



## ELDERCARE PROGRAMME

# NEWSLETTER

19TH EDITION | FEBRUARY 2014

## STAY HEALTHY OVER 60 AND LIVE LIFE TO THE FULLEST

Staying healthy and feeling your best is important at any age and this doesn't change just because you have a few more grey hairs. As we grow older, we experience an increasing number of major life changes, including career changes and retirement, children leaving home, the loss of loved ones and physical changes. How we handle and grow from these changes is the key to staying healthy.

**medical  
aid  
society**  
there when you need us.



*This information sheet is for your information and is not a substitute for medical advice. You should contact your physician or other healthcare provider with any questions about your health, treatment or care.*

These tips can help you maintain your physical and emotional health and live life to the fullest, whatever your age.

### Tips for coping with change

- » **Focus on the things for which you're grateful.** Appreciate and enjoy what you have even more.
- » **Acknowledge and express your feelings.** Find healthy ways to process your feelings without denying what you are going through, perhaps by talking with a close friend or writing in a journal.
- » **Accept the things you can't change.** Focus on the things you can control and face your limitations with dignity and a healthy dose of humour.
- » **Look for the silver lining.** When facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth.
- » **Take daily action to deal with life's challenges.** Take things one small step at a time. Even a small step can go a long way to boosting your confidence and reminding you that you are not powerless.

### FINDING MEANING AND JOY

- » Pick up a long-neglected hobby or try a new hobby.
- » Play with your grandchildren, nieces, nephews or a favourite pet.
- » Learn something new, such as a musical instrument, a foreign language or a new game.
- » Get involved in your community by volunteering or attending a local event.
- » Take a class or join a club.
- » Travel somewhere new or go on a weekend trip to a place you've never visited.
- » Spend time in nature by taking a scenic hike, going fishing or camping or enjoy a ski trip.
- » Enjoy the arts. Visit a museum or go to a concert or a play.
- » Write your memoirs or a play about your life experiences.

Continued overleaf →



## Tips for keeping your mind sharp

### » Try variations on what you know.

For some people, it might be games. Other people may enjoy puzzles or trying out new cooking recipes. Find something that you enjoy and continue to try new variations and challenges. If you like crosswords, move to a more challenging crossword series or try your hand at a new word game. If you like to cook, try a completely different type of food or try baking if you've mostly been cooking.

### » Work something new into each day.

You don't have to do elaborate crosswords or puzzles to keep your memory sharp. Try to work something new into each day, whether it is taking a different route to work or the grocery store or brushing your teeth with a different hand.

### » Take on a completely new subject.

Taking on a new subject is a great way to continue to learn. Have you always wanted to learn a different language, or learn new computer skills, or learn to play golf? There are many inexpensive classes at community centres or community colleges that allow you to tackle new subjects. Volunteering is also a great way to learn about a new area. Taking classes and volunteering is a great way to boost social connections, which is another brain strengthener.

## Tips for staying connected

- 1 Connect regularly with friends and family.** Spend time with people you enjoy and who make you feel upbeat. It may be a neighbour with whom you like to exercise, a lunch date with an old friend, or shopping with your children. Even if you are not close by, call or email frequently to keep relationships fresh.
- 2 Make an effort to make new friends.** As you lose people in your circle, it is vital to make new connections so your circle doesn't dwindle. Make it a point to befriend people who are younger than you. Younger friends can reenergise you and help you to see life from a fresh perspective.
- 3 Spend time with at least one person every day.** Whatever your living or work situation, you shouldn't be alone day after day. Phone or email contact is not a replacement for spending time with other people. Regular face-to-face contact helps you ward off depression and stay positive.
- 4 Volunteer.** Giving back to the community is a wonderful way to strengthen social bonds and meet others and the meaning and purpose you find in helping others will enrich and expand your life. Volunteering is a natural way to meet others interested in similar activities or who share similar values. Even if your mobility becomes limited, you can get involved by volunteering on the phone.
- 5 Find support groups in times of change.** If you or a loved one is coping with a serious illness or recent loss, it can be very helpful to participate in a support group with others undergoing the same challenges.

## TIPS FOR SLEEPING WELL AS YOU AGE

- » **Naturally boost your melatonin levels at night.** Artificial lights at night can suppress your body's production of melatonin, the hormone that makes you sleepy. Use low-wattage bulbs where it is safe to do so and turn off the TV and computer at least one hour before bed.
- » **Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark and cool and that your bed is comfortable.** Noise, light and heat can interfere with sleep. Try using an eye mask to help block out light.
- » **Develop bedtime rituals.** A soothing ritual, like taking a bath or playing music will help you wind down.
- » **Go to bed earlier.** Adjust your bedtime to match when you feel tired, even if that's earlier than it used to be.

