

November 2022

Boomers, Elders, & More E-Newsletter

Monthly Elder Care Newsletter of the Vanderbilt Child & Family Center

MEMORY & ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP

The Vanderbilt Memory & Alzheimer's Center [support group](#) is for individuals recently diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment or early stage Alzheimer's disease and their loved ones.

While individuals with memory loss are participating in one group, their loved ones (such as spouses, partners, and adult children) attend a second group held at the exact same time. This group not only provides helpful resources, but it also provides the opportunity to connect with family members who appreciate the experience of having a recently diagnosed loved one.

These support groups meet monthly in the early evening at the Vanderbilt Memory & Alzheimer's Center. The group is currently meeting virtually via Zoom due to COVID-19 safety measures. To learn more or reserve your spot for an upcoming meeting, please call Sydney Wilhoite at (615) 875-9601 or email sydney.wilhoite@vumc.org.

VCFC Learning Session

The Learning Session is a monthly educational meeting to receive valuable information while providing care to your loved one. This month's topic is "**Self-Care Tips for Caregivers**" And will be held on Thursday, November 3, 2022, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Please email Jennifer Main (famcenter@vanderbilt.edu) for Zoom details.



OLLI

The [Osher Lifelong Learning Institute \(OLLI\) at Vanderbilt University](#) is an inclusive group that strives to present to the greater Nashville community stimulating intellectual and cultural noncredit courses, programs, and trips for adults over 50. Interesting topics are explored with engaging instructors, who are primarily active or retired Vanderbilt faculty, as well as other community experts. In a relaxed atmosphere you have the opportunity to ask questions, contribute ideas, and interact with people who share similar interests. OLLI participants exercise their minds while making new friends, not only in the classroom but through other educational activities, special events and community engagement.

Caregiver Support Group

The Caregiver Support Group is a monthly group that offers a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges and rewards of providing care for an aging loved one. The meetings will be held virtually for the foreseeable future.

November's session will be held on Wednesday, October 9, 2022, from noon to 1 p.m. Please email Jennifer Main (famcenter@vanderbilt.edu) for Zoom details.

Quick Notes for Preparing Healthy Holiday Meals with Seniors

The nutritional requirements for elderly persons are different from the rest of the family. It is important to consider a few points while cooking for elders for their digestive health.

Ensure plates include lean proteins like chicken, eggs, beans, and seafood. Serve foods with little to no added sugar, saturated fats, and sodium.

Always consider allergies and other important factors. Make it pretty - being thoughtful with color and texture to encourage appetite!



Elder Care during Holiday Times

The holiday season offers many long-awaited experiences from spending time with friends and family to enjoying our favorite holiday meals. However, if you're providing elder care for a loved one, you may wonder how the holidays will affect your typical routine.

Most of us experience some kind of shake-up in our routines around the holidays, but these changes are often more acutely felt by seniors. Below, we've outlined some tips to help make elder care during holiday times easier on everyone involved.

Prepare An Elder Care Plan for the Holidays

Being prepared for the holidays will make your job as a family caregiver easier to manage. It will also ensure your loved one stays comfortable and content through what is often a chaotic season. Here are just a few of the ways you can prepare:

Encourage Healthy Eating in Between Holiday Meals

Indulging in delicious dishes is one of the most sacred holiday traditions. Not only do these nostalgic flavors bring back wonderful memories, but they also bring the family together in a shared experience that shouldn't be denied to seniors. It's important to keep an eye on balance throughout the holidays. Holiday meals are special occasions to look forward to, not to stretch out for days on end. In between those rich holiday meals, make sure your loved one has something light and nutritious within reach. They'll feel better physically and will also have an easier time sticking to their doctor's dietary guidelines.

Make Exercise a New Holiday Ritual

The cooler winter months often lead us toward a

more sedentary lifestyle, even as our calorie intake increases thanks to the holidays. While it's normal to want to spend more cozy time indoors as the weather cools off, less movement can make us feel more sluggish. It can also trigger a spell of the holiday blues.

Ensure your loved one benefits from exercise by making fun physical activities part of their holiday experience. For example, you could have the whole family bundle up and go for a brisk walk around the neighborhood after each family meal. Or, you can help your loved one get in the holiday spirit by doing a few laps around the mall while window shopping. Spending time in nature and watching the leaves change colors is also a great way to enjoy being active.

Reduce Gift-Related Financial Stress

Many seniors love to dote on their children and grandchildren with holiday gifts. Unfortunately, those on a fixed income often feel financial strain as they struggle with the desire to be generous within their limited means. To minimize stress for all the members of your family, including seniors, suggest opting for a "Secret Santa" or "white elephant" gift exchange so everyone can experience the joy of giving without going over budget.

Practice Fall Prevention at Family Members' Homes

The last thing you want is for your loved one's holiday joy to be marred by a dangerous fall. If they will be visiting other family members this season, take time to make the home both safe and accessible. This could include removing rugs that present a fall hazard and installing nightlights if the senior is staying overnight.

Schedule Time Off for Yourself

The holidays can be a stressful, chaotic time, especially for those who are constantly on the go. As a family caregiver, it's crucial to remain aware of your

own stress levels and take time off from your caregiving duties as needed.

One of the best ways to make your own health and well-being a priority during this busy season is to book visits from a professional elder care provider. Being proactive about meeting your own needs for self-care will make this time of year much more enjoyable and give you the energy required to provide the quality of care your loved one deserves.

Medicare Open Enrollment

When's the Medicare Open Enrollment Period?

Every year, Medicare's open enrollment period is **October 15 – December 7**.

What's the Medicare Open Enrollment Period?

Medicare health and drug plans can make changes each year – things like cost, coverage, and



what providers and pharmacies are in their networks. October 15 to December 7 is when all people with Medicare can change their

Medicare health plans and prescription drug coverage for the following year to better meet their needs.

How do people know if they need to change plans?

People in a Medicare health or prescription drug plan should always review the materials their plans send them, like the "Evidence of Coverage" (EOC) and "Annual Notice of Change" (ANOC). If their plans are changing, they should make sure their plans will still meet their needs for the following year. If they're satisfied that their current plans will meet their needs for next year and it's still being offered, they don't need to do anything.

Where can people find Medicare plan information or compare plans?

1-800-MEDICARE or [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov).