

Caring Connections Chronicle

STAY SAFE/STAY HEALTHY



Caring Connections Information Line: 211

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COVID-19: Resources for Seniors & their Caregivers

(provided by Government of Canada)



While COVID-19 can make anyone sick, older Canadians are at a higher risk of developing serious complications. Use the following resources to learn how you can prevent COVID-19 and find tips on taking care of your physical and mental health.

Take care of your mental and physical health

This can be a challenging time for many reasons.

It's important to [take care of your mental and physical health during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

COVID-19 protection measures may increase feelings of social isolation, but you're not alone. Ask for help if you need it. Stay engaged with your community. If you need someone to talk to in confidence, reach out to:

- [Wellness Together Canada: Mental health and substance use support](#)
- [Crisis Services Canada: Resources and supports](#)
- [Canadian Coalition for Seniors' mental health COVID-19 resources](#)
- [National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly](#)

- [Canadian Mental Health Association](#)
- [Fountain of Health for Optimal Aging](#)

Canadian Frailty Network: Tips to avoid social isolation

[For older adults with technology](#)

[For older adults without technology](#)

Health tips for older adults:

- [How to lower your fall risk](#)
- [Active Aging Canada: At-home exercises \(PDF\)](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging: Active at home videos](#)
- [Canada's Food Guide: Healthy eating for seniors](#)
- [Oral health for seniors](#)
- [Oral health tips for caregivers supporting older adults living with dementia at home](#)



The world has slowed down so you can rediscover yourself... Take Care!



How to Cope with Personality Changes in a Loved One



(excerpted from a post) by Judith Henry, *formerly a caregiver and healthcare surrogate for both her parents. This experience led her to write “The Dutiful Daughter’s Guide to Caregiving,” a blend of financial planner, family therapist, and geriatric care manager. Judith is a speaker, workshop leader, and creator of “Finding Your Voice,” a writer’s group for caregivers in the Tampa Bay area. To learn more about Judith, visit: www.judithdhenry.com*

Juggling the day-to-day challenges and responsibilities of family caregiving can be hard enough. Then add the unexpected changes in behavior and mental health that can occur in a loved one due to age or illness, and it creates a whole new level of stress to deal with.

Even with all you do as a caregiver to address a loved one’s needs, it’s not uncommon to be on the receiving end of an older adult’s anger, suspicion or withdrawal. These behaviors can often signal an out-of-control urinary tract infection (UTI), unmanaged pain, the onset of a dementia-related illness, or possibly medication side effects and interactions. Yet, with proper diagnosis and treatment, these issues can often be eliminated or at least reduced enough to improve quality of life for everyone concerned.

With that said, there are also behaviors that arise from the aging process that can’t be resolved through medical intervention. If you think about it, the older a person gets, the more likely they are to lose mobility, independence, control, friends, memory, and even a sense of belonging in the world. Is it any wonder a person experiencing these losses would feel grief, hopelessness, fear, and frustration? And who better to take it out on than the person who sees them at their most vulnerable, day after day?

So, as exhausted family caregivers, how do we help our loved ones adjust, while at the same time finding a way to cope with these changes ourselves?

Here are five suggestions that might be helpful:

- Understand that many situations are far beyond your control, and not everything can be fixed, no matter what anyone thinks, including you.

- Acknowledge what your loved one is going through with questions such as “Tell me what you’re feeling right now?” or “What are you most afraid of happening?” Then take some time to ask yourself those very same questions, and jot down your answers.

- Familiarize yourself ahead of time with some basic physical causes of behavior and mental health changes in older adults. This can help you and medical personnel eliminate additional possibilities such as hearing loss, the leftover effects of anesthesia after surgery, or even low blood sugar.

- When possible, take time to just be with your loved one without an agenda, and seek out their advice. Demonstrating that you value their presence and experience can go a long way in making them feel relevant, rather than a burden. This in turn, can minimize outbursts, at least temporarily.

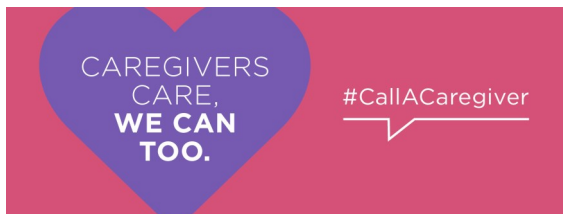
Finally, look for a support group either online or locally, where you feel safe enough to share that perfectly normal roller coaster of emotions we all experience at one time or another. Just knowing you’re not alone can make a big difference

The Ontario Caregiver Organization offers weekly online peer support groups. Information on how to register can be found here: <https://ontariocaregiver.ca/peer-support/>



The Ontario Caregiver Organization

<https://ontariocaregiver.ca>
COVID-19 Resource Centre



If you are looking for local resources to support you or your care recipient, please contact the Ontario Caregiver Helpline at 1.833.416.2273 or access the live chat on this site. A Community Resource Specialist will help you find what is available in your area.

The only resource of its kind in Ontario, the helpline is available to all caregivers – regardless of age, diagnosis or where they live. It provides 24/7 support because caregiving is not a 9-5 job. The Live Chat is also available 7am – 9pm (Mon – Fri).

If you need medical advice, please contact [Telehealth Ontario](#) at 1.866.797.0000

Cyber Seniors



[Cyberseniors.org](https://cyberseniors.org)

If you are a Senior Citizen looking for tech help, call toll free at 844-217-3057 or choose one of the options below.

Book a one-on-one tech call:

<https://calendly.com/cyberseniors/one-on-one-tech-session?month=2020-10>

Sign up for daily webinars:

<https://cyberseniors.org/webinars/>

Watch previous webinars:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/cyberseniorscorner/videos?reload=9>

TURKEY PUMPKIN CHILI

Ingredients:

2 pounds of ground turkey
1/2 tsp olive oil
1 onion chopped
3 garlic cloves minced
1 tsp chili powder
2 bay leaves
2 tsp cumin
1 tsp oregano
2 cans white northern beans or navy beans (15 oz), rinsed and drained,
2 cups chicken broth
15 oz pumpkin puree (NOT pumpkin filling)
4.0 oz – 4.5 oz canned chopped green chili
salt and pepper to taste



Optional garnishes: chopped cilantro, chives, sour cream, avocados, chips

HOW TO PREPARE Sauté turkey until lightly browned, add to slow cooker. Add all other ingredients, cook on high for four hours or low for 8 hours. Remove bay leaves, adjust seasoning to taste and serve.

Joy4All Hotline

Need some cheering up or a quick laugh?

The Joy4All Project is a Canadian-based hotline for seniors and others who are feeling the effects of social isolation to call and listen to pre-recorded jokes, stories, or uplifting messages. If you could use an extra bit of joy in your life, feel free to give their hotline a call at 1-877-569-4255 or visit their website at www.joy4all.ca.

BOOK REVIEW



by: Susan Bithrey

Reverberations: A Daughter's Meditations on Alzheimer's, Marion Agnew. Signature Editions. 2019

"An echo is a single sound that sends the sound wave back towards its origin. A reverberation is more complicated - several sounds echo, or one sound echoes several times. The sound waves cross each other, interacting as they go." Author Marion Agnew includes this definition in order to help us understand how her mother's diagnosis of dementia (and other events going back even further) echoed and re-echoed, crossed with other life sounds, and ultimately led to the creation of this book. The story is not told in a linear fashion, nor is it solely focussed on Marion's mother - Dr. Jeanne LeCaine Agnew, a renowned mathematics educator and researcher - or on Jeanne's disease. It is a collection of intricately connected essays that taken together create an evocative portrait of a family and its matriarch, as seen through the eyes of a daughter whose own life was changed in ways she could never have imagined, during and after the journey with her mother. It's also a love story to Lake Superior and a property on its shores that was an anchor for that family throughout Jeanne's entire life, and beyond.

a = My Favorite Paper
b = What Did You Miss?
c = What You Have to Do
d = My Darling Girl
e = Write Down What You Know
f = The Meanest Mom Ever
g = Egg Whites + Sugar
h = Solve for x
i = It's Just Work



REVERBERATIONS

A Daughter's Meditations on Alzheimer's

Marion Agnew

Easier-To-Find Information

This "one-stop" website ontario.ca/AgingWell is for seniors across the province. To get this information by phone, call 1-888-910-1000 or 211 - which offers information 24 hours a day.

This Caring Connections Newsletter is edited by: Susan Bithrey, Hilary Mettam,
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To receive additional copies of this newsletter please contact the CERAH office at (807) 766-7271