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From all of us at CIEPS, we hope that you have a very enjoyable festive season with your family and friends.

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

You have heard it said that "Christmas is the most beautiful time of the year." But for many seniors, it is a very lonely time of the year. Reach out to the seniors in your life and wish them and let them know you are there and care about them.

EPC Designation Program NEWS!

The NEW 12th Edition (2024) updated EPC materials have now been released.

The CIEPS faculty have been working relentlessly over the past 8 months to update the EPC Curriculum and information that each chapter contains.

The most updated statistics and information that we have found from multiple sources has been used to make this the most up to date aging program that you will come across today.

We have made the order of the EPC Curriculum so that it flows even better than before. Chapters have been rewritten to better reflect aging trends, ideas, lifestyle improvements and what is trending with our older populations today.

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Order your updated copy today - The hard copy version of the 12th Edition EPC Desk Reference materials are available for EPC Designation holders at a reduced cost of \$199 + taxes and shipping is included.

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The Toronto, ON EPIC was a success!

We would like to thank all our sponsors and attendees who made this conference an overwhelming success.

Save the date for the 2025 Niagara Falls, ON June 1, 2, 3, 2025 - [Niagara Falls, ON EPIC](#). **You can choose to attend either LIVE in person or by LIVE webcast.**

Agendas and registration will be available soon.

Please support this conference so that we can continue to bring you presentations that will help you with your aging clients, prospects and families. REGISTER SOON!

Ways to Boost Seniors' Wellness Over the Holiday Season... *from an article found on the web from a couple of years ago and updated.*

In Canada, nearly 30 per cent of seniors are at risk of becoming socially isolated. According to Statistics Canada, during the second quarter of 2024, 10.4 per cent of people aged 65 or older in Canada reported always or often feeling lonely.

Loneliness and social isolation can pose serious impacts on physical and mental health, as well as the well-being of society and communities, WHO reports.

The holidays are quickly approaching—but not everyone is excited about it.

The holiday season can be an especially tough and lonely time for seniors in retirement residences or long-term care facilities, or who live on their own.

So why not take some time out this December, to do something special for a senior over the holidays?

Here are just a few ideas to help out—whether it's a family member, friend, or complete stranger. Each idea is simple but can mean so much to a senior!

Here are just a few reasons why seniors get the holiday blues:

It's cold, icy and slippery outside—not to mention getting darker earlier—so a senior with limited mobility may feel especially confined to the indoors.

They may be dealing with the loss of a spouse and adjusting to spending the holidays alone.

Their peers may be getting increasingly ill or dying, and they may themselves be feeling anxiety for their own wellbeing.

Moreover, those negative feelings can worsen when seniors live alone, away from daily social interaction.

As the holidays draw near, here are a few thoughtful ways you can help keep an eye on your loved ones, and even boost their spirits.

Watch for signs of depression

The holidays can be nostalgic for everyone—but they can also be a painful reminder for seniors, many of whom have lost spouses or peers.

Science shows that social isolation is a key factor that contributes to depression and a decline in seniors' mental health. Checking in regularly with your loved one can help you stay on top of any symptoms of depression.

Visit them more than just on that “special day”

As mentioned above, social isolation leads to seniors' mental health problems. So, if you can, try to integrate seniors into more than just Christmas Day (or Christmas Eve, or whatever your holiday's most special day is).

This may be especially enjoyable to them if they spend time with grandchildren.

Help keep traditions alive

If there are any particular holiday traditions your loved one likes to do, make sure to celebrate it with them.

For example, they may like attending a specific church service or going to see Handel's Messiah every year.

Taking part in things they enjoy will make their spirits a little brighter, even if they are having a difficult time dealing with the holiday season.

Lower the “burden of holiday expectations”

As you already know, ensuring a wonderful holiday season for everyone else requires a lot of work! But not all seniors are physically able to fulfill the same traditions they used to. For example, the slippery, cold and wintry weather can make it difficult for seniors to venture outdoors for shopping.

They also may not be mobile enough or live in a large enough place to cook or host a meal.

You can help ease the “expectations burden” of the holidays by offering to help a senior with cooking, shopping, or anything else they need.

Help keep seniors’ costs low

Many seniors are on fixed incomes—and the holidays can bring on stress associated with gift-giving.

Help them keep their costs down by notifying them of sales, giving them a maximum to spend on grandchildren, or even suggesting they don’t buy any presents at all (instead, let your family spoil them).

Encourage them to get a flu shot

Unfortunately, the holiday season is also the dreaded flu season!

A flu shot is especially important if the senior in your life is prone to illness and seeing people over the holidays.

Moreover, people aged 65 and over are more susceptible to infection—which can lead to serious complications including pneumonia.

Consider investing in a “winter stay”

If you don’t live in the same city as your aging parent or relative, and you are concerned about them being isolated at this time of year, consider looking into a winter stay.

Also referred to as a “short-term stay,” there are so many benefits to staying temporarily in a retirement residence!

Take them shopping

It’s always nice to get out especially when there are things you need. However, many seniors stay indoors as much as they can when there is snow and ice. Offering to accompany a senior as well as drive is a way to spend more quality time as well as check some things off their list.

If limited mobility is an issue, ensure they have a walker or wheelchair to make moving more comfortable.

Do their holiday shopping for them

Ask them for a list of things they'd like to buy, and then do the legwork for them (including delivery). And remember, they are likely on a limited budget, so avoid making expensive recommendations.

Take the initiative to alleviate the holiday stress for your loved ones and other seniors by offering to handle their holiday shopping. Begin by asking them to provide a list of items they desire, and then take on the responsibility of navigating through the bustling holiday marketplaces on their behalf. Not only will you spare them the time and effort, but you can also ensure a seamless process by managing the entire shopping experience, including arranging for convenient deliveries.

Wrap presents

Transform the act of wrapping presents into a heartwarming social activity by teaming up with a senior friend or family member. Create a festive ambiance by playing holiday music in the background, turning what might be a routine task into a joyful and shared experience. Embrace the opportunity to spend quality time together, strengthening bonds and creating lasting memories.

To make the wrapping session even more special, come prepared with all the necessary supplies. Bring an assortment of wrapping paper, ribbons, bows, and gift tags to ensure a variety of options for a personalized touch.

Help them decorate

Help them make their place look festive. Add decorations to their home or retirement room. Even a small potted tree with tiny lights can make their space feel warm and holiday ready.

Send a card in the mail

Send a nice card, letter or picture to keep the senior's seasonal mail more upbeat.

Seek out events

Find out and attend events for seniors in your community or see if there are any social gatherings coming up at their retirement residence. Tell the senior in your life about these events, and/or volunteer your time at one!

Get the kids involved

There are so many benefits to bringing youth and seniors together—for both generations! If you have kids in your life, bring them along when you visit or help a senior. They can learn a lot from each other and enjoy each other’s company—despite the age gap.

Don’t have a senior in your life, but still want to do something for them?

Contact your local retirement residence or nearby church or community centre. Many organizations have special programs around the holidays, where they make special visits to seniors who live alone.

Include them

Especially if it’s a family member, remind them that they are loved by including them in holiday festivities. Whether it’s a movie night at home, a small gathering of friends and family, doing crafts or baking, a simple invitation can go a long way to easing their loneliness.

Above all else, listen

Be an active listener and show empathy. Not all discussions may be positive—in fact, some topics of conversation may be quite sad. But by listening, you can learn a lot about the senior in your life. If they’re feeling down over the holidays, you may also be able to lift their spirits simply by lending a caring ear.

A “Picture” of Health: 3 Art Forms and Their Health Benefits... *from an article posted on the McMaster University Portal on October 30, 2024*

The Bottom Line

- Creative arts include activities such as music, dance, drawing, and painting.
- Active music-making therapy may improve cognitive functioning in older adults with cognitive impairment or mild to moderate dementia.
- Dance-based mind-motor activities, like Tai Chi, may decrease the risk of falling and rate of falls in healthy older adults.
- Visual art therapy may enhance cognitive function and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in some older adults.

From performing arts to visual arts, the creative arts offer us a diverse range of activities to express our emotions, tell our stories, and share our perspectives. And of course, to have some fun too! Painting, photography, pottery, music, and theatre are a few examples of how we can tap into our inner artist. After all, “Every child is an artist,” according to Pablo Picasso. However, in the second part of that same quote, Picasso questioned how that child could stay an artist as they grew up . Could potential health

benefits provide a motivational push for some to continue engaging in the arts? Research points to how music, dance, and visual art can help improve various aspects of health and well-being in certain populations.

1. Music

Active music-making therapies delivered by professionals involve individuals participating in music through activities like singing, clapping, and playing instruments, to name a few. Preliminary research shows that active music-making therapy may result in small but meaningful improvements in the cognitive functioning of older adults with cognitive impairment or mild to moderate dementia. Clear impacts on depression, mood, anxiety, and quality of life haven't been seen at this time.

2. Dance

Dance-based mind-motor activities—such as Tai Chi and non-Tai Chi activities like ballroom/folk dancing—are forms of exercise that involve multiple components. These exercises can include an emphasis on balance, moving to an external or internal rhythm (like music or breathing), following choreography or directions, completing movements in a vertical position, and connecting with others. Research shows that dance-based mind-motor activities, specifically Tai Chi, may reduce the number of people who have a fall and the number of falls in healthy older adults. Additionally, both Tai Chi and non-Tai Chi activities may moderately improve balance and mobility, while non-Tai Chi activities may also enhance lower body strength.

3. Visual Art

Visual art therapy involves using various materials and methods to create a piece of artwork with or without the encouragement of peers or therapists. Research shows that supervised, group-based visual art therapy may result in large enhancements in cognitive function for older adults with mild cognitive impairment. It may moderately reduce depressive symptoms for those with normal cognition or dementia, but this effect was not seen for those with mild cognitive impairment. Lastly, it appears that overall, this form of art therapy may somewhat reduce anxiety in older adults; these results are not specific to cognitive status.

While more research is needed to further support the findings above and inform the development of programs that provide optimal effectiveness, nurturing creativity through the arts may have the potential to benefit cognitive, mental, and physical health. Interested in how you can incorporate these artistic activities into a comprehensive prevention or treatment plan? Consult with your healthcare team about your specific health status, needs, and wants.

Debunking 5 Myths About Antidepressants... *from an article posted on the Good Times magazine site, written by Jessica Dostie on September 20, 2024*

During my work as a clinical psychologist and neurobiologist, I have spoken with many individuals who are considering taking antidepressant medications such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). Many ask me for my thoughts on whether they need medication, whether the talk therapy will be enough or whether they are “strong enough” to get over it without medications.

I always make a point of listening to their reasons for taking medications versus their hesitations. While many are reasonable, such as potential interactions with other health conditions, I also hear many unfounded reasons over and over, suggesting that myths underlying antidepressant hesitancy exist deep in our collective psyches.

Given the rising rates in depression and anxiety, it is time to talk about how treatments work and why people hesitate so we can make informed treatment decisions — especially when hesitations may not be grounded in science.

Here are some of the most common myths I hear, along with my responses:

Myth 1: I am stronger if I do this without meds

Overcoming depression is like overcoming a broken leg. You could be an extremely strong competitive weightlifter, but if your leg is broken you cannot use it in the same way. You may be an incredibly strong person psychologically but if you have depression, your brain is no longer responding to everyday life in the same way, and it needs to “heal” before you can expect it to function like it did pre-depression.

Myth 2: I will be dependent on antidepressants to be happy

Antidepressants don't make people happy; they allow people to experience all emotions in an appropriate and balanced way. Antidepressants do not offer immediate symptom relief; in fact, they take four to six weeks to take full effects. However, they are a long-term (typically at a minimum for a year) and (hopefully) curative treatment, much like chemotherapy for certain types of cancer. With chemotherapy, you typically have to do a certain number of treatments over a prescribed time in order to kill the cancerous cells and be considered in remission.

Similarly, most studies show that if you take antidepressant medications for a year before coming off of them, the majority of people will not relapse. That means you will likely need to take them for a certain period of time to maintain the effects, but the effects will often remain long after you stop taking them. However, a small portion of people have a more

chronic form of depression and may need to remain on medications for longer periods.

Myth 3: Meds will change who I am, I will be different or feel high

Antidepressant medications do not make people feel “high.” They don’t change what you know, what you learn or who you are, but they do allow you to view things from a more balanced perspective. I once heard a patient describe taking antidepressant medications quite simply: “I still see the same good and bad things, but when I was depressed I seemed to only pay attention to the bad and now I pay attention to the good as well.”

Myth 4: I will become addicted

Antidepressants taken as prescribed are generally not addictive and have a low potential for misuse. Antidepressants are not associated with things like cravings for the drug, as seen with addictive medications like opioids. Some patients report withdrawal symptoms such as headache or nausea when they stop taking certain antidepressants suddenly, but these are generally short-lived and can be minimised by tapering off treatment slowly.

Myth 5: Meds should only be used as a last resort

Reserving antidepressants only for extreme cases doesn’t make sense for several reasons. First, it is a matter of quality of life: depression hurts. It hurts the sufferer, the people around them, work productivity and has immense societal consequences. The financial repercussions that can be attributed to depression in terms of the number of workdays missed, jobs lost, accidents caused, etc. are enormous.

We actually have medications that can help, are not addictive and have been around for long enough that long-lasting effects following treatment have been studied. To date, major long-term consequences of taking antidepressants as prescribed have rarely been observed in the short-term, though new evidence suggests that long-term antidepressant use (10 years or more) may be associated with increased cardiovascular disease risk. Though it is important to note that depression itself is also associated with increased cardiovascular disease risk.

So, if it improves someone’s quality of life — their concentration, their sleep, their relationships, their ability to work or to be present as a parent, decreases worry or helps them find the energy to do things they enjoy — why not consider the treatment?

Another factor in favour of treatment is that while major long-term negative consequences of taking antidepressants for a depressive episode have not been observed, the major long-term ramifications of living with depression have absolutely been observed. Depression significantly increases risk of cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disease,

respiratory disease and Parkinson's disease, to name a few. It also seems to worsen the outcomes for cancer.

If taking the medication is generally not associated with long-term health consequences but living with depression is, then the answer seems straightforward.

Treating depression

I am not suggesting that everyone with depression should take medications. Of course, this is something to be discussed with your doctor and there may be reasons why this would be a good or bad option for you.

Like any treatment, antidepressant medications do have side-effects and may pose risks to certain patients. If you are going to therapy or getting support in other ways and you see improvement, then by all means continue. But, if you are struggling and have held out on considering medications because of antidepressant hesitancy myths, maybe reconsider and discuss the possibility with your doctor.

It is also important to note that generally, the number of people that show improvement with talk therapy or by taking antidepressant treatments is similar (around 50-60 per cent). However, combining antidepressant medication with talk therapy is associated with greater improvement and a significantly reduced likelihood of relapse.

One theory as to why this occurs is because antidepressants increase neuroplasticity, which then leaves the brain in a better position to retain and exercise the gains made in therapy. One might think of antidepressants as therapy boosters in this case.

Antidepressant medications have evolved extensively from the first-generation medications used in the 1950s. There are now lifetimes of data about the long-term effects and underlying functions. Newer medications are now largely designed based on scientific theory.

Debunking the myths surrounding antidepressants is critical to permitting educated treatment decisions for those who suffer.

Aging Creatively: How Arts, Storytelling, and Hobbies Can Enrich Later Life... *from an article posted on the McMaster University Portal on November 6, 2024*

The Bottom Line

- Creative activities like art, storytelling, and hobbies can improve memory, thinking skills, and emotional well-being for older adults, especially those with mild cognitive impairment.

- Gardening is a versatile activity that supports physical health, reduces stress, and enhances social connections, leading to better life satisfaction and physical mobility.
- Arts programs for older adults promote connection, reduce loneliness, and help shift perspectives on aging from decline to growth.
- Starting creative activities is simple and rewarding, whether through local programs, reconnecting with hobbies, or doing art projects with family members.

As we age, we often seek ways to maintain cognitive vitality and emotional well-being. Art and creativity, in its many forms, offers more than aesthetic pleasure; it becomes a therapeutic tool that can support cognitive health, emotional resilience, and even social connection.

Creative expression, whether through painting, music, writing, or dance, can be transformative, providing outlets for self-expression, socialization, and mental stimulation. Beyond traditional forms of “art therapy,” other creative activities—like storytelling, gardening, and even exercise—can help older adults tap into new aspects of their creativity while supporting cognitive and emotional health.

What the research tells us

Research into creative activities for older adults has uncovered several potential benefits. For example, studies show that engaging in visual art therapy, creative storytelling, and community-based activities like gardening can offer cognitive, emotional, and social benefits to older adults across a range of thinking and memory skills.

One evidence synthesis focusing on lifestyle and psychosocial interventions to address cognitive decline in older adults found that engaging in arts and storytelling has been shown to support cognitive health, particularly in those with mild cognitive impairment (MCI). Specifically, regular participation in art therapy can improve memory, cognitive flexibility, and emotional well-being. Activities like painting, drawing, and creative writing can foster decision-making, problem-solving, and abstract thinking—skills that are vital for mental agility. Additionally, storytelling programs, especially in group settings, can boost social connectedness, reduce symptoms of depression, and enhance memory recall. Finally, for older adults with MCI, combining artistic activities with physical exercise (such as Tai Chi) has been shown to provide even greater benefits.

Studies show that even moderate levels of physical activity, when incorporated with creative activities like storytelling or arts programming, can significantly improve memory, executive function, and mood in older adults with MCI. Programs that integrate resistance training or aerobic activities, done twice weekly over several months, have been found to yield significant cognitive benefits. Adding artistic or storytelling elements

to these activities offers both cognitive and emotional rewards, enhancing motivation and engagement, particularly in older adults who may find exercise alone less appealing.

Another evidence synthesis highlights the potential benefits of gardening as a versatile activity that provides older adults with an opportunity for creative expression, physical activity, and stress relief. Studies focusing on gardening for older adults reveal that it fosters sensory engagement, maintains fine motor skills, and encourages interaction with others, which can lead to increased feelings of social connection. The act of nurturing plants offers purpose and routine, which are essential for mental well-being. Gardening can also stimulate memory and a connection to past experiences, enhancing older adults' sense of continuity and purpose. Older adults who engage in gardening often report higher levels of life satisfaction, improved physical mobility, and reduced feelings of loneliness, which together contribute to a better quality of life. This type of creativity can be especially beneficial in community and nursing home settings, where gardening activities can increase engagement and enjoyment, promoting a more active and satisfying lifestyle.

Finally, an evidence synthesis about leveraging the arts for improving communication and understanding in later life found that engaging older adults with the arts serves as a meaningful approach to foster communication about aging, age-related challenges, and associated care. Research included in the synthesis shows that the arts not only help reduce physical symptoms like blood pressure and mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression, but also enhance social connectivity, community involvement, self-efficacy, and overall wellness among older adults. Furthermore, arts-based interventions can reshape perceptions of aging, moving away from a focus on decline to a view that celebrates growth and creativity in older adulthood. Studies have employed various forms of art, including storytelling, performance theater, and drama, to address issues like dementia, ageism, and social isolation, with programs often tailored to specific needs in aging populations. This research highlights the potential of using the arts in later life to leverage creative expression as a pathway to healthier and more fulfilling aging experiences.

Embracing creativity in later life

While engaging in creative pursuits isn't a miracle cure, it holds the promise of enhancing well-being and cognitive health in ways that traditional therapies may not. Here are a few practical ways to begin or deepen creative engagement:

- **Join local art programs:** Look into community art classes or museum programs designed for older adults, which often offer social engagement alongside creative expression.
- **Explore online creative communities:** For those unable to join in-person programs, many organizations now offer virtual

classes, enabling social interaction and creative exploration from home.

- **Reconnect with personal artistic passions:** Whether it's knitting, gardening, wood carving, piano, or photography, engaging with a beloved hobby can bring joy, a sense of accomplishment, and mental stimulation.
- **Consider intergenerational arts activities:** Collaborative projects with family members or friends of different generations can help foster connection and share cultural memories, enriching both personal and social well-being.

Artistic engagement supports more than just the mind; it sustains the spirit. As more people embrace creative aging, they discover renewed connections, deeper self-expression, and a vibrant pathway to cognitive and emotional well-being. Whether rekindling old passions or exploring new ones, it's never too late to start creating.

A Spotlight on Men's Health: Addressing the Unique Needs of Older Men... *from an article posted on the McMaster University Portal on November 6, 2024*

As men age, their health needs evolve, often presenting unique challenges that require targeted care and awareness. Though both men and women experience changes related to aging, men face specific risks and health issues that can have an impact on their overall quality of life. Yet, older men are less likely to seek preventive healthcare and may miss opportunities to address these needs proactively. In this post, we'll explore the key areas where men's health matters most and the steps they—and those who care about them—can take to support their well-being.

1. Understanding physical health risks

Older men are at a higher risk for certain chronic conditions, including:

- **Heart Health:** Cardiovascular disease is one of the leading causes of death among men. Hypertension, high cholesterol, and heart disease are common as men age, making heart health a priority.
- **Prostate Health:** The risk of prostate issues, including benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) and prostate cancer, increases with age. Regular screening and awareness of symptoms are crucial for early detection and treatment.
- **Osteoporosis:** Though often associated with women, osteoporosis is also a significant concern for older men. Men typically experience bone density loss later than women, but the impact can still lead to fractures and long-term disability if not addressed.

2. Mental health is critical, too

Mental health among older men is a topic that deserves greater attention. Depression, anxiety, and loneliness can often go unnoticed or unaddressed, as men are less likely than women to seek support for mental health struggles. Everyday stressors like retirement, loss of loved ones, and health challenges can affect mental well-being, leading to an increased risk of depression and anxiety. Encouraging open conversations about mental health and breaking down stigmas can make a difference in men's lives.

- **Depression:** Men tend to manifest depression differently, sometimes presenting as irritability, aggression, or withdrawal rather than sadness. Recognizing these symptoms is the first step in seeking appropriate support.
- **Loneliness and Isolation:** Older men may experience social isolation, which can lead to decreased quality of life and even physical health decline. Engaging in social activities and building strong support networks can help combat loneliness.

3. The role that lifestyle plays

Positive lifestyle choices can have a powerful effect on health outcomes for older men:

- **Nutrition:** A balanced diet with plenty of fibre, lean protein, healthy fats, and essential nutrients can help maintain muscle mass, manage weight, and support cardiovascular health. Keeping an eye on portion control and nutrient-rich foods can combat health risks like obesity and diabetes.
- **Exercise:** Staying active supports heart health, muscle strength, flexibility, and balance—all of which are crucial for maintaining independence. Older men benefit from a combination of strength training, cardio, and flexibility exercises.
- **Avoiding Smoking and Alcohol Abuse:** Avoiding tobacco products and limiting alcohol consumption are essential. Smoking is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease and cancer, and excessive alcohol intake can impact liver health, bone density, and cognitive function.

4. Taking a preventative approach

Preventive healthcare is vital for men of all ages but becomes increasingly important as men grow older. Regular check-ups, screenings, and vaccinations are essential to catching health concerns early:

- **Annual Check-Ups:** Routine visits allow doctors to monitor blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, and other key health markers.
- **Screenings for Common Cancers:** Prostate, colorectal, and lung cancers are more common in older men. Regular screenings, such as colonoscopies and PSA tests, can help catch these cancers in their early stages.

- **Vaccinations:** Vaccines like the flu shot, pneumococcal vaccine, and shingles vaccine are recommended for older adults, particularly those with existing health conditions.

Family members, friends, and community groups play important roles in men's health. Encouragement from loved ones can affect whether older men prioritize their health. Engaging in social activities, reaching out to peers, or joining groups centered on hobbies can reduce isolation and improve well-being.

Aging is inevitable, but there are proactive steps to take to maintain and improve your health. Every small action contributes to a better quality of life, from routine check-ups and screenings to healthy lifestyle choices.

Healthy Holiday Eating for Seniors

If Santa keeps a list for “naughty” eating and “nice” eating over the holidays, many older adults will see a checkmark next to their name with the note, “nibbled too much/overindulged.” The list of fattening holiday foods is endless: mashed potatoes and gravy, pecan pie, iced gingerbread, eggnog. Pile on the artichoke dip and sweet potato casserole, and the extra calories, fat, sodium and sugar expand from Thanksgiving through New Year's.

Many aging individuals get nutritionally off-track during the holidays because they are already dealing with health conditions that affect diet, including diabetes, arthritis and recovery from surgery. The year-end sugary treats and rich foods can exacerbate an already poor diet, especially for seniors malnourished from eating convenience foods or empty-calorie foods. Eating a well-balanced diet boosts brainpower, adds energy and strengthens muscles and bones, but over the holidays, many older individuals turn to noshing on fattening foods with limited dietary value. The taste and smell of food can change with aging, also prompting the elderly to simply eat more of a food to try to discern the flavor or aroma.

Finding a healthy balance of nutrition and celebration over the holidays is a challenge for many seniors and their family caregivers. Yet with a few proactive steps, cooking for festive occasions and eating during them can be a blend of wholesome foods and plenty of enjoyable times with family and friends.

Depriving oneself fully of your favorite holiday fare can actually backfire and bring on more intense cravings and spark overeating. Instead, the key is to consume fewer unhealthy foods and revel in festivities at the same time. But how?

The following tips can help:

Plan ahead and choose wisely

Forget winging it at holiday functions. Consider eating a light protein snack before the party and bring healthier foods to the function including a vegetable or fresh fruit tray.

Know basic calorie counts

Checking the calories in favorite holiday foods can motivate seniors to indulge a bit but curb the temptation to have a second slice of pie or take home leftover fudge.

Mingle or sit away from the dessert platters and buffet tables

Hovering too close to the ready-at-hand foods invites mindless munching.

Select smaller portions

Sample a few bites of “off-limit” foods and practice eating in moderation overall. Choosing a smaller plate also can help with portion control.

Ease up on alcoholic beverages

At holiday celebrations and parties, alternate between drinking spirits and drinking nonalcoholic, calorie-free drinks. Stay hydrated with water throughout a gathering.

Be aware of emotions

Socializing with loved ones during the holidays can stir up tender and unresolved issues. Even the smell of certain holiday foods can trigger a painful emotional response.

Account for travel fatigue and stress

Allow for energy and sleep adjustments for seniors who travel to holiday gatherings. The busyness of holiday prep, shopping, etc. can add to its own toll. People tend to overeat when tired or frazzled.

Fit in exercise

Throughout November and December, keep up a regular workout routine or opt for indoor exercises such as stair climbing. After a holiday meal and before dessert, invite everyone to go for a walk together. (The dishwashing can wait.)

Substitute instead of skipping out

Citrus, vanilla and cinnamon are delicious substitutes for full amounts of sugar in recipes. Unsweetened applesauce or mashed bananas work well

for fat ingredients. The Mayo Clinic issued a substitution guide for replacing ingredients with healthier choices.

Savor the celebrations

Laughter and uplifting conversations can increase the body's natural defense system and lower blood pressure. Endorphin hormones released through laughter alone lower pain sensation and foster positive emotion.

A number of common holiday foods are actually packed with nutrients and can prove beneficial to encouraging older adults to join in the revelry without compromising their dietary health:

Cranberries – The tart fruit retards bacteria that are common in urinary tract infections. Cranberry sauce can be sweetened lightly with sugar or a sugar substitute.

Green Beans – Packed with vitamins K, C and A, this naturally low-calorie vegetable helps protect bones and is delicious served with a light sprinkling of olive oil and lemon.

Pumpkin Pie – A boosting source of potassium, fiber and carotenoids (for making vitamin A), the orange vegetable is a traditional holiday favorite in pies and bars. Substituting artificial sweetener and 2% milk instead of sweetened evaporated milk will save calories without sacrificing taste.

To avoid “nibbled too much/overindulged” this holiday season, talk ahead of time with family and party hosts about alternative recipes, or contribute your own healthier culinary creations.

CEIPS/EPC Member Benefits

By now you have received the EPC Special Bulletin highlighting the NEW additional EPC Member Benefits that are available for you as an EPC member in good standing.

We have put together some great partnerships for you to consider. Please contact the individual companies for further details.

Check them out here - [EPC Member Benefits](#)

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The CIEPS faculty have been working relentlessly over the past 8 months to update the EPC Curriculum and information that each chapter contains.

The most updated statistics and information that we have found from multiple sources has been used to make this the most up to date aging program that you will come across today.

We have made the order of the EPC Curriculum so that it flows even better than before. Chapters have been rewritten to better reflect aging trends, ideas, lifestyle improvements and what is trending with our older populations today.

Order your updated copy today - The hard copy version of the 12th Edition EPC Desk Reference materials are available for EPC Designation holders at a reduced cost of \$199 + taxes and shipping is included.

[Visit here](#) to order your set today.

The Advantage of Having a CARP Membership

Let us first go over the [Canadian Association of Retired Persons](#) (CARP) and why it would be good to become a member.

If you are a Canadian citizen aged 50 or older, you can become a member. You will then get senior discounts at several businesses across Canada.

The minimum age requirement depends on the partnering business, but it might be worth spending a little money each year for the membership in exchange for the discounts available. I have listed several 55+ senior discounts in Canada below, and many of them are exclusively available to CARP members.

This list of senior discounts in Canada based on different categories to help you find discounts on specific items, businesses, or services that you can use for the senior in your life.

Did you know that CIEPS is on LinkedIn?

EPC member Paul Fawcett started a group on LinkedIn, and it is now an open group. Why not join it so that you can keep up to date with trending discussions that would be of interest to the Elder Planning Counselor.

Join and share with the group here –[EPC LinkedIn Group](#)

CIEPS/EPC is always looking for interesting articles from the EPC membership for submission to the PULSE.

If you have any interesting articles that you would like to have submitted into the EPC PULSE pertaining to senior issues etc., please send them to me and if suitable, we will put them into the monthly PULSE and give

credit where it is due. You can send them directly to me – registrar@cieps.com

Please keep your contact information current with us

To help us keep your contact information up to date, so that you do not miss any timely information, renewal notifications and the PULSE monthly email newsletter, please use our member update form if any of your information has changed. You can access the form here - [EPC Member Update Form](#)

Important notice regarding your EPC Membership dues. Please ensure that your EPC is always in good standing.

When you pay your EPC Membership Dues, please include applicable taxes (GST/HST) for your Province of residence.

If you are sending a cheque for your EPC Membership, please reference that the cheque is for.

Annual renewal fee—\$150.00 + Applicable taxes for the province you reside in. This can be paid by Cheque, Visa, or MasterCard, or email transfer to payments@cieps.com and it will be processed for you.

- If you reside in AB, BC, SK, MB, QC, NT, NU, or YT your yearly renewal is \$157.50 all taxes included.
- If you reside in ON, your yearly renewal is \$169.50 all taxes included.
- If you reside in NS, NB, NL, or PE your yearly renewal is \$172.50 all taxes included.

Not sure when your renewal is? Check the date on your EPC Certificate. The date you passed your EPC Qualification examination is your renewal date each year.

We email receipts for renewal payments at the end of the month which you paid your dues.

RENEW SECURELY HERE

Reminder

Remember, only an EPC member in good standing may use the EPC mark, the words EPC Designation, or logo on any advertising, business cards, stationery, signage, voice mail or email. This is in accordance with the CIEPS tenets and standards.

CE requirements when renewing your EPC Designation

CIEPS has a requirement of 30 CE credits annually when you renew your EPC membership.

Lately we have been receiving questions about the Continuing Education requirements when renewing your EPC Designation.

The following should clarify this for you.

If you are in a profession that requires CE Credits, then we accept that number of CE hours towards your EPC Membership renewal.

If you are in a profession that does not require CE Credits, then you do not require any CE to renew your EPC membership.

PLEASE NOTE!

Just a reminder that when you use your credit card to pay for your EPC Renewal fees, or purchase anything from the EPC Resource Library, it will show on your statement as CNDIAN INTIVE FOR ELDR ST... Beamsville, ON. With a phone number of 855-882-3427 do not panic, as this is the Elder Planning Counselor Designation (EPC).

If you would like to stop receiving this publication, please respond to info@cieps.com with the message "**STOP MY PULSE!**"

To contact CIEPS:

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