

CELEBRATE • *Healthy Aging*

The Importance of Staying Connected

A Conversation with a Centenarian

There is no secret to longevity... according to centenarian Edith Landy, who is 102 years old. With many older adults living well into their nineties and beyond, Edith is not a novelty.

"I just live how I live."

"My mother died when I was eight. She was 36 years old. Two of my sisters lived well into their nineties". Outliving friends and family are the hard bit about aging, with memorials and funerals becoming all too common.

When people find out about Edith's age, she often gets treated differently. People make assumptions; individuals start talking slower or less intelligently. Most people are unaware they are being ageist; prejudice or discrimination against people based on their age. The excellent news – ageism can be stopped. You can change the way you think about aging. Reflect on your thoughts; learning and acting when you hear an ageist joke or stereotype can help.

Having faced many challenges over the years, dealing with Covid was no big deal to Edith, who lives independently. She stayed in her home and abided by the restrictions. She is hesitant to impart advice for fear that someone who takes her advice shouldn't otherwise.

Music has been a mainstay for Edith since her early teen years when she garnered a love for music. Edith and her friends would head downtown to The Bay or Eaton's as young women and listen to records in the "music room" department store. Growing up, she never had music in her home; she had no time. "My father hummed," she remarked. Along with listening to records in the downtown department stores, once married, her husband shared his love of classical music with her too. "Listening to the symphony is a thrill"; Edith has been attending Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra for over half her life. Concerts were fantastic as all Edith grew up with was a radio.

After getting married, having a supportive husband was key for her, having five children in 8 years. Edith did what she had to do to support her family; she worked outside the home. She worked evenings and nights, opposite shifts to her husband.

Giving back to her community was vital.

Edith and her late husband spent countless hours and over twenty years volunteering at the North End Centennial Complex and earlier spent time at the North End YM/YWCA and the Seven Oaks pool.

Talking with Edith, an intelligent, spirited woman with a healthy dose of go-getting energy, was a pleasure. Bottom line – we are all individuals; the one shoe fits mentality doesn't apply.

Just live your own best life.



The Importance of Social Engagement

For older adults, possibilities for social participation can change for various reasons, such as health, retirement or change of residence.

Activities that involve interaction with others can greatly improve their health and quality of life. Those who engage regularly in activities with friends or family, or who have someone to talk to often have a more positive outlook. Participating in hobbies and activities with others can also help them find pleasure and purpose in life during difficult times. Some of the main benefits include:

Enhanced Mental Health

Socializing can help older adults feel loved and needed as their lives are affirmed by the activities they do and by those with whom they interact. Being around other people, especially if you're doing something fun or rewarding, helps us keep a positive outlook on life.

Sense of Belonging

Enjoying the company of others who have similar personalities or interests helps us feel like we belong somewhere. For those who may have lost a spouse, family member or friend, the need to belong may be more intense. Engaging with others can cultivate new friendships and can create lasting bonds.

Better Self-Esteem

The more people socialize or participate in activities with others, the more they benefit by feeling like they contribute to their community. Any kind of positive interaction with friends, family or neighbors can help us feel confident in ourselves and our abilities.

Improved Physical Health

When we have good conversations or do things we love with others, our bodies release health-promoting chemicals that boost the immune system to ward off illness and make us feel physically well. Also, socializing promotes an active lifestyle and better nutritional intake.

Increased Cognitive Functioning

Socializing is also key to keeping the brain sharp as we age. Having an active social life encourages us to continue learning, observing and responding to the world around us. Conversation and activity are great for exercising the mind and can potentially lower the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Purposeful Living

Having somewhere to go, something meaningful to do or people to see helps us get excited for the day. When we build strong relationships with others, we gain a sense of fulfillment, and spending quality time with those we love reminds us that life is worthwhile.

FREE Healthy Aging Challenge

October 24th-30th

Join us to explore small changes that can add up to better well-being. The free challenge is open to all and includes daily emails that feature topics from the Wellness Institute's Lifestyle Medicine experts and Active Aging in Manitoba, such as exercise, gratitude, mental wellbeing, connections, brain health and more! **Sign up today - <https://wellnessinstitute.ca/aa-challenge/>**

Brought to you by a partnership between Active Aging in Manitoba and the Wellness Institute for Active Aging Week and Seniors and Elders Month.



CELEBRATE•Prevention

Stay Healthy & Active through Prevention

Seasonal safety tips

When the temperature drops, older adults run a higher risk of health problems and injuries related to the weather, such as falls on slippery, uneven or icy surfaces. And of course, as with most things in life, it is better to be prepared. Here are a few precautions everyone should take, especially older adults, as the weather starts to cool off:

Make sure to bundle up

If you have lower blood circulation, you could be more susceptible to changes in temperature. Put on additional layers of clothing throughout autumn as the days can start out very cool and then warm up later on. Layers are easy to shed and adjust as temperatures change. and make. Also be sure to wear a hat that covers your ears, insulated gloves, a warm jacket and a scarf when temperatures really start to drop. You can never be too prepared to face our unpredictable Manitoba weather!

Keep the shovels ready!

Living in Manitoba, it is likely that we can experience an early taste of winter during autumn. So keep the shovels handy, and get help clearing the snow in case your area gets an early winter storm.

If you choose to shovel, take some precautions. Strenuous activities like shoveling snow may put too much strain on your heart, especially if you have heart disease. Take precautions if you have problems with balance or have issues such as osteoporosis or arthritis.

Light up your surroundings

The key to preventing unfortunate falls and trips is to watch where you are walking, which in turn requires your living space to be properly lit. Place a lamp next to your bed within your reach. Set up nightlights in hallways, bedrooms, and any other room that you may use in the evenings. Store flashlights in drawers and cabinets that are easily accessible.

Prevent falls

When possible, avoid walking on wet, leafy or icy sidewalks to avoid slipping. If you must walk outside (and your pathways are not dry or clear), wear shoes or boots with non-skid soles to help with traction and keep you steady on your feet. If you walk with a cane, it is a good idea to consider replacing the rubber tip before it gets worn out or even purchase an ice pick-like attachment to help with your balance.

Don't feel guilty asking for help

Most of us are wired to not ask for help when needed, we've been told it's a sign of weakness. Nothing can be further from the truth; asking for help is smart and actually a sign of strength. There are many resources and supports available. Family, friends and loved ones are a good place to start, but when no one is available.

If someone you know is feeling isolated **Call 311** to access resources available through **A & O: Support Services for Older Adults**

FREE Presentation

Staying on Your Feet: Taking Steps to Prevent fall and Fall-related Injuries.
October 25 at noon – 1 pm

Aimed at reducing the risk of falls among older Manitobans. We will help you understand the risks of falling at home and in the community. You'll receive information to help to determine your risk of falling and how to take action to lower your risk.



Pre-registration is required – please call **204-632-3912**
OR email **info@activeagingmb.ca**.

Prevention is Key - Get the Shot Not the Flu!

Make sure to get vaccinated

As we age, we know that eating healthy foods and being physically active will contribute to our overall health and well-being. However, we sometimes tend to pay less attention to other healthy choices that could be life-changing, for example, getting the vaccination for Influenza that is appropriate for us.

There's a good reason why the message '**Get the Shot, Not the Flu**' is so prevalent. Influenza is not merely a cold or stomach illness; it's serious and can be deadly.

Older adults are at greater risk of influenza during the autumn season. What's worse, the flu can aggravate pre-existing health conditions and even require hospitalization.

According to the World Health Organization, influenza vaccination is the 3rd priority intervention to achieve healthy aging after the prevention of falls and the promotion of physical activity.

As we age, there is a natural weakening of the immune system, which increases the risk of Influenza related complications.

Many older adults are living with a chronic condition, such as cancer, heart disease, pulmonary disorder or diabetes, which can put increased stress on the immune system, making them much more susceptible.

The burden of Influenza

Influenza remains a serious infectious disease and is estimated to be responsible for approximately 12, 200 hospitalizations and 3,500 deaths across Canada annually.

The more informed you are, the more you'll understand the importance of getting an annual flu vaccine to help protect yourself and prevent the spread of the flu to those you care about, including the most vulnerable.

Prevention options:

Protect yourself against the burden of influenza and serious related complications by getting the flu shot that is right for you, such as the high-dose vaccine for Influenza, now covered and available in Manitoba. The high-dose vaccine for Influenza has proven superior protection and can help you stay healthy throughout the flu season.

What are the risks?

- On average, adults 65 years and older account for 70% of flu-related hospitalizations and 90% of flu-related deaths.
- In adults 65 years and older, the risk of death associated with the flu was:
 - **5X GREATER** among those with chronic heart disease
 - **12X GREATER** among those with chronic lung disease
 - **20X GREATER** among those with BOTH chronic heart and lung conditions.

Did you know?

The high dose flu vaccine is now available and completely covered for Manitobans aged 65 years and older. Be sure to discuss this with your health-care provider.

Get vaccinated to help protect yourself and prevent the spread of flu to others!



Always consult your healthcare provider about what choice is best for you.
Supported by an education grant from Sanofi Pasteur.

CELEBRATE • *Connection & Community*

Embracing the Importance of Belonging

Humans are social beings and are hardwired to want to be with others. When we are young, we thrive on these social connections but as we age those connections sometimes become harder and harder to keep. Feeling a lack of connection to the world around us can affect anyone at any age but can be more common among people 65 and older.

Being part of a community can have a positive effect on mental health and emotional wellbeing. Community involvement provides a sense of belonging and social connectedness. It can also offer extra meaning and purpose to everyday life.

As we re-engage with those around us while still navigating the world of safe interactions, we can celebrate the connections we make within our communities - local people and places that inspire us to keep moving in a positive way! If you are looking for ways to connect to your community, why not try:

- Connecting with your neighborhood Rec Centre or senior centre to see what fall programs are starting. Visit the Manitoba Association of Senior Centres website at: www.manitobaseniormunities.ca for more info on a local senior centre near you.
- Volunteering some of your time to a worthwhile cause that is important to you. Not only will it make you feel more grateful for the things you may take for granted, but studies show that volunteering for the purpose of helping others increases our own well-being. Check out activeaginginmb.ca for volunteer opportunities, or head to www.volunteermanitoba.ca

- Consider joining or even starting your own bird-watching or walking group with a group of friends or neighbours. It's always a great idea to have a walking buddy! As an added bonus, it creates a support system to help everyone stick to regular exercise. Here are a few established, local walking groups:

Prairie Pathfinders is an organized walking group that offers weekly walking within Winnipeg and hikes throughout Manitoba. There is a fee to join but you can try it out free of charge: www.prairiepathfinders.mb.ca

Join the **Dakota Community Centre Walking Group**, guided by an Active Aging Manitoba trained leader. All levels are welcome. Walker and wheelchair accessible facility. Group meets Thursdays from 11:30-12:30 at the Dakota Community Centre, Jonathon Toews Sportsplex on the indoor track.

- Libraries are hubs of information, which serve as the perfect place for lifelong learning. Cognitive stimulation is so important, especially as we age. Libraries can also offer access to computers and printers or connection with friends and family through social media or email. Consider dropping in at your local library to see what's new and exciting this season! All Winnipeg Public Library programs are free of charge. Visit their calendar of events at: www.wpl.libcal.com for more information.



CELEBRATE • *The Changing Season*

Tips to Enjoy Everything Fall Has to Offer

There's a chill in the air and the leaves are starting to change – fall has arrived!

The change in seasons also brings shorter and cooler days which can unfortunately also lead to less physical and social activity. Therefore it is especially important to find ways to be physically, socially and mentally active in order to maintain good overall health.

Here are a few ideas you can take part in to embrace the changing seasons:

Decorate the house

Seasonal decorations can go a long way to get you into a positive mood! You can put out colourful, cozy throw blankets, or bring out any other fall themed items you might have stored away. Some glass pumpkins, a fall wreath on the door or a bright centerpiece on the table all add a nice seasonal touch.

Practice mindfulness

Make a list of the things you are thankful for, seasonally or in general. Try to be mindful every day, present in the moment and savour the small things that make you feel happy, such as a hot cup of tea or curling up with a good book. Also consider trying meditation or taking up yoga.

Take a walk, ride or roll

Make time to enjoy a walk, bike ride or roll in a wheel chair. Embrace whatever form of movement you can and get outside and admire the changing colours. Inviting a friend or family member to join you is always a good idea too! Fall can be one of the most beautiful seasons and being outside this time of year is a great way to boost your mood and get some exercise at the same time!

Attend a fall festival or market

Fall festivals, craft fairs, trips to a pumpkin patch, or fall markets are all great ways to spend a day celebrating autumn. Take advantage of local markets and bring home some autumn goodies such as; pumpkins, squash, local honey, jams and jellies, root vegetables or fresh baking. Check with your local community to see what events might be upcoming near you!

Learn something new on a cool or rainy day

Whether you decide to stay indoors at home, or venture out, try to do something that's educational. Visit your local library and pick out a good book, check out an exhibit at a local gallery or simply stay in and watch an educational documentary.

Make a fall craft

Crafting is a great hobby any time of year, but especially as the days get shorter and cooler.

Try your hand at knitting a cozy scarf, or put together a fall centerpiece. Perhaps your local community or senior centre offers a painting or pottery class. There are also many options for those who might be less crafty. You can get a fall-themed adult coloring book, paint by numbers project or even a good old fashioned puzzle - there is something for everyone!

Bake some fall treats

Baking is a great way to celebrate the autumn season! Think pumpkin spice muffins, cinnamon apple cake or anything else that makes you feel cozy. Invite family or friends to join you and make a day of it!



CELEBRATE•Movement & Independence

Physical Activity is Essential to Healthy Aging

You have probably heard the saying “celebrate the little things!” During Active Aging Week and Seniors and Elders month, we want you to celebrate what you do to be physically active!

Aging can bring physical challenges, chronic health conditions, loneliness and a desire for a more meaningful and fulfilling life.

As an older adult, regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Staying as physically active as you are able to helps maintain the ability to live independently and reduces the risk of falling and fracturing bones. It also reduces the risk of heart disease and of developing high blood pressure, cancer, and diabetes.

Older adults should strive to **move more and sit less** throughout the day. Any amount of physical activity is better than none!

Try to take stock of all the activities you are engaging in throughout the day. Did you know that simple tasks like vacuuming, raking leaves, gardening, dancing, and walking to the grocery store can all be counted as physical activity?

The Canadian 24-hour movement guidelines recommend 150 minutes per week or 30 minutes daily over five days of moderate to vigorous activity. They are designed to help older adults remain independent and reap health benefits. Overall health benefits include reduced blood pressure, better blood sugar control, and improved mobility. Maintaining mobility by being active daily is key to remaining independent as you age.

‘Exercise Snacking’ is currently a big fitness trend. It’s a term to describe engaging in short bouts of activity throughout the day and can also help with your weekly 2.5-hour total. It’s not a new concept, but it works, contributing to your well-being and giving you a daily energy boost. Instead of heading to the refrigerator for a snack break, switch it up and take an ‘exercise snack’ break instead.

Your exercise snack could consist of taking a flight of stairs, walking around the block, picking a few weeds, or simply practice getting up from a chair and sitting back down slowly several times.

For more exercise ideas, check out our Take a Minute to Move Breaks on our website: www.activeagingmb.ca

Research has shown that exercising can add 6 minutes to your life for every minute of expenditure. Now that’s a significant investment!

Find Your Balance

Celebrate your independence by working on your balance every day. Balance exercises can help in preventing a fall, improve your posture and strengthen your leg muscles. Check out these balance exercises you can do at home, which only require a few minutes every day!

Initially, you can do these movements by holding onto a chair or the wall. When you feel steady, try it without assistance.

- 1) Stand on one foot using a chair or countertop for support. To challenge your balance, hold with one hand rather than both. For a further challenge close one eye at a time while balancing and then close both together. How long can you hold the pose?
- 2) Walk the line. Find a line on the floor. Walk it forward and backwards, placing one foot in front of the other as though walking a balance beam.

Move more, sleep better

The 24-hour Movement Guidelines also focus on getting enough sleep. Sleep is a pillar of health that gets neglected even though falling short affects much more than energy and alertness.

There are many reasons why older people may not get enough sleep at night. Feeling unwell or being in pain can make it hard to sleep. Some medications can keep you awake. No matter the reason, if you don’t get a good night’s sleep, the next day you may:

- Be irritable
- Have memory problems or be forgetful
- Feel depressed
- Have more falls

Studies also link disrupted sleep to various health issues, from obesity and diabetes to hypertension, cancer, and depression. Sleep deprivation also increases the risk of injury and accidents. Research indicates that sleeping less than six to eight hours per night increases the risk of premature death by 12%. The recommendation is 7 to 8 hours of good-quality sleep regularly.

Most people find that they sleep better and have an improved outlook on life when they add regular physical activity into their days. In addition to health benefits, being active also impacts our mental and social health.

Ultimately, try to reduce your sedentary time each day, move more, and sit less! Try calling a friend to go for a walk and enjoy some time in nature. Join a group to learn Tai Chi, play pickleball, or participate in an exercise group to increase your social connections and be physically active at the same time!

Celebrate what you can do every day. Enjoy and appreciate every minute that you are able to be active!

