enjoyed the parade. It started at Grandview Ave and finished at Fountain Park when the opening ceremonies were conducted.

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- Nebulizer or Inhaler

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We can create capsules with the precise dosage prescribed, so there is no more dividing pills! Often a patient will have to divide pills or take medication more often. This can be challenging for caregivers and patients.

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- Provides a solution for those patients who experience problems due to allergies or intolerance to inactive ingredients such as preservatives, dyes, lactose etc.
- Provides a solution for those patients with the inability/or difficulty to swallow
- Provides patients with an available alternative to medicines and dosage forms that have been discontinued by manufacturers due to low demand
- Provides individualized dosage forms to meet your unique needs

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- Veterinary Formulations
- Suspensions & Insufflations
- Creams, Ointments, Sprays, Powders & Lotions
- Dental Preparations
- Hospice Consultations
- Pain Formulations
- Vaginal Creams
- Suppositories & Transdermal Gels
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- Sublingual Troches & Tablets
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# Staying Safe in the Summer



Summer provides a great opportunity to get out of the house to enjoy the weather, relax and enjoy the outdoors, particularly after the long fall, winter and spring that we have just experienced. While it is always nice to feel the warmth of the sun on our face, the sun, heat and humidity can create challenges. To help prevent a heat-related emergency, here are a few safety tips that you can follow:

- ☼ **STAY HYDRATED** - Staying hydrated is essential in the summer heat. Drinking 6 to 8 glasses of water each day is important. Rather than drinking when you are thirsty, which means that signs of dehydration are already kicking in, it is important to consume water throughout the day. This is especially important as you age, when the feeling of becoming thirsty can sometimes be less noticeable and your body has trouble adjusting to changes in temperature. Get in the habit of taking a water bottle with you wherever you go. Try and avoid, pop, alcohol and caffeinated drinks which can dehydrate you.
- ☼ **WEAR SUNSCREEN** - While we enjoy the sun, spending 15 minutes in the sun on a hot summer day can cause damage to our skin, especially with the impact of UV rays. In addition to being painful, sunburns prevent the body from naturally cooling. Apply and reapply sunscreen throughout the day to minimize the impact of the sun on your skin.
- ☼ **PROTECT YOUR EYES** - Too much exposure to the sun can irritate your eyes, especially if you are already experiencing issues with your vision. Wearing sunglasses is recommended to help protect your eyes from harmful UV rays.
- ☼ **WEAR THE RIGHT TYPE OF CLOTHING** - Light, loose clothing, made of natural (such as cotton), rather than synthetic material, can help heat to escape and to make you

feel cooler. Wearing lighter colour white or yellow can help to reflect the rays of the sun. Wearing a light, long sleeve shirt is also a great way to protect your skin from the sun. Wearing a hat with a wide brim to protect your neck and face is also helpful.

- ☼ **EXERCISE WISELY** - If you enjoy getting out of the house for activities, walking or gardening, be sure to wear protective clothing, keep track of time to avoid long periods of exposure to the sun and drink more water than usual, especially if you are exercising.
- ☼ **AVOID THE HOTTEST PART OF THE DAY** - If at all possible, it is best to organize outside activities in the morning or evening, when it tends to be cooler. Limiting outside activities between noon and 3 pm, when it tends to be the hottest part of the day, is a good way to reduce the impact of the heat.
- ☼ **KNOW YOUR MEDICATIONS** - It is important read labels and to talk to your doctor or pharmacist to understand if your medications cause any side effects or sensitivities as a result of the sun. Some medications are also less effective if exposed to heat.
- ☼ **STAY COOL** - During the heat of the summer, finding opportunities to stay cool is important. Having access to air conditioning at home is always helpful. However, there are many public places in our communities that you can access to stay cool.

**On behalf of Community Care Concepts, we want you to enjoy the many benefits of the summer weather while staying safe and in good health. If you have questions, concerns or need help in getting out of the heat and into a cooler environment, please don't hesitate to contact us at 519-664-1900, 519-662-9526 or 1-855-664-1900.**



## COVER STORY



# Gift From the Heart Day

WRITTEN BY KELLY DURST, IRDH  
OWNER / HYGIENIST: HEALTH FIRST  
DENTAL HYGIENE

**“When we do something for someone with no expectation of something in return and they express gratitude, it actually makes us want to be more generous.**

**It’s amazing how gratitude and generosity feed off each other. It proves the very human dynamic that together is better, that we need each other.”**

- *Simon Sinek*

With graciousness and appreciation, Health First Dental Hygiene was honored to give back to the community of Wilmot by providing no-cost dental cleanings during the national Gift From the Heart Day on June 25th, 2022. Being able to provide preventative oral health care services to those who may experience barriers to accessing dental care, is the vision that leads Health First Dental Hygiene, states owner and independent dental hygienist, Kelly Durst. We couldn’t be prouder to participate in our first annual Gift From the Heart Day, a day that provides no-cost dental care to people in need.

**A Canadian nonprofit charity, Gift From the Heart (GFTH) believes everyone should be able to access oral health care.**

It is a great collaboration as we share the same vision. Oftentimes, people end up going without care because they simply can’t afford it. We truly want to help those in need because **poor oral health can lead to poor overall health.** It can impact us not only physically but can lead to social implications as well. Health First Dental Hygiene wanted to give back, particularly now when everything is so expensive and many people have gone without routine dental care due the pandemic. It’s important to give back to the community that has been so supportive. We were very pleased with the response and participation for the day. In total, Health First Dental Hygiene provided eight residents of Wilmot with a total of \$2150 of preventative dental hygiene services. Furthermore, meaningful connections were made and the kindness continues to spread.



Gift From the Heart was founded in 2008 by a fellow Canadian Dental Hygienist who saw the necessity for better access to preventative dental care. What started as a small outreach to help those in need get the care they deserve, has grown into a national organization that has helped thousands of people. Unfortunately, there are hundreds of thousands of Canadians who cannot access preventative oral health care. There are underserved and vulnerable people in our communities. By offering a day each year to give back, or providing whatever you can as an oral health care professional, we can help bridge the gap. To help people access care, GFTH also has a mobile van that visits different communities offering no cost dental services.

**If you are a person in need, Health First Dental Hygiene encourages you to reach out to GFTH by visiting their website to see if / when their mobile services will be in your area.**

Additionally, contact an independent dental hygienist to see if they are willing to work within your budget. Seeing an oral health professional and getting your teeth cleaned even once a year will have a great impact on your health. It doesn't have to be overwhelming; it may just take some time to find a practitioner that suits your needs.



Health First Dental Hygiene's mission is to provide access to preventative oral health services. As always, you can visit the office for a complimentary oral cancer exam.

**Even if you don't have an interest in getting your teeth cleaned, it's worth your while to stop in and ensure your mouth is healthy!**

Unfortunately, oral cancer often likes to hide in areas we can't see when looking in the mirror ourselves. Additionally, we continue to provide competitive rates and are approximately 25% less expensive than getting your teeth cleaned in a standard dental office.

As a reminder, Health First Dental Hygiene also offers mobile services, and is able to provide the same level of service in your home or care facility. Furthermore, Health First Dental Hygiene can assist those who may be eligible for government funding. To note, there are government programs,

for those who qualify, including Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Seniors Dental Care Plan. There is also Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) for low-income families with children under 17 years old. Through care, compassion and understanding, we can make a better community for all.

# Starting a New Story, Not a New Chapter



Retirement is not the end of your chapter, it's the beginning of a new book. You have read until the end of the story and now it's time to close the book, put it on the shelf, and start a different book. You can always go back and re-read the highlights, but you can never re-read that book like you are reading it for the first time.

When you are starting your journey from one ending to a new beginning, it's going to take a while to get used to. Just like it takes a while to get into a good book when the beginning might not seem to entice you as much as the old book did. But all good readers know that sometimes the best books are the ones that you didn't see coming. You might be used to your last book filled with a more fast-paced story and your new story with retirement might be a slower lifestyle; but that doesn't mean it still won't be a good story.

There are going to be different emotions that come with the closing of a good book

and it may feel as if nothing can compare. Anger, fear, sadness, loss of identity, and grieving what once was, comes with holding on to something that you once had. The key is that it's not about comparing one book to another, it is about living in the here and now, knowing that there two different stories. Instead of holding on to that pain and comparison that will torture you, lend your book to another, share your stories, and build companionship. Watch your children, friends, and family go through the same mistakes you did, work as hard as you did, and be as eager as you maybe once were.

Now it's time to keep turning the page in your new story, you can't just keep re-reading the first page. What can you do in your new story? Anything you want. This book is not only one page. There are so many chapters for you to experience. Set new goals, try new things, spend more time with family and friends. Find a new purpose, find a new plot to continue telling your story that is not over.

You are the writer of this new book, this new journey you are on. How are you going to live it?

**Vanessa Curry, BSW Intern**  
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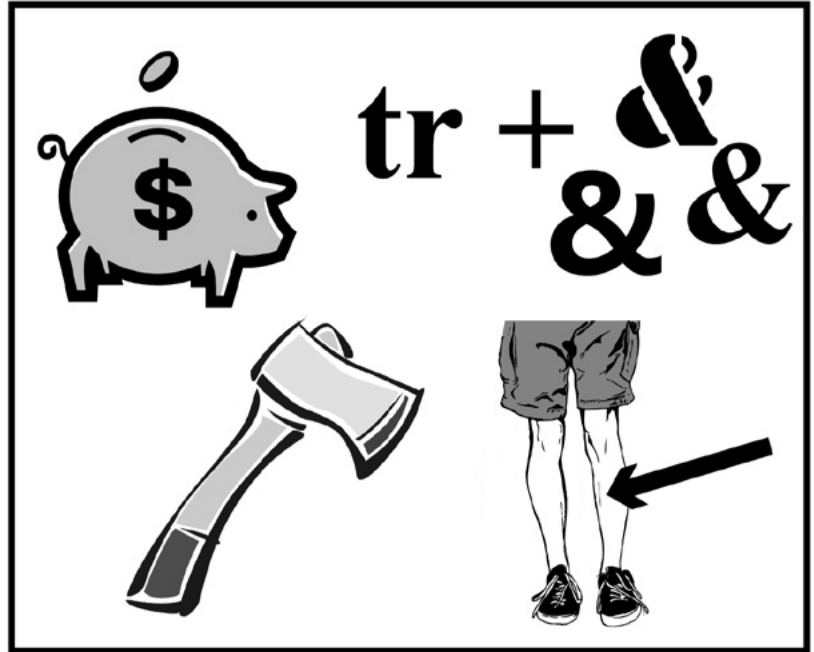
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# INSPIRING HOPE

# August Puzzles!

## Concentration Puzzle

Use the visual clues in the puzzle to figure out what it says.



## Word Pyramid #10

Answer the clues to fill in the pyramid.



1. First letter \_\_\_\_\_
2. Depart \_\_\_\_\_
3. Automobile \_\_\_\_\_
4. Funny line \_\_\_\_\_
5. Louisiana stew \_\_\_\_\_
6. Popcorn topping \_\_\_\_\_
7. Letter holder \_\_\_\_\_
8. Diamond sport \_\_\_\_\_
9. Spineless sea creature \_\_\_\_\_



# Laughing Matters!

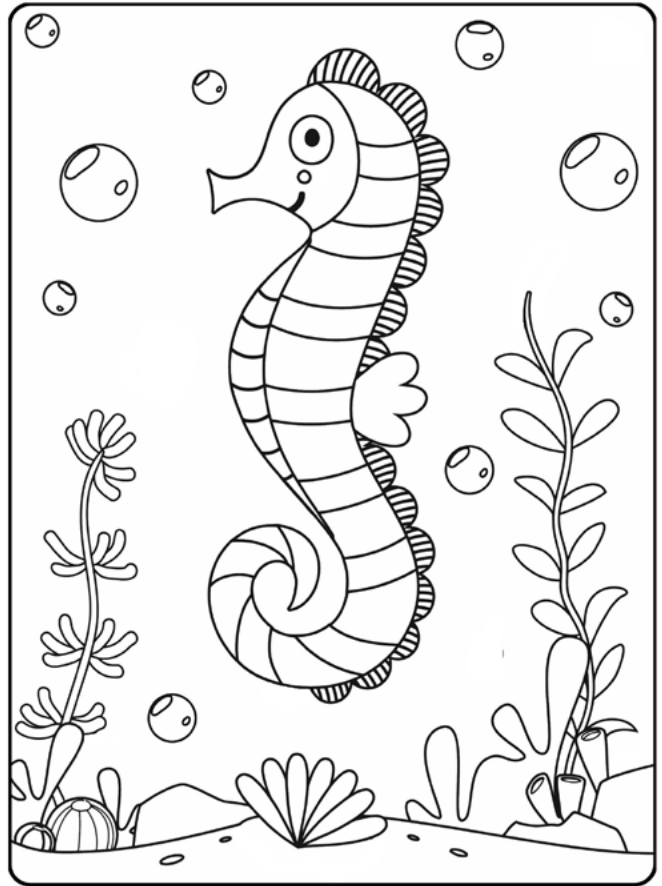
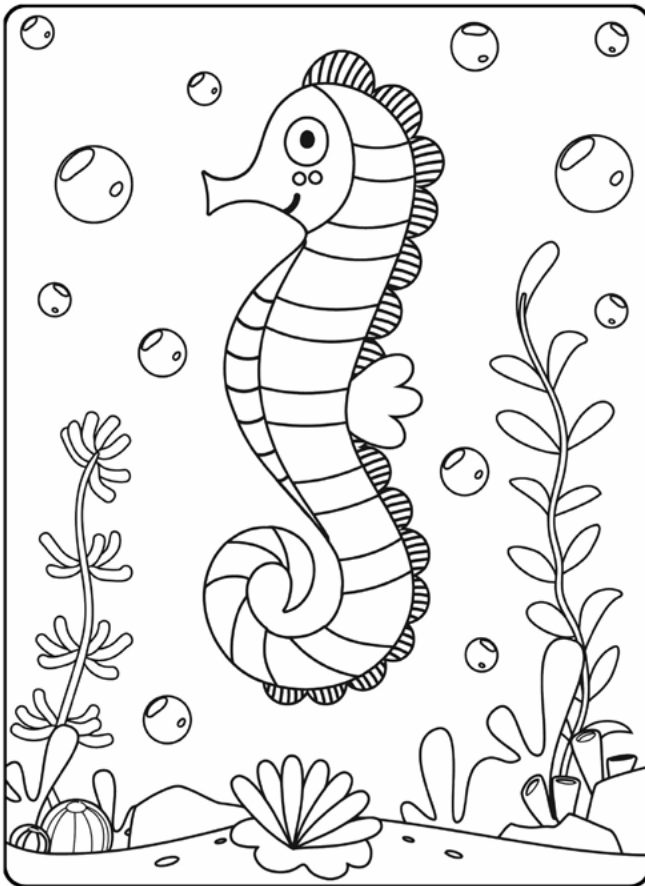
PICKLES

BY BRIAN CRANE



## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you spot the 10 differences between these two pictures?



# WHERE TO GET YOUR FREE COPY

Copies will be available around the first Wednesday of every month at the following locations:

## WILMOT TOWNSHIP:

- MeMe’s Café New Hamburg (outside magazine stand)
- Sobey’s New Hamburg (outside magazine stand)
- Hemmerich Hearing
- Dolman Eyecare
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- Foxboro Green
- Community Care Concepts
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- New Hamburg Legion
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- No Frills New Hamburg
- Baden Village Pharmacy
- Rudy Held Performance Centre
- Soles Journey New Hamburg
- Little Short Stop New Hamburg
- Heart & Home Creations NH



- McDonalds (outside magazine stand)

## WELLESLEY TOWNSHIP:

- Schmidtsville Restaurant (outside magazine stand)
- Wellesley Township Community Health Centre

- Linwood Nurse Practitioner Office
- Pond View Retirement Village
- Cooks Pharmacy Wellesley
- Pym’s Village Market
- In Season Home & Garden St Clements
- Len’s Mill Store – Hawkesville
- Food Town IFT St Clements (Outside Magazine Stand)

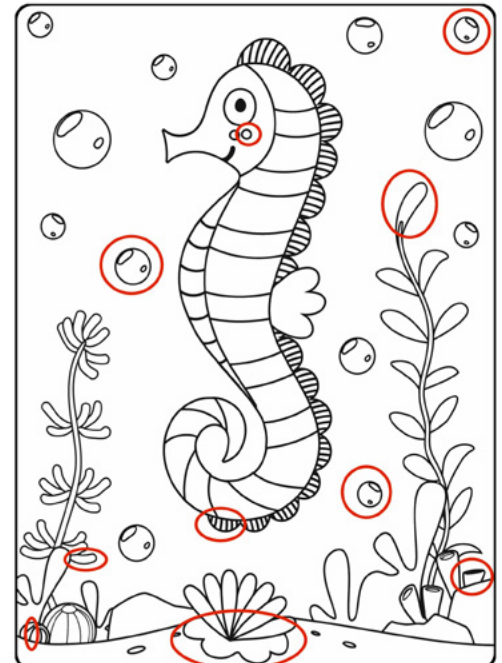
## WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP:

- Community Care Concepts
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- Woolwich Health Care Centre
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- MCC Thrift & Gift Elmira
- Living Waters Books & Toys Elmira
- Bonnie Lou’s Cafe
- Hillcrest Home Baking
- Dollarama Elmira (outside magazine stand)
- Harvest Moon St. Jacob’s

# Solutions

## Concentration Puzzle: Bank Transaction

A  
G O  
C A R  
J O K E  
G U M B O  
B U T T E R  
M A I L B O X  
B A S E B A L L  
J E L L Y F I S H







# Ask the Doctor

with Dr. Nicole Didyk

## When is a mole considered dangerous, or when does it need to get checked by a professional?

A mole (aka melanocytic nevus) is a benign cluster of melanocytes, or pigment cells. How many moles a person gets depends on:

- 1. Genetics:** moles run in families!
- 2. Sun exposure as a child:** the more sun, the more moles
- 3. Skin pigment:** lighter skinned individuals are more likely to have moles

A typical mole is small (6mm or less), symmetrical and round or oval-shaped with even pigmentation. It can be normal for moles to change during childhood and adolescence but change in a mole in an adult can be cause for concern. The main worry is that a mole can become a melanoma, a type of skin cancer.

Doctors and nurses often use the “ABCDE” approach to evaluating a changing mole:

- **A** – asymmetry, or an odd shape, rather than a round or oval mole
- **B** – borders that are irregular instead of well defined
- **C** – colour variegation, or different colours in the same mole
- **D** – diameter or more than 6mm
- **E** – evolution, or significant change overall in a mole that had been stable for a long time.

The “ugly duckling” rule means that a mole might be suspicious if it looks very different to all the other moles on a person’s body. Unexplained itching, bleeding or other irritation of a mole could also be a

reason to seek help.

It’s a great idea to “get to know” your moles and visually check for changes every few months. If you’re worried about your moles, consider taking a photo and see your primary care provider about it. They may reassure you, do a biopsy, or send you to a specialist like a dermatologist.

In the meantime, stay sun safe and enjoy the summer with a hat, sunscreen and some shade time too!

For more information about aging and health, go to [www.TheWrinkle.ca](http://www.TheWrinkle.ca)

**If you have questions for Dr. Didyk, please email them to [embracingchangeinfo@gmail.com](mailto:embracingchangeinfo@gmail.com). You don’t need to give any identifying information.**

#### Disclaimer:

Any comments Dr. Didyk may make regarding an individual’s story should not be construed as establishing a physician-patient relationship between Dr. Didyk and a caregiver, or care recipient, and should not be considered a substitute for individualized medical assessment, diagnosis, or treatment.



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I was talking ‘car stuff’ with a guy I’ve gotten to know, Ralph. He’s operated his own auto specialty shop for many years. A midsize gent with bedraggled white hair, wise eyes and rough hands – that swallows your handshake – he’s a testimony to a lifetime of physical work... and the consummate professional.

You can learn a lot from a guy like Ralph... the least of which is cars.

One day, I was telling him of an incident with my classic car that was being restored. Not long into the project the long-time body shop manager called to say that he’d never seen anything like it. Unlike most cars, mine is of fibreglass construction and his emailed pictures showed that the battery shelf had been previously repaired with wood, plastic glue, and duct tape (the handy man’s friend). But now, supported only by wooden splinters, the heavy battery was threatening to fall out.

Sarcastically, I suggested that they could have at least used rot-preventative, pressure treated, wood. (lol) Yet, even though he laughed as well, Ralph brought me down a notch to better understand that poor people need to be resourceful. “Necessity is the mother of invention.”

For example, Ralph said it’s not unusual to see Cuban youngsters running around with tools in hand... learning early how to keep cars running. No one can afford a broken-down ride; so, a temporary fix must suffice until a more

permanent solution can be found – especially in the absence of American replacement parts. Still, you’ll see classic cars running the roads in Havana and everywhere else on the island, in support of tourism. From Cuba with love!

In other circumstances, it would be celebrated as ingenious. Who can forget the line in the movie Apollo 13, delivered by astronaut actor, Tom Hanks, when he calmly said, “Houston we have a problem.” Suddenly, NASA’s super smart engineers had a lifesaving problem to solve, fast! Death laden CO2 fumes were filling the spaceship’s cabin. The solution? Duct tape. Duct tape? Yes! It worked!

Since then, duct tape has been stowed on every space mission.

“One thing a Southern boy will never say is, ‘I don’t think duct tape will fix it.’ - Nasa Engineer Ed Smylie

Like duct tape, our Covid-19 lives may not look pretty, but for most of us, things could be worse. We’re all trying to peer into the future, when all we have to do is look to the past... how people overcame devastating effects of war and depression.

One take away is the relief of music. With music we can smile, sing and support each other. It soothes our souls, as duct tape fixes our outside. We honour our fallen when we keep going,

One of my aunt’s favourites:

“Oh, we ain’t got a barrel of money /  
Maybe we’re ragged and funny  
But we’ll travel along, singin’ a song /  
“Side by Side” – by Kay Starr

<https://youtu.be/UpNreOp4XZ4>

Music and duct tape – carry them both.

**That’s the way I figure It – FP**



**‘Music in Me’ writer Fred Parry is a lover of people and a collector of stories, music, wisdom and grandchildren.**

Find him at [www.fredparry.ca](http://www.fredparry.ca)

# Two new free programs all seniors in Ontario should know about!

Rarely does something free come without a catch, but if you are an Ontario resident 55+, there are two important free programs available to you this fall. Okay, maybe there is a bit of a catch... once you take part, you'll never again look at aging the same way.

Both programs have received funding under the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program. This federal grants and contributions program supports projects that are led or inspired by seniors who are making a difference in the lives of others in their communities. The funds have been used to make these programs, piloted locally at the Woolwich Seniors Association, available at no charge to all older adults in the province.

## **The Rethinking Aging Workshop Series** Can changing the way you think about aging really change the way you age?

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**RETHINKING  
AGING**

Funded in part by the  
Government of Canada's  
New Horizons for Seniors Program

Find out in this in-depth, 6-week course that brings seniors together online from across Ontario for a much-needed dialogue about what it 'actually' means to 'age well.' Engaging, enlightening, and sometimes a bit gritty, the workshops examine the validity of our beliefs and fears of growing old. They explore new perspectives on aging, recent scientific discoveries about the aging process and glean valuable insights on aging from other cultures. Applying these discoveries to their own lives, participants then develop a rest-of-life plan for a dignified, purposeful and fulfilling aging future. The pandemic shone a spotlight on society's marginalization of older adults, reinforcing the fears of loneliness, isolation and loss of control which can directly impact mental and physical health. In response, To Thrive Together Sustainable Living developed this six-part educational workshop series that dispels the negative myths of aging, building hope, confidence and enthusiasm for aging as an exciting new stage of growth and learning.

**To register for a Fall 2022 workshop, email:  
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## **Fitness for Your Aging Brain**

**Take care of your brain! It's the only one you'll ever get!**

This is a great opportunity for older adults to learn, hands-on, about what it requires to keep a brain healthy and active throughout a lifetime. The popular program that ran live as The Great Brain Workout since 2014 throughout Waterloo Region, is now being made available to all seniors across Ontario, because brain health is so critically important to aging well.

We all know physical exercise has a major effect on health, more so with every year that passes. Only recently, though, have scientists recognized the profound impact of physical





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exercise on proper brain function. After all, the human brain developed so that we could hunt and forage for food, escape predators, and procreate the species. Every one of these activities is intimately related to movement, so the natural conclusion is to tap into our genetic heritage and use the body and brain as they were meant to be used. That's what this program teaches.

Movement can positively change brain chemistry in as little as 15 minutes. It ups

the chemicals that send messages from one brain cell to the next and causes the release of hormones and proteins that enhance learning and memory. This unique program draws on the latest research in Geriatrics and Neuroscience to design physical/cognitive activities to stimulate brain function. Participants literally think on their feet during challenging, entertaining exercises that are just plain fun. On top of that, each video class gives a weekly take-home brain health tip to apply to daily life.

**Register for the Fall 2022 Session.**

**Email: [FitnessForYourAgingBrain@gmail.com](mailto:FitnessForYourAgingBrain@gmail.com)**

Thanks to the New Horizons for Seniors Program funding, seniors from all areas of Ontario will now be able to access programs that were only available locally. Fitness for Your Aging Brain and the Rethinking Aging Workshop Series, offer Ontario seniors opportunities to positively affect their aging. Most importantly, they counteract society's negative spin on growing older and paint the later part of life as an incredible gift to be nurtured and cherished.

*Jill Simpson is a Seniors' Fitness and Healthy Aging Specialist. Through workshops, speaking engagements and classes her mandate is to dispel the negative myths of aging. Her website: [betterwithfitness@gmail.com](mailto:betterwithfitness@gmail.com)*




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AUGUST 31<sup>ST</sup>

# International Overdose Awareness Day



International Overdose Awareness Day is a global event held on August 31st each year. It aims to raise awareness of overdose and reduce the stigma of a drug related death. It also acknowledges the grief felt by families and friends remembering those who have met with death or permanent injury as a result of drug overdose.

Overdose is the term used when someone enters into a critical state from ingesting too much of a substance or blend of substances - taking too much of a substance, whether it's prescription, over-the-counter, legal, or illegal. While medication can be useful when used as prescribed, we walk a fine line between remedy and ravage when using drugs. There is a good reason that the annual salary for an anesthesiologist is over two hundred thousand dollars, and the bottom line is that proper dosage of medications saves lives. The reality is, however, that once these are prescribed and leave the healthcare facility the responsibility for their safe use is transferred over to the patient who must assume the liability for them. These drugs are not like over-the-counter medications but are instead formulated specifically for the individual and in proper amounts so as not to create disastrous effects such as overdose.

Overdose is when someone takes a dangerous dosage of a substance, thereby poisoning themselves and causing harm to their vital organs. Since we need these organs to be always

functioning in order to operate, an overdose can cause us to lose consciousness, have heart failure, or otherwise severely damage our other tissues. Even if the overdose does not lead to death, it will have a lasting cognitive or physiological impact on the individual. What some may not recognize is that this includes worsened mental health since these drugs can change neurological patterns and lead to depression, anxiety, and memory problems. Now, the purpose of saying this is not to slander the use of prescription drugs, since we rely on them heavily for procedures like surgery and various therapies, it is to encourage thoughts surrounding drug education. Different medications can have vastly different effects on the body and mind, which is why it is so important to understand your medication and its potential risks. As well, many seniors will be taking several medications at once and this can increase the potential health risks for the individual. If this is the case, more precautions should be taken as well as ensuring that each medical professional has a complete reference list of the medications being used. Furthermore, the doctor has a responsibility of providing information about any newly prescribed medicine, but it would be wise to do a little independent searching and question asking so that proper personal caution is taken. Some of the things that could be unveiled include that the drug may cause feelings of disorientation, and if this is a symptom, it should be ensured that there is proper surrounding care and a safe environment to be in while under the influence. Some drugs may cause tiredness, nausea, pain, etc... It is important to seriously evaluate the possible consequences and have a plan together for when they are used and to be quick to consult your health care professional (a doctor) if the symptoms become severe. Another good idea is to tell someone or a few trustworthy people about the prescription so that they can monitor it if needed. The key is that medication can only help if the recommended instructions are followed, and it should be used by the same person it was intended for.

Now what is trickier is dealing with this during some of life's more difficult times. While preventing an overdose will save someone's life or wellness, most of the time it won't appear heroic and may require difficult decision-making. When the liability for the medications is transferred over to the patient, it becomes the patient's responsibility



to use them properly and ensure that the desire for their effect doesn't take control of the patient's actions surrounding drugs. Yes, it is our natural instinct to try to pursue options that have been working, but our knowledge is greater than our instinct, so we have to remember to follow what has been suggested by experts instead. If we were to just live impulsively, there would be carnage. The same applies in this situation, and it is important to remember that there are other ways for remediation that can be used. For example, just talking honestly about the situation and our needs with others will generate allies who are willing to give their help socially.

From a nonpersonal standpoint, being in possession of pills requires some responsibility for other people who could access them. Infants are known to put different objects in their mouths, youth have a reputation for being curious, and adults often face emotional phases of their lives. In any of these cases, what do we do to remediate the situation before drug abuse occurs? It all comes back to responsibility. Proper storage and labeling can ensure that medications are stored out of the reach of children and are not mistakenly taken. Storing stronger drugs in a separate cabinet away from common pills can also help to avoid the possibility of an accident. Further, keeping a schedule and count of the pills is good for ensuring that they are administered properly. Alternatively, there is a possibility of someone else attempting to gain access to drugs through a prescription that is not their own. This is the most difficult scenario, but it is important to consider. Even though rejecting a demand like this could help to prevent an overdose or dependency, it most definitely won't be met with praise. In cases like these, there are many different resources that are willing to help one navigate the situation, many at the click of a button.

While medicine in Canada is not something to fear, it is something that requires careful and proper handling. Overdose is something that happens to all ages, from infants to the elderly, but it is preventable. Remember that there is a responsibility that comes with prescription medications and that proper precautions will protect.



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## Get Outside! The Health Benefits of Spending Time in Nature



The next time you see your doctor, don't be surprised if they tell you to take a hike. They mean it in the best possible way: spend more time outdoors, especially in natural settings like parks and forests.

Health professionals in North America are catching on to a growing trend: nature as medicine. In recent years, you may have heard the terms “forest bathing” and “friluftsliv.” These two concepts – the first from Japan, the second from Norway – focus on spending time outside and reconnecting with nature. Both have become popular with wellness seekers who want to counteract the effects of a sedentary lifestyle and too much screen time.

Forest bathing (shinrin-yoku in Japanese) encourages slow walking through forests to ease stress and other negative emotions. It's an opportunity to contemplate, engage the senses and take in the natural surroundings. Friluftsliv (pronounced free-loofts-liv) is a delightful combination of the Norwegian words for “free,” “air” and “life.” In Nordic countries, friluftsliv is a way of life. People spend a lot of time outdoors, alone or together, doing activities such as hiking, camping and skiing. Canadians would be smart to follow suit, especially when indoor facilities such as gyms and swimming pools are closed due to COVID-19 safety precautions.

### Nature is good for you

Starting in the 1990s, researchers began to uncover the health benefits of forest bathing and other ways of spending time outdoors. They've found that

people experience lower blood pressure, reduced levels of cortisol (stress hormones), stronger immunity and less anxiety, as well as improved concentration, short-term memory, energy, mood and sleep.

By now, researchers have conducted hundreds of studies into the link between nature and health. Last year, a study published in the International Journal of Environmental Health Research found that spending just 20 minutes in a park can boost a person's well-being. In 2018, researchers at the University of East Anglia published a large review of studies – including data from 290 million people in 20 countries – and they concluded that spending time in or living near green spaces had many positive effects, including a lower risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, premature death and preterm birth.

Even without this growing body of research, however, you likely already know that spending time in nature is good for you. Many of us go for a walk when we need to clear our minds, stretch our legs or just get some air – and we feel better afterwards, even if it's just a quick stroll around the block.

### Doctor's orders: Go outside!

Nature walks, birding, gardening and other “ecotherapy” activities won't replace conventional medical therapies, but they are a healthy addition to your routine – and physicians are getting on board. In the past few years, some doctors in Canada



and the United States have started writing “nature prescriptions” or “park prescriptions,” directing their patients to spend more time outdoors. Shetland, Scotland, made headlines in 2018 when its health board authorized physicians to write nature prescriptions for patients with chronic illnesses and other health issues. Meanwhile, a program in Oxford, England, aims to improve the well-being of hospital patients by encouraging them to visit nearby woodlands and parks.

Don't wait for a doctor's orders to start enjoying the great outdoors. Try going for a walk every morning or afternoon. Eat your lunch outside. Plan a day trip to a provincial park. Create your own friluftsliv lifestyle – your body and mind will thank you.

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# Safe Use of Medications for Older Adults

As we get older our bodies and minds don't offer the same performance and resilience that they once did. Even the most diligent older adults with a focus on exercise and nutrition will still likely wind up being prescribed medications for the treatment or prevention of various age-related health issues. We are fortunate that a wide range of medicines are available to help us live longer and healthier lives. However, it is essential to take medications precisely as directed to have the intended effect and prevent further complications.

## Why is effective medication management so important?

Medications are designed to improve our health and manage undesirable symptoms. But, taking medications incorrectly or mixing certain prescriptions together can have adverse and even disastrous effects. Using medications safely and accurately is key to improved health and independence.

## Never Stop Taking Medication Without Consulting a Professional

Abruptly ceasing your medication without first talking to your doctor or pharmacist is highly inadvisable. Not only can it have negative effects on the condition you are attempting to treat, but it can also be extremely dangerous.

In many cases, people stop taking medications because they are no longer experiencing negative symptoms. The problem with this approach is that those symptoms can quickly return after the medication is no longer being taken. You want to make sure you are terminating your medication for the right reasons, so consultation with a professional is essential.

A variety of factors must be considered before ceasing any prescriptions to help prevent unfavourable consequences. Suddenly stopping a medication can end up making the original condition worse, and withdrawal symptoms may also begin to emerge. Some medications can be safely discontinued immediately, and many require a slow and tapered reduction. Consulting a professional will provide accurate insight into the effects of stopping a medication and knowledgeable guidance on how to safely do so.

## Maintain Prescribed Dosage

Just as you should never stop taking a medication without expert guidance, you should also not alter the directed dosage without consultation. Skipping or forgetting to take medication doses is a fairly common occurrence, with reports of up to 50% of prescribed medications not being taken as directed. This results in poorer health outcomes, a greater risk of hospitalization, the need for ongoing care, or even worse.

## Common Reasons for Not Taking Medications as Prescribed

It may seem like a straightforward procedure - you are prescribed medicine to treat an illness and you take the medication until it is finished. However, that is not always how it plays out. For whatever reason, doses get skipped or medications get ignored completely. Here are some common reasons medications are missed are:

- ▶ Refusing to recognize the severity of the situation
- ▶ Wanting to avoid admitting illness
- ▶ Don't believe in pharmaceutical medications
- ▶ Feeling fine in the moment and assuming medication is no longer needed
- ▶ Ceasing medication to see if anything changes
- ▶ "I forgot"
- ▶ Some medications can be costly and may not be covered by OHIP or insurance

While taking medications as directed can sometimes seem tedious and annoying, the alternative can be exceedingly worse. People with existing health conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes are at a significantly greater risk for hospitalization when medications are not taken as prescribed. Age is also a factor, as adults over the age of 65 are high risk for hospitalization and/or a higher need for long-term care when taking medications incorrectly.



## Follow Instructions Exactly

Prescribed medications will come with specific instructions regarding dosage, schedule, and administration methods. This is all based on a scientific process and in accordance with the illness or symptoms being treated. This process should not be tampered with or adjusted. Your medication instructions should be followed exactly so that the medicine is having the desired effect. In addition – it's important to remember is that your doctor will be better able to recommend changes to your prescription(s) if he is confident that you have been following your current medication instructions.

## Pharmacist Assistance

Consulting a pharmacist can be extremely helpful for medication management. A pharmacist can help get any questions answered and concerns alleviated regarding your prescriptions. It also a good idea to have all your prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy to keep a centralized record of your medications. This helps ensure that there are no conflicts with any of the prescriptions that could result in adverse effects.

Some topics to address with a pharmacist might be:

- ▶ Get as much literature and written documentation about the prescription as possible
- ▶ Make sure you can read and understand everything on the label
- ▶ Make you can easily open the container
- ▶ Inquire about any special instructions or features of the medication
- ▶ Where does the medication need to be stored? (i.e. fridge, cool dry place)
- ▶ Does it need to be taken with food?
- ▶ Let your pharmacist know if you have trouble swallowing pills – alternatives may be available
- ▶ Does anything need to be monitored over the duration of the prescription?
- ▶ Provide a list of current medications and supplements to prevent conflicts

It is critically important to take all medications exactly as instructed for the intended results. Failing to do so will likely only make the issue worse and possibly introduce new complications.

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The outside versus the inside can be dramatically different. Actions, thoughts and behaviours impact our mind, body and spirit. There are different types of aging. Chronological aging is simply the number of years lived while primary aging is universal and inevitable. Reading glasses and a few strands of grey start the wheels in motion. Changes are subtle and slowly over time may dramatically alter our day to day life. Tying shoes, a once simple task turns troublesome. It's easier to blame others, residing to the notion our current health status is courtesy of the family tree. Truthfully, all the choices we made and make day in and day out directly impact our current overall well-being. In hindsight, it may have been holistically helpful to have dined daily on a menu of mainly fresh produce and exercised more often. There's no point in regretting smoking or skipping sunscreen this late to the party. Some people are only 65 chronologically but so focused on medications, medical appointments and convinced aging is negative, the body repeatedly releases the stress hormone cortisol. Long-term stress creates inflammation in the body and long-term inflammation plays a critical role in various diseases such as atherosclerosis and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. How you handle daily life helps or hinder the aging process. Do you want to sit on the sidelines or dance like nobody is watching?

Biological or physiological age refers to how old a person seems. You can't turn back Father Time but you can certainly wind the clock back up! It's time to add pep to your step. Call on your inner child and have more fun. Stumble through a salsa class, color outside the lines, learn a new language and go for a golf lesson already! Increasing your energy output lowers your perceived age. Wrinkles merely tell a story of a life lived and not an accurate age.

Functional aging combines every component of the aging process. There is no better moment than

now to revise your nutrition and bring ease to your regular routine by an improved fitness level. Change is never easy but even the most minuscule modification manifests in a can-do mindset. Exercise is a key component to help live your best life. There's a wide range of fitness levels within aging communities. Have you been a cheerleader for others your whole life or still a weekend warrior with the physiotherapist on speed dial?

Over the age of 65, whether you are staying active or starting new, current Canadian guidelines recommend setting aside at least 2.5 hours a week for participating in moderate to vigorous activities. Age, level or diagnosed or potential

health concerns should be taken into account. Suffering from joint pain can be unbearable but even 5 to 15 minute workouts provide heaps of health and fitness benefits. From a stroll to a power walk to chair yoga or rowing, there's

a laundry list of options to try. Swimming lengths or water aerobics supports the body and targets all muscles simultaneously.

For now, enjoy the sunshine and start walking ten minutes daily. Walking builds muscle and bone strength as nature's treadmill is full of hills and valleys, laying the foundation for incorporating weight-training. An experienced trainer may use dumbbells, resistance bands, free weights, a stability ball, and your body weight alone during sessions. Strength training supports day to day life. Functional training translates to standing up more easily and carrying extra grocery bags into the house. Increasing muscle and bone strength improves posture and balance. A greater range of motion and stability gained from a stronger core helps prevent a slip or fall. Spending just two days a week incorporating resistance training is enough to make a significant difference. Start with a maximum of 30 minutes in the gym. It's important to warm up for approximately 5 minutes, stay hydrated and take a 1 to 2 minute break in-between the exercise sets. Feeling

## WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF AGEING GRACEFULLY?



dizzy or out of breathe is a red flag and the sign to slow down. Timeouts in between sets are a great opportunity to check your heart rate. It's important to understand the difference between a target heart rate and maximum heart rate compared to an active and resting heart rate. An experienced trainer will monitor your working heart rate throughout a session. Self-monitoring with a fitness-based watch is an option.

*\*Always consult your MD, ND or health practitioner before beginning any health program.*

*Mercedes Kay Gold is a Certified Holistic Nutritionist, Certified Personal Trainer and a published writer who loves helping others live their best life when not spending time with her children and grandson Theodore.*



Embracing Change is essential and linked to living your best life. The number of candles will keep climbing but it's never too late to take a giant leap towards a longevity based lifestyle. There's a difference between being old, acting old and thinking old. If you are treading this article, it's a sign to slip on sneakers and build a healthier body. Stronger muscles and bones can help turn back the biological clock! Physical Fitness is the cornerstone to living a long healthy, strong and vibrant life.

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# Exploring the Virtual World

## Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington

Anyone who has used a computer knows the love/hate relationship that they offer. On the one hand, it gives you access to the entire world of information - but on the other, it tries your patience at every turn! Using computers is a skill; like all skills, it takes practice. If you struggle the first time, try and try again! Below are some suggestions, tips and strategies to make your experience a little easier!

### Online Activities

#### 1. YouTube Videos

YouTube.com is an excellent resource for people living with dementia and their care partners. Our Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington channel has educational videos and recreational activities. You can use the search bar to explore foreign places, learn about exciting topics and even sing karaoke! There are also options to set time limits on how much YouTube you consume.

#### 2. Online Games

From solitaire to euchre to backgammon, there are virtual games for you! Use the search bar to find your favourite game. These games are also a great way to keep your brain active!

#### 3. Music Playlist

There are curated playlists for any music taste! These are a great way to reminisce about favourite tunes and sing along. YouTube is an excellent resource for this again! Find videos with the lyrics synced as an added activity.

### Social Media Tips

#### 1. Ensure Privacy Settings are Strong

Privacy is one of the most talked-about issues on the web. There will always be a trade-off between 'free' services such as Facebook and personal information. Make sure to strengthen all privacy settings as much as possible - turn your posts and account private, use nicknames or monikers instead of real names and read up on how companies use your information before registering.

#### 2. Monitor friend list

Make sure to know who you have as friends on all accounts. Use friends as a safety net to check up on social media activity. Trusted friends can be the first to alert you about suspicious activities on your account. Be wary of friend requests from people you do not recognize.

#### 3. Use Picture-Based Apps

Picture-based apps like Instagram might be easier to use and enjoy than text-based social media like Twitter. You can follow your friends' accounts to get updates and look into following accounts such as National Geographic for beautiful pictures of nature and wildlife. Be careful, though. Instagram has infinite scrolling possibilities so you might enjoy it too much!

### Safety Strategies

#### 1. Download files and documents only from official, trusted, and secure websites.

When downloading apps, files and documents - please only use websites you recognize. Download your iPad and tablet apps from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. If you're looking for specific files and documents, do not download from websites that ask for your credit card use - these are usually scams.

#### 2. Do not visit any unfamiliar or suspiciously named websites

Websites that are scams like to spoof standard URLs or website names. Be sure to double-check what website you are on. Spoof websites will use words like www.Utube.com or www.123.google.org. These websites are trying to trick you, so beware!

#### 3. Install and run anti-virus software regularly.

Anti-virus software is an essential part of your computer system. Windows Defender is a great free one, but you can also spend money on subscription-based ones that can be more thorough. The most important aspect of a working anti-virus is maintaining and running the software regularly.



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# Guardian

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