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VOL 5 ISSUE 2 OCTOBER 2022

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Tara Held

EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Rich Held

DISTRIBUTION

Jessica Uttley

DESIGNER

Kelly Durst

Dr. Nicole Didyk

Fred Parry

Elaine Ballantyne

Community Care Concepts

Woolwich Community Health Centre

Alzheimer Society Waterloo

CONTRIBUTORS

On The Cover

A routine eye health and vision assessment is just as much about preserving your future vision as it is about how well you see today. Find out the most common questions that people often have for Eye Doctors on page 9.

Cover story written by:

Dr. Howard Dolman

Cover Photo Credits:

Emily Gilmet, Dolman Eyecare

**Embracing Change**

147 Arnold St
New Hamburg, ON N3A 2C6



519-574-6428



embracingchangeinfo@gmail.com



www.embracingchange.ca

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Fall Blessings...

As we watch the leaves falling from the trees and fluttering to the ground in the fall, we are reminded that nature's cycles are mirrored in our lives. Autumn is a time for letting go and releasing things that no longer serve our higher good. I think this is why Fall is my favourite season of the year. It always feels like a time of fresh new beginnings for me. Sometimes Embracing Change is hard, but some of the hardest things we go through bring us the greatest joy. Look back and reflect on your own life and think of how some of the hardest changes have made your life so

much better. Maybe it was a career change, relocating to another city, or a relationship change. Whatever the change was it is so important to ask yourself "This change that happened, what have I learned from it? What lesson did it teach me?" And, "How has it made my life better?" If nothing comes up, keep looking, because often the hardest experiences or changes teach us the most powerful and transformational lessons and we turn into better people because of it ... and for that we can be grateful!

In October we recognize Fire Prevention week from October 9-15. This years theme is "Fire Won't Wait, Plan Your Escape. A fast, pre-planned escape is critical to survival. Be sure to check out page 20 for some great tips on getting your plan in place!

Life Hack Tip of the Month ~ Easy Way to Peel a Potato

1. Take a sharp knife and carefully run the blade along the middle of the potato. Make sure you don't cut too deep, you simply want to carve into the top layer of the potato (the skin part).
2. Once you've done this to all of your potatoes, place them in a pan and pour boiling water from the kettle over them.
3. Turn on your stove and leave the potatoes to cook.
4. Once they're ready, drain the boiling water away and keep the potatoes in the pan.
5. Run the pan under cold water for a few seconds to help cool the spuds down. At this point, you should be able to see the cut marks around each potato.
6. Now for the good bit, using your fingers, simply pull the skin away from the potato.

**Wishing you a harvest of blessings, good health and good times...**

Tara

All About Collagen

Many of our customers here at Town Pantry are interested in learning more about collagen and all of the things it can do to improve our health. Collagen is the most abundant protein in the body, sometimes referred to as “the glue that holds the body together”. It gives the body structure and can be found throughout the body in bones, joints, tendons, ligaments, hair, skin, nails and even our arteries.

Collagen production naturally slows as we age, but there are many ways in which we can support collagen production at any age. This article will look at ways in which we can create a collagen supporting diet and why this is so important for maintaining good health.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF COLLAGEN

Collagen is well known for its ability to improve the health of our hair, skin and nails, but it has many other impressive health benefits you may not be aware of. Below is a brief, but certainly not exhaustive list:

Bone Health

Bones are primarily made of collagen. When the body’s production of collagen decreases bones weaken, and become more prone to fracture. This may make taking collagen supplements helpful in preventing or treating osteoporosis. If this is a concern for you, ask your doctor if collagen supplementation is right for you.

Joint Health

Joint deterioration can cause the unpleasant pain, stiffness, inflammation and decreased range of motion associated with osteoarthritis. Collagen supplementation, particularly one formulated for joint health, can help ease these symptoms.

Heart Health

As mentioned, collagen plays a role in the health

of our arteries. Collagen can help stiff and weakened arteries to become more flexible and more efficient in transporting blood throughout the body.

Gut Health

Although more research is needed in this area, it is thought that collagen may have anti-inflammatory properties that may help with digestive disorders such as IBS and leaky gut.

DIETARY FACTORS WHICH MAY HARM COLLAGEN PRODUCTION

This is where we must remember the simple but very wise advice “everything in moderation”. Too much of the following can harm collagen production:

1. Excess Caffeine

Caffeine inhibits an enzyme important in collagen synthesis and stimulates the production of cortisol, which can impair collagen production. If you are aiming to decrease your caffeine intake try to increase your water intake or switch things up and try one of the many varieties of herbal teas available.

2. Excess Alcohol

Alcohol can decrease levels of Vitamin A, thereby lowering collagen production in the skin.

3. Excess Sugar

Excess sugar intake over long periods of time and/or hyperglycaemia (high blood glucose levels) can cause sugar to bind to collagen proteins and reduce elasticity in the affected tissue, be it skin, joints, muscles, tendons or cartilage. To avoid spikes in blood glucose levels, be aware of how you are combining foods in your meals and snacks. Combining sugars with protein, fibre and/or healthy fats will slow

FEATURE BUSINESS OF THE MONTH: PHARMASAVE



digestion of simple carbohydrates and sugars and help prevent large spikes in blood glucose levels.

DIETARY FACTORS WHICH SUPPORT COLLAGEN PRODUCTION

Creating a healthy collagen supporting diet is not a chore when it includes delicious foods rich in the following nutrients:

1. Silicon

Silicon is necessary in the synthesis of collagen and elastin and plays an important role in strengthening connective tissue, bones, joints, hair, skin and nails. Foods rich in silicon include:

- ✓ green beans
- ✓ bananas
- ✓ spinach
- ✓ brown rice
- ✓ red lentils
- ✓ oat bran

2. Vitamin C

Vitamin C also plays an important role in collagen production, helping to form strong connective tissue. You can increase your

vitamin C intake by adding more of these foods to your diet:

- ✓ red peppers
- ✓ kiwi
- ✓ strawberries
- ✓ oranges
- ✓ broccoli
- ✓ lemons
- ✓ grapefruit

3. Zinc

Zinc supports collagen production by activating enzymes essential for collagen synthesis. It also helps remodel collagen during wound healing. Foods to include in your diet to up your zinc intake include:

- ✓ oysters
- ✓ Alaskan crab
- ✓ beef
- ✓ eggs
- ✓ cashews
- ✓ chickpeas

If you are interested in collagen supplementation, or if you have any questions about it, visit us at Town Pantry. We are always happy to help!

PHARMASAVE[®]



Flashback Photo

Ted Dietrich's Garage in St. Agatha c.1930s. Dietrich was one of the early General Motors dealers in this area back in 1920. Dietrich would sell a car, go by train from Kitchener to pick it up at the General Motors plant in Oshawa, drive back to St. Agatha at 15 miles an hour, teach the customer how to drive and look after its servicing. He started the business when automotive garages were evolving from the blacksmith shop of the horse and buggy era. This image is from the Castle Kilbride Collection.

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Bank Investigator Scam

A scammer calls you to ask for your help to catch a bank employee who has been stealing money or claims to be helping you resolve suspicious transactions on your bank account.

New Variation: Dial *72

Victims are directed to dial *72 followed by a phone number. *72 is used to forward any calls to the victim's phone number to an alternate phone number. If *72 is dialed by the victim, suspects will receive all incoming calls including legitimate financial institution phone calls that may potentially flag actual fraudulent charges by the suspects.

New Variation: Residence visits

Fraudsters go to the victim's residence in person to pick up their bank cards. Some recent reporting identified victims being directed to put their bank card and PIN number in an envelope and place on their front steps for pick-up by an "investigator". Fraudsters retrieve the card and proceed to complete unauthorized transactions.

Variation: Catch a bank employee

A scammer calls you to ask for your help to catch a bank employee who has been stealing money. To help, you need to go to your bank and make a cash withdrawal from your account. The scammer tells you not to let the bank teller know what you're doing because the teller might be involved. After the withdrawal, the scammer meets you in a nearby parking lot, where you turn over the cash.

Variation: Unauthorized charges or compromised account

In a variation of this scam, the scammer claims to be from the bank or a major credit card provider. They say there are unauthorized charges on your account or your account is compromised. In some cases, the scammer demands that you provide your credit card information. The scammer will tell you to send money for reimbursement fees or as "bait money" to help catch a bad "employee".

Warning signs and how to protect yourself

- DO NOT dial *72; it will forward all incoming phone calls to the fraudsters
- Fraudsters will often provide the first 4 numbers of your debit or credit card
- Remember that most debit and credit card numbers with specific financial institutions begin with the same 4 numbers
- Calls from Bank Investigator fraudsters tend to happen early in the morning when a victim is still sleeping or not alert
- Financial institutions or online merchants will never request transferring funds to an external account for security reasons
- Financial institutions or police will never request you to turn over your bank card nor attend your residence to pick up your bank card
- Criminals use call-spoofing to mislead victims
- Do not assume that phone numbers appearing on your call display are accurate
- Never provide remote access to your computer
- If you get an incoming call claiming to be from your financial institution, advise the caller that you will call them back
- End the call and dial the number on the back of your card from a different phone if possible or wait 10 minutes before making the outgoing call

This information has been provided by the RCMP. For more information please see the Seniors Guidebook to Safety & Security at www.rcmp.gc.ca.

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COVER STORY



Most Common Questions for the Eye Doctor

WRITTEN BY: DR. HOWARD DOLMAN

PHOTOS BY:
EMILY GILMET, DOLMAN EYECARE

I've had perfect distance vision my entire life and have only needed glasses for small detail up close. Why is my distance vision starting to become blurry?

Many individuals have the blessing of clear natural vision for the first 45+ years of their life and grudgingly accept the need for reading glasses as they approach their 50th birthday. This condition of near vision blur in middle age is called Presbyopia ('old eyes' in Latin) and it affects absolutely everyone!

Many individuals over the age of 50 who wear distance vision correction to help them to see clearly to drive and watch TV will resort to taking their glasses off at times to see near detail, due to the onset of presbyopia. Yes, it's true! Most people put glasses on to read and some people take their glasses off!

What many don't know is that the crystalline lens in each eye that is responsible for the onset of Presbyopia continues to change and this can lead

to distance vision blur. Like presbyopia, the onset of distance blur is slow and gradual until one day it becomes too difficult to read the subtitles on the television or the score of the game. Fortunately, there are many glasses options that can help provide clear vision, including multifocal glasses.

If I need different glasses for distance vision and near vision, do I have to get Multifocal glasses? And does that mean that I have to wear the glasses all the time?

The good news is that there are more options than ever to address your vision requirements, depending on what you need to see through the day and how many hours you spend on digital devices. You could have one pair of glasses for TV and driving, one set for the computer screen, and a third set for reading and your tablet / phone. Ideally, it's nice to combine at least two uses of your glasses in one frame. Say a pair that allows you to read road signs and see the dashboard? Or a pair that allows you to work on a laptop or tablet and read a label.

I'm 65+, healthy, and see well. Why do I need to have an eye exam?

A routine eye health and vision assessment is just as much about preserving your future vision as it is about how well you see today. The risk of vision loss increases greatly after our 60th birthday and many eye diseases have no symptoms until your vision is permanently lost. Despite the lack of adequate funding in Ontario for eye care services for seniors, many optometrists have invested in new technology that can help uncover eye disease years in advance of a 1990 eye exam (the year that I graduated!).

Compared to the cost of dental care, a small, regular investment in an eye exam can go a long way to confirming that your eyes are healthy or will uncover the start of eye disease that would benefit greatly from early intervention. Your eyesight is a precious gift. Eat the right fruits and vegetables, take small but regular breaks from digital devices, and choose a trusted eye care professional. Your future self will thank you!

Howard Dolman BSc OD

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FROM MY FAMILY TO YOURS

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Educational Sessions at Woolwich Community Health Centre

Practicing Functional Mobility through Daily Life Tasks

As your body takes you through many different motions throughout your day, it is important to practice functional movement and to be mindful of the ways you complete regular tasks. Join us as we explore the importance of and ways to enhance functional mobility, through activities of daily living and the often repetitive motions we may complete throughout the day.

Date: Wednesday, Oct 26, 2022 at Woolwich Community Health Centre

Time: 1:30-3pm

Facilitated by Bernadette Vanspall, Physiotherapist. Registration is required. To register, email Tariq at tabdulhadi@wchc.on.ca or visit our website www.wchc.on.ca and click on the Register Online tab, or call 519-664-3794 or 519-656-9025

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Sleep: Setting, Slips and Successes

Sleep: we all need it, yet as many as 25-50% of us report not getting enough quality sleep.

Join us for this 2-part workshop where we will explore the social context of sleep; why we need to sleep, and what happens when we do not sleep well or get enough sleep. We'll discuss strategies to sleep better, and set practical goals for changing our sleep habits for the better. Participants can practice strategies as they work towards sleep goals, and are invited to come together for part 2 of this series to discuss successes, challenges, and next steps.

Part 1: November 16, 2022, from 6 pm -7:30pm, via zoom

Part 2: November 30, 2022, from 6 pm-7:30pm, via zoom

Facilitated by: Penny Bedford, MSW, RSW, Psychotherapist

Registration is required. To register, email Tariq at tabdulhadi@wchc.on.ca or visit our website www.wchc.on.ca and click on the Register Online tab, or call 519-664-3794 or 519-656-9025

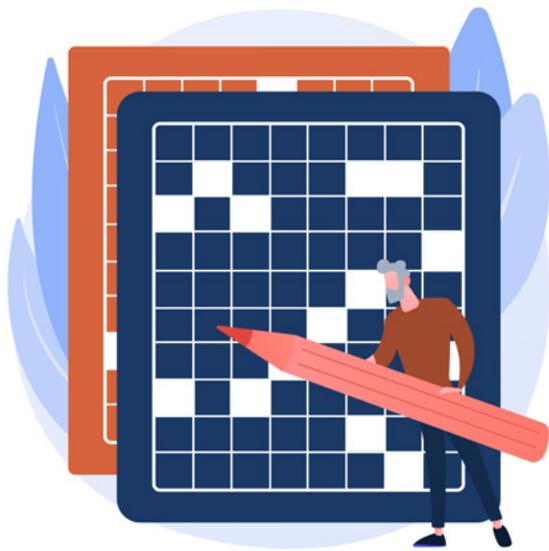
Wellbeing Waterloo Community Survey

Watch out in your mailbox, on social media and at public events this fall for an opportunity to contribute to the Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey.

This is a follow up to the survey that was carried out in 2018 where 40,000 people's views was solicited, but only 17,000 people replied (only 2% was from the townships).

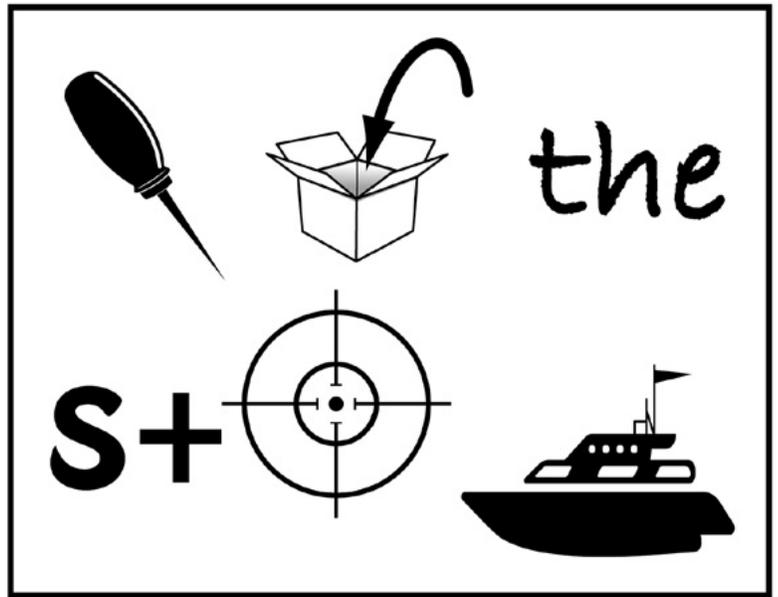
Speaking up for rural voice is very important as this survey becomes the basis of much planning and resource development choices. **MAKE OUR RURAL EXPERIENCES COUNT!!!**

October Puzzles!



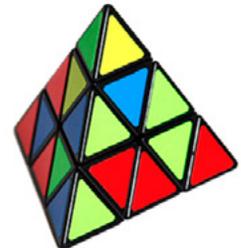
Concentration Puzzle

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



Word Pyramid #13

Answer the clues to fill in the pyramid.



1. A, E, I, ____, U

2. Pa's mate

3. Toddler

4. Ready for business

5. Delivery vehicle

6. Group of fish

7. Tall African mammal

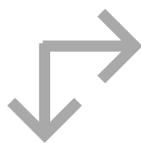
8. Squid dish

9. Type of fireman

Laughing Matters!

Spot the Difference

Find 9 differences



Why didn't the ghost dance at the Halloween party?



Because he had no BODY to dance with!



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- Cooks Pharmacy
- New Hamburg Thrift Centre
- New Hamburg Legion
- New Hamburg Office Pro
- 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:

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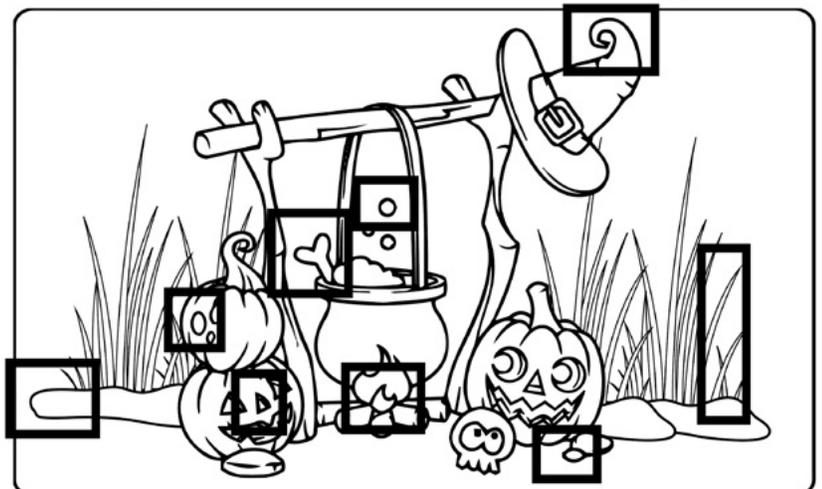
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- Hillcrest Home Baking
- Dollarama Elmira (outside magazine stand)
- Harvest Moon St. Jacob’s

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Concentration Puzzle: All in the same boat





Ask the Doctor

with Dr. Nicole Didyk

Should a senior continue using their family doctor as they get older or should a Geriatrician take over as their main doctor?

That's a great question and one that I hear fairly often.

It is vital to have a family doctor or primary care provider at any age, but especially as one moves into an older age group.

Family physicians are trained to provide continuing care to, and build relationships with their patients, and are skilled in guiding patients through medical decisions. They're also based in the community and can help a patient navigate community resources. This works especially well when the family doctor works in a group or team with other professionals.

A Geriatrician, on the other hand, is a specialist internist with additional training in the care of older adults. They typically work in teams as well, with specialized nurses and therapists. Geriatricians provide consultations at the request of other doctors or nurse practitioners, for advice around a specific issue. Examples of the areas Geriatricians can help with include:

- ▶ Falls
- ▶ Incontinence
- ▶ Multiple Medications
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Memory changes (Dementia)
- ▶ Unexplained Weight Loss, Fatigue, or other symptoms

The Geriatric assessment is thorough, taking up to 2 hours, and the Geriatrician will share recommendations with the family doctor. There may be a few follow up visits with the Geriatrician, but not usually for years, like with a family doctor.

In the United States, Geriatricians do practice as primary care providers much more frequently than here in Canada, so that might be why you're wondering about having to switch as one gets older.

Family doctors have the knowledge and skill to provide long term, preventive and comprehensive health care across all age groups. So even at age 65 and over, the primary care office is the best place to get ongoing support. Geriatricians are there to help family docs with some of the complex issues and syndromes that can come up at an older age.

For more information about aging and health, go to www.TheWrinkle.ca

If you have questions for Dr. Didyk, please email them to 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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Sports: A Training Ground for Life

Once, playing high school football, I remember running the ball back from our own 20-yard line – past the centrefield sideline where my coach and teammates were cheering me on – to within 20 yards of getting a touchdown... when something weird happened.

When looking over my shoulder, I saw two guys trying to catch up with me. One had a helmet that seemed two sizes too big, wobbling on his head, while the other had this strange, wild man, look on his face. Mesmerized, I thought, “What’s all the fuss about?”

After the game, Mr. Edwards, our coach, and math teacher said, “Parry, why don’t you ride back with me.” So, I’m thinking I’m in for some sort of special commendation, when, after a bit, he turns to me says, “Why’d you stop running?” Stunned, I asked, “Did I?” However, because he respected all his team player’s individuality, he said no more about it. He obviously knew I felt bad enough and would self-correct my own mistakes. I did!

Acclaimed hockey superstar Bobby Orr, in his book, *Orr: My Story*, says he was lucky in that all his coaches just let him play his natural style.

As kids, when Bobby and his friends were playing hockey – often on a frozen lake – there might be 20 kids show up. That meant that if he wanted to keep the puck on his stick, he had to stick handle through ten players. Later, when playing organized hockey, he’d only had to stick handle through six players – which he figured was easier! “I was shaped by my own passion – not what

someone else wanted me to be ...what’s important is that kids are doing something they love.”

Sadly, in retirement, he’s noticed increasing incidents of parents involved with post-game brawls. “Parents who stifle their kid’s passion are going to find life even harder.”

So, along with General Motors, Orr originated Chevrolet Safe & Fun Hockey. It has since involved hundreds of thousands of players, parents, coaches, and officials. Their team of caring professionals use the platform of sportsmanship, dedication, and commitment to teach two important core values: Respect and responsibility.

Basic respect is something everybody deserves – from referees to rink attendants; responsibility, like respect, is behaviour that should apply off and on the ice.

Orr recounts a basketball player claiming that he didn’t have any responsibility as a role model and that those types of expectations shouldn’t be placed on pro athletes.

Bobby, respectively, disagrees. You may have special skills and worked hard, but no one becomes successful all on their own. Others in your life have no doubt offered encouragement and help at key times in your development. Beyond yourself, thinking of others... when you make it in life, it’s time to “play it forward”. Orr offers valuable perspective, “Sometimes we are reminded that there are things far more important than hockey.”

“Put me in coach / I’m ready to play, today
Don’t say it ain’t so/You know the time is now!”

– Centerfield by John Fogerty

<https://youtu.be/nOwPr6kGHRE>

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



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Celebrating Community Support Services



October marks Community Support Month across the province of Ontario. Across Ontario, more than one million people benefit from home and community support services that support seniors and adults with disabilities to live independently and in their own homes. Home and community support services include a broad range of programs, including programs that help individuals to remain connected to their community, services that help individuals navigate the health and social services system and services that support individuals and caregivers to live in the community. By customizing services to individuals' needs and supporting immediate needs, services often help to prevent or delay further challenges, keeping people at home and with support for as long as they are safely able to do so.

For the past 37 years, Community Care Concepts has provided community support services across Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot to more than 5,000 individuals and caregivers each year. A variety of services are provided, including:

Programs that help individuals connect with others in a variety of community locations

- ✦ Community Dining – Sign up for a hot nutritious lunch, fellowship and entertainment
- ✦ Exercises – Drop-in for gentle exercise classes
- ✦ Active Living Programs – Join us for a variety of free social and recreational programs

Services that help individuals to live independently

- ✦ Meals on Wheels - Hot, nutritious meals delivered at noon on weekdays
- ✦ Assisted Transportation – Rides to medical and other appointments
- ✦ Assistance with grocery shopping or other errands
- ✦ Homemaking – Help with housekeeping and meal preparation
- ✦ Outdoor Maintenance – Help with yard work or snow removal
- ✦ Friendly Visiting – Visits by screened volunteers
- ✦ Hospital Discharge Support – Transportation home and settling in after a visit to a local hospital or clinic
- ✦ Senior Support Workers – Practical, responsive in-home support
- ✦ Adult Day Programs – A day filled with activities, games, music and crafts
- ✦ Information and Referral – Help in navigating the health and social service system

Opportunities to give back to your local community. A variety of volunteer opportunities are available including:

- ✦ Delivering Meals on Wheels
- ✦ Driving individuals to medical appointments
- ✦ Preparing and serving meals in our dining programs
- ✦ Visiting isolated seniors
- ✦ Helping with programming in our adult day programs

As we celebrate Community Support Month, we extend our heartfelt thanks to our many volunteers, our staff, our community donors and partners, our funders and most importantly the individuals and families who continue to place their trust in us. Together we have been able to support our friends and neighbours to live independently at home across our Townships.

For more information on services or volunteer opportunities, call 519-664-1900 519-662-9526 or 1-855-664-1900.

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Halloween Tips for People Living with Dementia and Care Partners

Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington

Trick-Or-Treating Tips

Halloween is the time of the year when strangers dressed up in costumes knock on your door, asking for candy. It's possible to see how the holiday might be more confusing and terrifying than fun for people living with dementia. Be realistic about your expectations for Halloween, and always consider the stress threshold of those you care for. We typically celebrate Halloween with scary decorations, costumes, and other activities that aren't part of their daily routine. The holiday can cause a variety of situations that could trigger behavioural responses. This guide will give tips and suggestions on how to make the most of this spooky season!

Costumes

Costumes are always a fun way to get into the Halloween spirit! Make sure to create costumes out of comfortable loose clothing. Accessories are a great way to spice outfits up - avoid dangly and heavy extras.

Pirate: This is a classic costume you can make from household objects. Wear a loose white blouse or shirt with comfortable tan pants for the base. Wear a black hat or toque with crossbones cut out of white paper taped on it!

Rockstar: This is an excellent option for those with reduced mobility. Throw on a band t-shirt and old jeans and spike up your hair. Wheelchairs can become drum thrones if you carry drumsticks, and canes can become your microphone stand!

Candy

Ask any kid, and they will tell you the reason for the season: Candy! Preparing grab bags beforehand is a great way to spend an afternoon! Avoid candy with peanuts and small candies that could be a choking hazard to younger children. If you're looking for a healthier option, you can

create Halloween activities packages. Halloween-themed colour pages, pencils and erasers are always a hit!

Preparation

Preparation is key to a successful Halloween! Spread out candy bags on the table in a well light space on your property where you and your loved one can view them from the window. You can enjoy the costumes from a distance without the ringing doorbell and the children yelling. Make sure to place an instruction sign for the trick-or-treaters!

If you would like to answer the door, make sure there is space at your front entrance so the children do not crowd the gate.

Decorations

Avoid decorations that can be too scary or overwhelming for those with dementia. Voice-activated CDs with creaking doors and ghosts screaming are things to avoid. Nighttime candles and light-up pumpkins might cast an eerie glow that might cause anxiety in people with dementia. Making your decorations beforehand is a great way to spend time together!

Key Takeaways

1. Be realistic about your expectations for Halloween.
2. Be prepared to alter your plans at a moment's notice. This might be pivoting from a Halloween parade to a fall walk
3. Limit decorations - keep decorations clear from walkways.
4. Create new traditions such as non-bake pumpkin pies, painting pumpkins or driving to look at the fall leaves.

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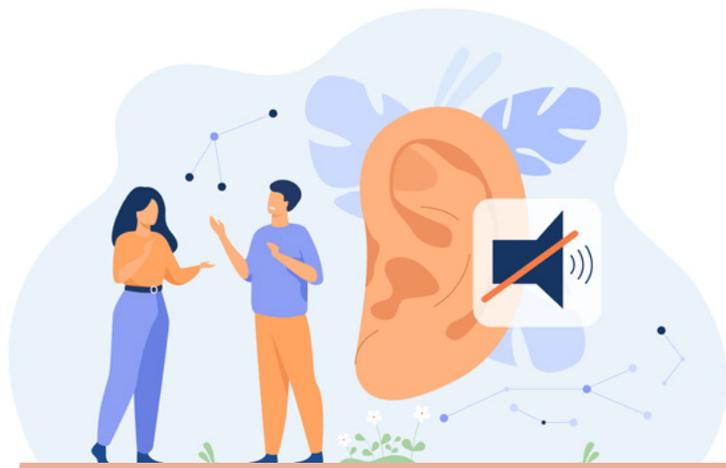


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Effects of Untreated Hearing Loss

Provided by Hemmerich Hearing Center



Some believe that hearing loss is a benign result of aging. However regardless of your age or type of hearing loss, left untreated it can cause negative effects on your wellbeing. Even a mild untreated loss can have adverse effects on your social, psychological, cognitive, and overall health.

Your social life may be impacted as you find it increasingly more difficult to function in certain gatherings such as parties and group events. Untreated hearing loss can leave you struggling to understand and follow conversations. This often leads to frequently asking for things to be repeated and pretending to understand what is being said. It can be difficult to understand and remember what is being said to you when you

are struggling to hear.

This can impair memory and the ability to learn new tasks often resulting in irritability, anger and social isolation.

All of this can cause a potential increase in cognitive decline and dementia risk. *Researchers have several theories. One has to do with cognitive load. The brain gets overworked by constantly straining to understand speech and sound. Another has to do with brain structure. Brain cells can shrink from lack of stimulation, including the parts of the brain that receive and process sounds.

And the last theory is social isolation. When a person has trouble hearing conversations and socializing, they prefer to stay home instead, as isolation increases brain stimuli decreases.

If you or someone you know is experiencing any of the above issues it may be time to include a hearing assessment in your self-care routine.

* * *Wei et al. 2017, Hearing Impairment, Mild Cognitive Impairment, and Dementia: A Meta-Analysis of Cohort Studies.*

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How Older Adults Can Make New Friends



Loneliness is a serious problem among Canada's older adults. About one-quarter of people aged 65 and older live alone, according to census data. Many of them are "elder orphans," or seniors who have no partner or children in their lives. This vulnerable population is at higher risk of loneliness and social isolation, which can contribute to or worsen health problems.

In 2014, the Government of Canada's National Seniors Council released a report on the social isolation of seniors. It noted that half of people over age 80 reported feeling lonely. Previously, Statistics Canada has reported, "An estimated 1.4 million seniors – 25% of men and 40% of women reported feelings of loneliness 'often' or 'some of' the time."

Seniors' loneliness is so common that some experts consider it a public health crisis, potentially more detrimental to a person's health than smoking or obesity. Psychological effects of loneliness can include depression, anxiety and cognitive decline.

If you live alone and have few social connections, remember that it's never too late to make new friends. Staying active and participating in your community can help prevent loneliness and isolation – and it can enrich your life with new experiences.

Here are eight ways that you can meet people and foster new friendships:

- **Say yes to invitations** – If someone invites you to go somewhere, accept! For many of us, especially people who are introverted, staying home has become the default choice. Yes, it's easy and comfortable to stay in, but you'll also miss the opportunity to see friends and family and make new acquaintances.
- **Reconnect with friends** – You may find it easiest to start with people you already know, especially if you're shy or nervous about talking to strangers. In addition to spending more time with family and friends, consider reconnecting with people whom you're fond of but have lost touch with. You can phone, email or write, or even use a free video chat service, to renew ties.
- **Join a group or take a class** – Look around your community for groups that meet regularly, such as book clubs, social clubs, religious congregations, choirs, teams, fitness classes, continuing-education classes, etc. Libraries, community centres and seniors' centres often have programs for older adults. You could also try finding groups online using Meetup. Don't see anything you like? Consider starting your own group.

- **Meet new people online** – Online, you'll find many communities geared toward older adults. Join a group on Facebook, or try a website dedicated to your demographic. We particularly like Amintro, which is a free friendship-making service and resource for adults 50 and older. (Bayshore HealthCare is one of the site's preferred partners.) Amintro helps you connect to people in your community and expand your circle of friends.
- **Volunteer** – Are you able to contribute your time and energy to a worthwhile cause in your community? Pitching in to help others can be good for your well-being, in part because it gets you out of the house and interacting with others. Remember, you have a lot to offer – others can benefit from your life experience and know-how.
- **Get a job** – Yes, you read that correctly! Some retirees get a part-time job not because they need to, but because they enjoy staying busy and socializing. Visit BoomersPlus.com, a website created for experienced, retired and semi-retired professionals who are finding innovative ways to get the most out of their second act. BoomersPlus offers access to short- and mid-term employment, mentorship and volunteering opportunities.
- **Join a tour** – If you have the means and are physically active, consider joining a senior-friendly tour to a place you'd like to visit. It's a great opportunity to see the world and meet other adventurous, young-at-heart travellers.
- **Consider a companion** – If mobility or health issues prevent you from being active outside the home, or if you have a senior loved one who is in this situation, consider hiring a professional caregiver to provide companionship services. A friendly, skilled caregiver will visit a senior's home or care facility for a few hours a week to share conversation and engage in meaningful leisure activities.

It may be intimidating at first to try new things, strike up conversations with strangers and step outside of your comfort zone. Don't give up too early, and don't get discouraged if your initial efforts don't seem fruitful. Focus on finding activities you enjoy and connecting with the like-minded people you meet while doing them.

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Eggs Florentine

NUMBER OF SERVINGS: 4

Ingredients

- Extra virgin olive oil, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)
- Onion, sliced 1
- Eggs 4
- Baby spinach, lightly packed 6 cups (1.5 L)
- Salt, pinch
- Lemon juice 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
- Fresh cracked pepper, pinch
- Ontario goat feta cheese, crumbled 1 cup (250 mL)
- Whole grain bread, slices 4
- Shaved Black Forest ham, slices 8

Directions

1. In large skillet, heat oil over medium high heat. Cook onions until tender and golden, stirring often, about 12 minutes.
2. Bring a large pot of boiling water to simmer with lemon juice (this helps the whites stay together when poaching). Crack each egg into a small bowl or custard cup and gently pour eggs into the water one at a time. Let cook for about 3 minutes, just until whites are set but yolk is still runny (longer if you like yolks hard). Remove each egg with a slotted spoon and keep warm on a towel-lined plate.
3. Stir spinach into onions and season with salt and pepper; cook just until spinach is wilted and remove from heat, about 3 minutes. Sprinkle spinach with goat cheese.
4. Top each slice of bread with 2 slices of ham and 1/4 of the spinach mixture. Put one egg over top and serve sprinkled with additional salt and pepper if desired.

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Calories 320 | Protein 19 g | Fat 18 g | Carbohydrates 23 g | Fibre 5 g | Sodium 550 mg



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