



JUNE IS Seniors' Month

FOR THE LOVE OF OUR SENIORS



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A society for all ages

The phrase "senior friendly community" may not yet be familiar, but it surely will be as our aging population forces communities to adopt dynamic strategies to deal with the changing demographics. In doing so, these communities will be enriched by the collective resources that they establish. A senior friendly community is more than just a matter of geographic location; it is a network of social connections that include people of all ages with various skills and interests. Recognizing that everyone, regardless of age, should be able to participate as much as possible in the life of the community, senior friendly communities want their aging population to remain active citizens.



Working to adapt the environment to its aging population, a senior friendly community also improves its own capability to meet tomorrow's challenges, because a healthy environment and strong social

connections are the main components to a successful community. Everybody wins! Schools can also be adapted to seniors. In fact, strong intergenerational connections are at the core of senior friendly communities. For example, schools can invite students to participate in curriculum development and review; invite them to speak to students about current and historical events, or about their personal area of expertise; or match seniors with students for mutual support and assistance (help with reading and other subjects, computer skills, odd jobs, yard work, meal preparation). Let's show some imagination in making our community a "senior friendly community"!

The importance of physical activity for seniors

For every age group, physical activity and good nutrition are essential for good health. As we age, diet can be managed more easily, but physical activity decreases. However, while it may be normal to reduce strenuous activities, total idleness reduces bone mass, muscle strength, agility, and health in general, including the condition of the heart and lungs.

When you consider the evidence regarding the benefits of physical exercise, seniors should remain active as much as possible. By adapting their favourite activities, like walking, skiing, cycling, swimming, etc., it is possible for them to maintain their functional and cognitive autonomy, improve their mental health, and reduce chronic diseases.

Physical exercise also plays an important role in aging in good health. In fact, it was proven that seniors who resume moderate physical activity, after a long period of inactivity, can improve their health. There is no need to run 10 kilometers, walk for 2 hours, or swim 30 Olympic-sized pool lengths to stay in shape. Moderate exercise, such as a 30-minute walk every day, or 3 sessions of aquagym or soft gymnastics every week, is fully sufficient to ensure good health.

On the other hand, chronic inactivity is associated with serious health problems, premature death, chronic diseases, and many forms of disability. It reduces your quality of life and your independence. Choose good health and stay active!



Seniors who stay active enjoy better health longer.

Prevention for a better life!

Health is a topic that is often discussed, and has been for a long time. We often talk about the poor physical condition of Canadian children and teenagers. However, as their numbers increase, people aged fifty and over are also the subject of serious concern. We wonder how we can improve the health and well-being of our elderly. The answer to this question is complex. It is found not only in shorter hospital waiting lists, access to emergency services, increased medical staff, and a reduction in the cost of medications. Other factors, such as genetics, lifestyle, stress, living environment, and self-esteem also have a determining influence.



Walking, dancing, gardening, or swimming, as well as eating a balanced diet that is varied and nutritious, increases our chances of aging well.

Of course, society must devote important resources to provide social and health services. However, the guarantee of adequate funding for seniors can no longer depend solely on these resources. People aged fifty and over are also responsible for maintaining their good health and their autonomy. Prevention is another determining factor for good health. Walking, dancing, gardening or swimming, as well as eating a balanced diet that is varied and nutritious, helps to maintain a healthy weight, prevent high blood pressure, improve cholesterol levels, manage stress, increase energy, and develop stronger muscles. We increase our chances of aging well.

Many seniors suffer chronic problems that require a special diet. For example:

- A diet that is high in potassium and low in sodium can reduce the risk of high blood pressure, and consequently the risk of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases.
- A diet with adequate quantities of calcium and vitamin D, along with physical exercise, helps keep bones healthy and can reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- A diet rich in various fruits and vegetables can reduce the risk of certain types of cancers.

Good nutrition for active seniors!

Good nutrition and physical activity are both essential to good health. This is true for everyone, whether you are 10, 40, or 70 years old! However, for the elderly, good nutrition assumes particular importance.

Our body and metabolism change with age. Our nutritional requirements change, just as our body changes the way it uses nutrients. Our calorie requirements diminish, as does our need for salty, sweet, and fatty foods. Our requirements in vitamins A, E and K increase. Consequently, it becomes important for seniors to diversify their meals. A daily serving of fruits, vegetables, cereals, and milk products will ensure an equitable intake of essential nutrients.



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Up to age 30, the body is composed of 55% water and 15% fat; at 70 years old, the ratio changes to 45% water and 30% fat. This is due, in part, to the fact that the urge to drink decreases with age. The risk of dehydration increases considerably for seniors. It is important to drink 1.5 litres of water per day, even more during hot summer days. The best way to ensure that you drink enough is to prepare a pitcher of fresh water each morning, and drink it all throughout the day.

People who eat well, age well! Eat a good variety of foods and eat smaller meals more often. Avoid over-eating, which is unhealthy for everyone, anyway. If you want to improve your eating habits, consult a dietician. A dietician will help you determine your present eating pattern, and help you plan a new diet that responds to your actual nutritional requirements.

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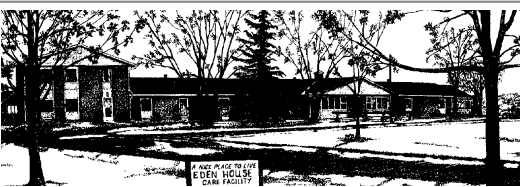
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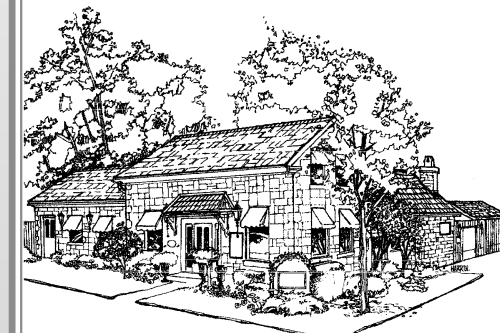
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