

# ASK THE PROFESSIONALS



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## THANKSGIVING AND LEFTOVERS

All of us enjoy Thanksgiving, a time well spent with our family, friends and our very important pets. These events usually mean heaps of food, candies, chocolate and of course, turkey. Then there are the leftovers!

Leftovers can be lethal. At these times of the year, our homes are filled with candies, chocolates, turkey and turkey bones. If your pet is allowed free access to these foods, you could run into potential serious medical problems.

Keep the chocolate out of reach: - Most dogs and some cats love chocolate, but chocolate contains a compound that is toxic, if eaten in sufficient quantities. The quantity needed to be poisonous is related to the body weight of the cat or dog. The symptoms vary from gastrointestinal disturbances, abnormalities in the heart function, brain disturbances (seizures) and, in very severe cases, death. I have treated more dogs for chocolate poisoning and hospitalised more dogs for potentially fatal pancreas inflammation at these times of the year.

If you suspect that your pet has ingested chocolate, I would urge you to contact your veterinarian immediately. It is helpful if you are able to report the quantity eaten and the description of the product.

Apply the same caution with "Trick or Treat" candies too!

Turkey Bones: - If consumed, turkey bones and carcasses, or other meat bones can make your pet very sick. In addition, your pet may require very intensive care, with or without surgery. My advice to readers is, that after you have stripped the meat off the bone, done whatever it is that you do with your carcass, wrap it up, and dispose of it, securely, in the garbage. Regardless of your pet's age treat them as if they are toddlers - no matter how well trained your dog is, turkey is turkey! Assume that your pet has a nose that is much more powerful than yours. Do not let them anywhere near the garbage.

On a slightly lighter note, your pet is probably a very important part of the family - and in keeping with the family festivities you will probably want to fill a little "pet bowl" with gravy, stuffing and turkey meat. Just pause there a while! Be aware that we also see many "upset stomachs" in the following days after the festive seasons - remember, this food is very rich in comparison with their normal diet.



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## Q: In recent columns you have made reference to the Fieldstone Centre for Family Law, Counselling and Mediation. What services do you provide there?

A. The Fieldstone Centre for Family Law, Counselling and Mediation is a unique service available in Halton. The Centre provides family mediation services to deal with issues involving divorce, separation, family businesses and elder care. I as a lawyer and Elayne Tanner, a registered social worker and family therapist, partners in the Fieldstone Centre, are able to address both your legal and emotional needs. Our holistic approach will care for these needs so that your family is protected and not forever torn apart by conflict.

We are committed to providing legal, educational, life management and mental health assistance to adults and children involved in the difficult process of separation, divorce and other life transitions. Watch for our announcement for upcoming seminars or check out our web site at [www.fieldstonecentre.com](http://www.fieldstonecentre.com). Events will be posted shortly.

In addition to the Fieldstone Centre, Elayne and I have separate distinct private practices, she as a psychotherapist and counsellor and I as a family law lawyer. Our affiliation offers our respective clients the opportunity of being able to deal with all of their issues in one place if they wish. Our beautiful, private, relaxing rural facility in north Milton is located on 60-acres on the Niagara escarpment. Whether sitting in front of a roaring wood fire, enjoying the expansive vista of the conference room or enjoying a nature break walking in the woods or visiting the pond, this country location brimming with ambience, will make you feel secure, welcome and at ease when discussing your emotionally or legally based personal issues. The Fieldstone Centre is centrally located between Milton, Georgetown and Guelph.



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## Shopping for auto insurance

Whether you're a first time buyer of auto insurance or already have it but are looking for a better deal, you should be asking several questions.

First, is the person from whom you're buying (your agent) a visible, established member of your community - someone you know and trust?

Second, is the company from whom you're buying well known? What is its reputation? What about price? Because there are hundreds of companies competing for your business, prices vary - sometimes a lot. It may pay you to shop. Be sure the premiums you're quoted are for equal amounts of coverage.

How about service? Price is important but saving money won't mean much unless you get the service you need - when you need it. If possible, ask other clients of your prospective agent how they've been treated, especially when they've had a claim. Find out how the company handles claims. Is the method convenient for you, no matter where you have an accident?

How about solvency? Is the company you're considering still going to be in business when you file your claim? Once you've decided on a company and an agent, there are more questions to ask.

How much coverage do you need? The required minimum amounts of liability coverage may not be enough for you.

Consider your needs in light of your assets and income. How much can you afford to pay if there's a big judgment against you because of an accident? What about deductibles? Deductibles lower your premiums - most commonly for collision and comprehensive coverages - but increase the amount of loss that comes out of your pocket. How much additional risk are you willing to take in order to save? Should you carry collision and comprehensive coverage? As your car's value decreases, you might consider dropping these coverages and pocketing the savings on premiums. But consider if the savings are enough to offset the risk of footing the entire cost of repairing or replacing your car.

Auto insurance is not a generic commodity. It is a product that should be tailored to each individual. Your agent can help you answer these questions and help you tailor your auto insurance to your specific and unique needs.



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## Q: Should I wear my hearing aids all of the time?

A: You have not heard well for a long time and you have adapted to imperfect hearing. You have to relearn what "normal hearing" is and one of the best ways to achieve this is to wear the hearing aids as much as possible, as consistently as possible during waking hours. Wear your hearing aids for a few hours the first day and add an hour a day the following day, and the next, and the next, until you are wearing hearing aids most of the day. Adapting to your hearing aids is a gradual process.

Interact with people familiar to you during your first days with new hearing aids. Start in a favorable listening environment (such as one-on-one conversations in quiet) and work towards more difficult listening situations. Let your friends and family know you're using your new hearing aids.

Please do NOT wear them to a party or restaurant during the first few weeks, thinking "this will be a good test!" It will absolutely not be a good test - it will be very difficult! You should not wear hearing aids in noise until you are very accustomed to them!

### Learning to Use Your Hearing Aid(s):

1. At first, wear the hearing aids in your own home environment.
2. Wear the hearing aids only as long as you are comfortable wearing them.
3. Do not strain to catch every word, even people with normal hearing do not hear every word!
4. Do not be discouraged by background noise
5. Practice adapting to your hearing aids by locating the source of sounds.
6. Increase your tolerance for loud sounds SLOWLY.
7. Practice learning to discriminate different speech sounds.
8. Adapting to hearing aids is increased by listening to something read aloud. "Books on tape" are available at your library.
9. Gradually extend the number of persons with whom you speak.
10. Gradually increase the number of situations in which you use your hearing aids.

## Trusted Care for the Senior You Care for.



TOM CHUCHMACH  
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## Laid Back Socially Active Adults Do Best In Senior Years

Q: I'm curious. Are there any studies about how temperament impacts aging issues such as dementia?

A number of studies have pointed to the fact that being socially active is a positive lifestyle for seniors and one that seems to lessen the impact of dementia.

Recent research has revealed that people who were socially isolated or inactive but relaxed had a 50% lower risk of developing dementia compared with people who were isolated and prone to distress. The dementia risk was also 50% lower for people who were outgoing and relaxed compared with those who were outgoing but prone to distress.

"In the past, studies have shown that chronic distress can affect parts of the brain, such as the hippocampus, possibly leading to dementia, but our findings suggest that having a relaxed and outgoing personality in combination with an active lifestyle may decrease the risk of developing dementia even further," says study leader Dr Hui-Xin Wang, at the Aging Research Centre (ARC) in Stockholm. "The good news is, lifestyle factors can be modified as opposed to genetic factors which cannot be controlled. But these are early results, so how exactly mental attitude influences risk for dementia is not clear," said Wang.

The research is published in the January 20, 2009, print issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

It stands to reason that seniors can reduce their risk by guarding against isolation and making companionship a priority. If you are a family caregiver to an older loved one, do everything you can to ensure that your senior is able to get out and enjoy the company of people of all ages. If your senior is homebound then consider hiring a companionship service such as Home Instead Senior Care.

A Home Instead CAREGiver can help older adults by providing companionship from a few hours up to 24 hours a day, on weekends and even holidays. CAREGivers are screened, trained, bonded and insured, and many are seniors, too.

For more information about Home Instead Senior Care, contact Tom Chuchmach or Scott Johnson at 905.847.8433 or to become a caregiver visit [www.homeinstead.ca/3014](http://www.homeinstead.ca/3014) - For more information about this study, log on to <http://ki.se/ki/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=130&a=67778&l=en&newsdep=130>.



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## My Mothers Ginger Cookies Mrs. Joe Harris Shared by Ruth McKinnon (4th generation)

- 1 cup .....Crisco
- 1 cup .....White Sugar
- 1/2 cup.....Brown Sugar
- 1 .....Egg
- 1/2 cup.....Dark Molasses
- 3 1/2 cups ..Sifted All Purpose Flour
- 2 tsp.....Soda
- 2 tsp.....Cinnamon
- 1 tsp.....Ginger
- 1/2 tsp .....Cloves



Mix crisco and sugar until creamy. Add egg beat, add molasses and beat more. Mix spices, flour and baking soda together. Add half of the flour mix to the batter and mix well.

Gradually add the rest of the flour mixture and mix well. You may need to use your clean hands to mix. Let batter set in the fridge for an hour or over night.

Roll out to make ginger man or roll into walnut size balls, press down with a fork to make cookies. Bake at 350 for 7-9 minutes.

**Ruth enjoys living at Martindale Gardens because of the warm friendly staff and delicious food.**