

senior review

FREE

November 2023

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**November is Home Care/
Hospice Care, Alzheimer's
and Dementia Care Month**

A Senior Magazine for Living a Healthier, Smarter and More Active Life in Wausau



Leave Your Leaves! *By the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources*

Give yourself a break this fall and skip raking your leaves and cleaning up your garden. Leaves provide important habitat for insects and other animals over the winter as well as natural mulch and fertilizer for your garden.

Fallen leaves provide mulch that keeps weeds from growing. Mulch protects the soil, helps prevent erosion from rainfall and snow melt, and helps keep moisture in the soil during a drought. Mulch also helps plant roots keep warm in the winter and cool in the summer. As the leaves break down, they add organic matter back into the soil, which decreases the amount of fertilizer you'll need to buy.

If you can't leave the leaves where they fall, rake gently without disturbing the soil. Move the leaves to garden beds, between rows of crops, or around trees and shrubs. You can also use leaves in your garden between growing seasons instead of leaving the soil bare.

In addition to the benefits they provide for your garden, leaves protect wildlife, including birds, turtles, frogs, and insects. Some butterflies and moths lay eggs under leaves and use the leaves for



shelter on cold days. Some types of bees build nests in dead plant stems, while bumblebee queens hibernate in shallow holes just below the soil surface. Keeping leaves intact provides a safe shelter for these animals. Let the leaves stay where they are until spring when insects have emerged.

If you want to remove leaves from your yard, make sure to compost them. Burning yard waste leads to increased air pollution and may cause fires in dry areas. The U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency has estimated that yard waste, like leaves, grass clippings, brush, and small pieces of wood, makes up over 12% of garbage collected in the United States each year. This percentage is even higher in the summer and fall. When left to decompose in landfills without enough oxygen, yard waste produces methane, a greenhouse gas that contributes to warming temperatures on Earth. Wisconsin law prohibits disposal of yard waste in landfills. Some counties and municipalities collect yard waste for composting. In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides information on home composting here: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Recycling/Compost.html>.

SMART *and* SWEET

White sugar can raise your risk for heart disease and cause your blood sugar to spike, then crash. But you don't need to go without! Instead, go natural with one of these four options - less fructose and more nutritional benefits.

1. DATE SYRUP Full of fiber, it also offers inflammation-fighting and mood-lifting health perks. Add a dash of it to ease up spicy dishes.

2. MAPLE SYRUP We're talking "100% pure organic" to score essential minerals like thyroid-boosting manganese. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons to balance out any bitterness in a vinegary salad dressing, and sub 3/4 cup for every cup of sugar when baking - just be sure to reduce other liquids by about a quarter too.

Source: *Women's Health Magazine* / Abby K. Cannon, RD, dietician in New York City.

3. COCONUT SUGAR Sub in one cup of these caramel-colored crystals for one cup white sugar to whip up baked goods that promote a happy tum, courtesy of the good bacteria from coconut's star fiber, inulin.

4. HONEY It's heart-healthy antioxidant and antibacterial properties (which make it great for soothing soar throats) are destroyed by too much heat, so skip it in baked goods. Instead, use it in drinks and on fruit.



.195 SECOND...

That's how long it takes for you to think about whether that chocolate cake is healthy after your first thought, which is always about taste, according to a study in Psychological Science. Researchers say you can overcome your natural gimme impulse by waiting a second longer to weigh the pros and cons of that cake before throwing it down the hatch.



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NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL CAREGIVER'S MONTH

Don't Forget to Take Care of Yourself, Too!

By The Landing at Woodson YMCA

Caregiving for an ill or elderly family member or loved one is a tough job. Caregiving duties can range from assisting with baths or other self-care needs, grocery shopping, cleaning, and providing social connections. These activities can take physical or emotional tolls on caregivers. Caregiving is rewarding but also challenging in the best of times – Covid-19 adds another layer of challenges. If you are a caregiver, make sure you are taking time for yourself. When you take care of yourself, you can better care for your loved one. Here are some strategies for managing these challenges (adapted from Circle of Care – A Guidebook for Mental Health Caregivers):



Physical Health – physical exercise is important for dealing with stress. So is fueling your body with the right foods and drinks. Here are some strategies to take care of your physical wellbeing:

1. Get outside and go for a walk – You don't have to commit a large amount of time – 20 minutes a few times a week is beneficial. You also have the added benefits of being outside and removing yourself from the caregiving situation.
2. Exercise inside – if you cannot get away, there are plenty of free or fee-based apps and websites where you can exercise. We post many videos on The Landing Wausau's Facebook page that anyone can access. If you are comfortable going to a gym, consider membership.
3. Eat well – your diet is tremendously important to your overall health. Eat plenty of fresh fruits and veggies, low fat proteins, and whole grains.
4. Drink water – stay hydrated and avoid alcohol when you are in a stressful situation.

Spiritual Health – each person's spirituality can look a little different, but don't neglect this area. Here are some ideas to nurture this area of your life:

1. Take a yoga, tai chi, or meditation class. These types of classes are available online or in person.
2. Spend time in nature – pause during your walk and just enjoy the world around you. Reflect on the beauty of the natural world.
3. Connect with The Landing – we have virtual coffee talks, classes, and other programs. The second Tuesday of each month we offer a free-to-members class focusing on various spiritual topics and do a 30-minute guided meditation.

Emotional Health – you are not alone. Caregiving is an emotional journey. Here are a few ways you can attend to your emotional health:

1. Connect with a friend by phone, zoom, or socially distanced in person.
2. Do something for yourself – order takeout from your favorite restaurant, buy yourself something new, take a mini vacation.
3. Utilize respite care if you are able.

These strategies will help you care for yourself so you can better care for others. At The Landing, our goal is to provide people with the tools to connect with others and live a healthier and more fulfilling life. If you'd like to learn more about membership to The Landing, please give us a call at 715-841-1855 – we'd love to hear from you!



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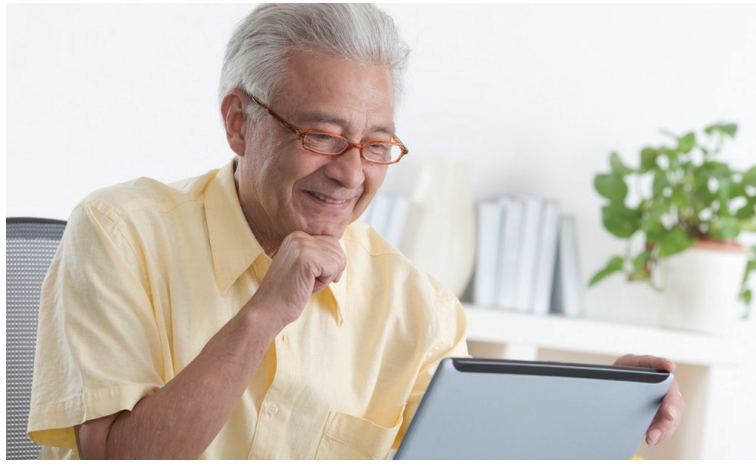
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7 Tips for Applying for Medicare *By Becky Streeter*

Open enrollment for Medicare begins this year on October 15 and ends December 7. If you haven't applied for Medicare before, it can be a confusing process. If you already have Medicare, and aren't happy with your previous year's plan, this is the time to make changes. However, whether you're new to the program or not, you need to do your research to make sure you're getting the plan that's right for you.



Here are seven tips that will help in your Medicare enrollment process:

1. Start researching early - If you're new to Medicare, don't wait until 65 to do the research. There are so many plans and options out there, it's best to get a head start on reading through all the information. Human Resources at your place of work and/or your insurance representative can be great sources of information and help clarify Medicare rules and how they impact you.

2. Learn all your options - There are two main options for Medicare, but each has multiple nuances and ways to tailor the plan to meet your specific needs.

- Original Medicare includes Part A and Part B, with the option of adding Part D and/or Medigap or Medicare Supplement Insurance. Part A is usually free after age 65 and includes hospital visits and use of any doctor or hospital that takes Medicare anywhere in the U.S. Part B covers 80% of the cost for most medical bills, 20% is out-of-pocket with no yearly limit. Part D is a separate add-on for prescription drugs, and Medigap is supplemental insurance. If you do not sign up for Part D or Medigap from the start, you may be charged a lifetime premium penalty.
- Medicare Advantage, also known as Part C, is a Medicare-approved plan from a private company that bundles Parts A, B and usually D. You use in-network doctors, the plan may have a yearly limit on and lower out-of-pocket costs than Original Medicare, and may offer some additional benefits such as vision, hearing, and dental.

3. Review your plan every year - The Annual Enrollment Period has already begun, so if you haven't already reviewed your plan,

you have until December 7 to make changes for 2024. Even if you are happy with your plan from this year, you should still double check to make sure there weren't any changes from the government side of the plan. If you have Medicare Advantage or Part D, you should have received an Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) with your Evidence of Coverage (EOC) by mail or email in September. If you did not, or have misplaced it, contact your plan. This document outlines the changes in the plan's cost and benefits for the following year.

4. Consider all the costs involved - Each option has out-of-pocket costs that go beyond the premium. Co-pays, deductibles, and prescription medications all have varying prices attached depending on the plan you choose, so read the fine print carefully.

5. Research your network of providers - If you have favorite doctors, specialists, hospitals and pharmacies, check to make sure they are included in your plan. If not, you may have to pay more to continue visiting these.

6. Use the benefits provided - Go to your screenings, get your vaccines, and don't miss your regular checkups. You are paying for all these services, after all. By using the benefits provided, you can be proactive about health concerns before or as they arise.

7. Ask questions - Make sure you understand what you are signing up for in a Medicare plan.

- Visit Medicare.gov for direct information.
- The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) provides phone numbers to call or options for meeting in-person to help you sift through the language (www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/benefit-specialists/medicare-counseling).
- Friends and family who have Medicare are another great resource as they have already been through the process.

Source: Kocher, Ryan and Cigna Healthcare. "Seven Common Medicare Mistakes to Avoid." *Next Avenue*. 12 Sept 2022. <https://www.nextavenue.org/seven-common-medicare-mistakes-to-avoid>.



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Spencer Tinkham, "Hope" is the Thing with Feathers, 2022, oil on basswood, dogwood, electrical wire, and roof flashing

Hunting with Grandpa by Kristi Gay, freelance writer

November in Wisconsin gets a large majority of the population VERY excited about deer hunting and the potential for a future venison dinner. I grew up in a full-on hunter's family with my dad and brother and now my husband gone all fall bow hunting in October and November and then the exciting rifle season around Thanksgiving where all of my cousins and uncles would roll into Thanksgiving dinner with their blaze orange clothes, wind burnt cheeks and tired eyes.

What many don't know is the hunt itself is only part of the excitement, and possibly not even the biggest and best part. What is more memorable and special is the bonding between hunting buddies, relatives, or in the cases of these stories the special time with Grandpa.

My husband, Keith, now 48 years old, remembers with a laugh a time hunting with his late Grandpa Ernie when he was a young teen in Ernie's town of Owen, Wisconsin where he was an attorney. As they were sitting huddled together quietly in a tree stand waiting for a deer to walk by, Keith made a sound with his shoe without any real intention. The speed at which Grandpa Ernie turned his head thinking it was a stick breaking in the woods from a deer walking fully amused little Keith, who proceeded to continue that sound every 30 seconds or so. Each sharp intake of breath and head-whip from Grandpa made it even funnier, finally throwing Keith into a fit of laughter which if there ever WERE going to be deer around likely squashed that hope with the extra noise. But these are the memories that make him smile 35 years later with fond thoughts of Grandpa Ernie.

My daughter, Sydney, now 17 years old, remembers hunting with my own dad, her late Grandpa Mike one freezing spring day as he shared his #1 hunting passion with her which was hunting for turkeys. As they sat huddled in the small turkey blind with sideways snow whipping around outside, Sydney's fond memory that she laughs with an eye roll about now was Grandpa's soapbox talk about the importance of learning history and paying attention in school "so we don't repeat the mistakes of the past." Sure enough soon after that he called a turkey over and with her heart beating in her ears took a shot and made it. Posing for the photo in the crazy weather was the least fun part of such a warm memory.

Our nephew, Emmitt, now 13 years old, has had heightened senses his entire life, so when his Grandpa Dave, my husband's dad, took him out to sight in guns one fall he was completely turned off by the loud sound of the gun right next to his ear, even with the typical foam ear plugs in. Never deterred, Grandpa offered option after option of different noise-canceling headphones, not wanting to miss out on this grandson bonding moment of sitting in the quiet nature and having stories to tell afterward. Finally Emmitt found some headphones that he was comfortable with and the huge grin from ear to ear that was plastered on his face afterward made it worth the effort.

These bonding moments between generations are the thing that drives people to deer camp or to the deer hunting stand. Of course the sport of hunting is a fun hobby, but the memories and shared stories are the thing that people remember over the number of tines on the deers' antlers in any given year. To any grandmas and grandpas reading this, find this bonding experience with your own grandkids, whether it's hunting or baking or walking in the woods. If you don't have a hobby to share with them, ask them to share their own hobby with you. The memories of shared experiences are what will stay with people long after their loved ones have passed.



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Providing a Peace of Mind *By Christine Eggers, RN*

“He’s gotten so big!” is a joyous part of celebrating the holidays with family. We shout it out when we first see our youngest family members to mark their growth and vitality. “She looks so frail,” is the other side of that coin. We say it quietly, privately. Instead of being joyous, it’s anxious because we see the people who protected us needing help and protection.

What do we see? Loose fitting clothes indicate weight loss. Weight loss has several possible causes; decreased appetite, inability to shop or prepare food, or an unknown illness. Stained clothes or wearing the same thing every day suggests difficulty doing laundry. The cause may be physical. Look for changes in mobility like needing help getting up from a chair, or shortness of breath after minimal effort? Other signs of poor hygiene include odors, unkempt hair, hands, and nails. Physical barriers that prevent a person doing laundry, taking a shower, or even walking across the room don’t usually prevent them washing hands, brushing teeth, or combing hair. It may be an early sign of dementia, or a late sign of depression.

What about the home environment? Is it as clean as expected? Are there obstacles that could cause falls? Is there expired food in the fridge or in the cupboards? Altogether these add up to deteriorating health.

Help with hygiene and housekeeping is a great start! Personal and supportive care workers assist with bathing, dressing, cleaning, shopping, and a whole host of tasks that need doing on a daily or weekly basis to help keep loved ones at home.

What can be done to address the health problems behind these changes? Check into private nursing services. A private nurse performs assessments to control chronic illnesses and prevent acute illnesses. The assessment is like a routine physical; taking vital signs,

listening to heart, lungs, and abdomen, performing skin checks, and cognitive and functional assessments, and reviewing medications for effectiveness, side effects, and other issues. Over the age of 70 the majority of ER visits are related to medications. An RN works with her clients’ doctors to change treatment, like medications, as needed to maintain health and prevent decline.



Navigating the health care system is another benefit of a private nurse. Starting with chaperoned clinic appointments, a private nurse is able to communicate between doctors and patients to the benefit of both. A nurse can initiate a referral to a specialist for timely care of a new health problem; and having the status of a nurse when calling the clinic speeds up care and treatment.

Several studies over decades have shown that RN care managers for people with chronic conditions improve overall health, and health outcomes, and are a cost-effective way of slowing decline. Finally, a private nurse provides peace of mind that loved ones are well cared for and safe in their homes so that family may exclaim, “Doesn’t she look great!” at the next holiday gathering.

Christine Eggers RN owns Appeal to Heaven LLC: Independent Nurses’ Network.

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Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging
wihealthyaging.org

Why Music Helps Memories Resurface *By Becky Streeter*

Everyone has memories that center around music. You hear that one song on the radio that you haven't heard in years, decades maybe, and you're suddenly transported back to high school, jamming in the car with your best friends, remembering every word like it was yesterday. Music is so much more than tones and words—it's feelings and memories. And because of this, it is a great tool to help those struggling with dementia and Alzheimer's.



Episodic memories fall under the explicit heading. They are the experiences that happen to us—we have to work to remember them, especially in detail. These memories are stored in the hippocampus part of the brain, and they are also the first targeted by dementia and Alzheimer's.

However, many different parts of the brain come together to create a memory. The outer surface of the brain, the cortex, is responsible for creating the neural patterns of sight, smell,

Because music is incorporated in many social settings such as restaurants, movies, stores, dances, it automatically creates an auditory and emotional stage for us to retrieve memories. Everyone literally has their own soundtrack that is meaningful to that specific person.

Studies have shown that music affects the brain. It can help the brain release neurotransmitters, such as dopamine that makes us feel joy, and lower our cortisol to help us feel more relaxed. Angry, yelling music can help you get amped up for a big football game, just as meditative music can calm you down and reflect inwardly until you reach Shavasana. We feel music with our whole being.

When it comes to memory, there are two different types: implicit and explicit. Implicit memories are like autopilot. They are the things we unconsciously remember how to do from day to day, like how to brush your teeth, locking your car when you get out, turning on the coffee even though you're still half asleep. Explicit memories are conscious thoughts that your brain has to work to remember, such as all the items on your weekend to-do list.

emotion, thoughts, and sounds. Memories are then consolidated into the hippocampus, but fragments can still be found throughout the brain as though loosely tethered by elastic strings. Sometimes, these fragments can suddenly snap together with intense clarity at seemingly the most unexpected moment. Because music is so deeply entwined throughout our entire being, past and present, these “flashbulb” experiences are often initiated by hearing “that one song.”

That is why, even for those struggling with dementia or Alzheimer's, a single song can bring back a strong memory from years past. Caregivers and family members can play their loved one's favorite songs in hopes of helping them remember snippets of their life that seem deeply buried or lost, or even just change behavior or mood during the specific tune. It can create pockets of normalcy so often craved by caregivers, and bring forth feelings of peace, even if just for a few moments.

Source: Cmons, Marlene. “Why music causes memories to flood back.” The Washington Post. 26 Feb 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wellness/2023/02/26/songs-music-memory-connection/>

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Thankfulness and Wastefulness By Ken Anderson, The Mayberry Guru, themayberryguru@gmail.com

For Americans, the month of November can mean different things. For many, especially in Wisconsin, November means deer hunting and the great outdoors. And, of course, November means Thanksgiving. A national holiday set aside to give thanks for our many blessings. But contrary to popular belief, Thanksgiving is not unique to America. A day of Thanksgiving is observed in Canada, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Japan, and many other countries worldwide.

In Japan, Thanksgiving is called "Kinro Kansha no Hi," which means Labor Thanksgiving Day. In the United States, we celebrate Thanksgiving Day every third Thursday of November, while Japan celebrates Thanksgiving every November 23rd. Japan's Thanksgiving is a day set aside to honor the hard work of laborers.

According to the German Way & More, in German-speaking countries, Thanksgiving is an autumn harvest celebration called Erntedank or Erntedankfest ("harvest thanksgiving festival"). The observance usually occurs in September or October, depending on the region. The typical German, Austrian, or Swiss Thanksgiving celebration (Erntedankfest) is usually a rural harvest time observance with church services, a parade, music, and a country fair atmosphere.



Although countries worldwide have unique ways of celebrating Thanksgiving Day, America's Thanksgiving practices are significant. We use Thanksgiving Day as a day set aside to give thanks for our many blessings as Americans. We sit around the family table laden with all kinds of delicious foods. At least, that is how Thanksgiving Day is perceived to be for all Americans.

But for many, food scarcity is a reality. Yet, our supermarkets have enough food to feed everyone. RTS Waste Services, a company that helps businesses and communities manage waste more responsibly using technology, estimates that nearly 35 million people across America, including 10 million children, suffer from food insecurity. At the same time that so many people are hungry, Americans, each year, discard more food than any other country, nearly 40 million tons or 30-40 percent of the entire US food supply. According to Forbes.com, 30 percent of the food we see in supermarkets is wasted.

I have difficulty processing all these statistics about hunger in the wealthiest country in the world. All that food ends up in landfills, only to be eaten by rats rather than those who desperately need it. Take a few moments on this Thanksgiving Day to think about those who are so desperately hungry. Especially the children. I will try to remember all this the next time I tell my wife, "I'm starved."

Happy Thanksgiving, from our family to yours



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Being a Caregiver to a Sibling By Becky Streefer

When we think of caregivers, the first image that comes to mind is child-parent or spouse-to-spouse. These are perhaps the most common forms of caregiving, however, there are many siblings in this world that care for the physical, emotional and mental needs of their brothers or sisters. And sibling-sibling care is expected to become more of a norm in the future.

As we age, we accept the notion that we might someday have to care for an elderly parent, but the role of caregiving for a sibling is not always anticipated. It may come in the form of an aggressive diagnosis or a debilitating accident—something that leaves the sibling at the mercy of needing daily assistance. If there is no other family around to help, that duty can fall to a brother or sister.

Additionally, modern medicine is continually finding ways to increase life expectancy for those with mental and physical disabilities. Under normal circumstances, this is great. However, an aging parent who was the primary caregiver for their child in the past might find that they are no longer the best fit for that role. The role then often falls to the sibling.

Sibling-sibling caregiving comes with unique stressors. If the sibling still has cognitive function, they might experience a range of emotions from frustration and rage because of their new situation, to jealousy of the caregiving sibling's independence and health. The new caregiver can often feel forced into the role and simultaneously feel guilty for not wanting the responsibility. The need for care often occurs around midlife, when the caregiver sibling is unprepared financially and probably extremely busy with their own significant responsibilities such as family and work. The caregiver may be required to spend more time with their sibling than forming and developing other key relationships in their life.

If you know you might need to take on the role of primary caregiver for a sibling someday, planning is key. If possible, start having conversations with the current caregiver sooner rather than later. It can be uncomfortable to have end-of-life conversations, but when

another life is dependent on the elderly caregiver, this conversation is essential. Family dynamics can be tough to mitigate, so consider bringing in a professional such as a therapist or healthcare advocate who can help keep everyone's best interests in mind.



Research group living facilities if that might be an option. So much depends on the illness, insurance, willingness of the sibling and financial means of those involved. Also keep in mind that abuse in a group home can be hard to detect, especially among those with intellectual disabilities.

Other resources for sibling caregiving include:

- Sibling Leadership Network - <https://siblingleadership.org>
- The Sibling Support Project - <https://siblingsupport.org>
- The Caregiver Action Network - <https://www.caregiveraction.org>
- The National Alliance for Caregiving - <https://www.caregiving.org>

As with any type of caregiving, make sure to care for yourself, too. You need and deserve support and rest. Find friends and groups who will listen to and support you. Give yourself a day off, or treat yourself to something nice, even if it's just alone time with a good book. And most importantly, give yourself grace.

Sources: Barrett-Ibarria, Sofia. "What to Expect When You Become a Sibling's Sole Caregiver." *Vice*. 9 April 2018. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/gymw7m/what-to-expect-when-you-become-siblings-sole-caregiver>.

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Preparing Thanksgiving Dinner for the Alternative Eater

By Becky Streeter

If you have a family like mine, preparing a large group dinner can be challenging. We have the traditionalists who like their meat and potatoes, a lone vegetarian, one on the Livia diet plan, 3.5 who are dairy-free (one is prone to cheating and deals with the consequences), two gluten-free, and two very picky kiddos. What in the world do we make for Thanksgiving?

While one size, or meal, definitely doesn't fit all anymore, dinner doesn't have to be stressful. We've got you covered with six of the most common dietary preferences below, and what to serve.

1. Keto - Low-carb, high fat, moderate protein. Ketos also avoid processed and artificial foods, natural sugars, certain fruits, beans and grains.

- Protein: Turkey, ham, or salmon
- Sides: Mashed cauliflower or cauliflower stuffing, asparagus, Brussels sprouts, roasted broccoli
- Dessert: Dairy-free pumpkin pie, no crust

2. Paleo - A focus on whole foods, avoid added sweeteners, gluten, grains and dairy.

- Protein: Turkey, ham, or salmon
- Sides: Mashed cauliflower or sweet potatoes, Brussels sprouts, homemade gravy and homemade cranberry sauce, stuffing made with paleo breadcrumbs, roasted acorn squash with pecans and pure maple syrup
- Dessert: Paleo-friendly pumpkin pie, baked apples with cinnamon and pure maple syrup

3. Pescatarian - Follow a vegetarian diet but also include seafood. Many choose to also avoid eggs and dairy.

- Protein: Salmon, scallops, lobster, or sea bass
- Sides: Almost any of the traditional fixings will work—stuffing, carrots, sweet potatoes, cranberries
- Dessert: Dairy-free pumpkin, apple or pecan pie with crusts made without eggs

4. Vegan - No animal byproducts. No meat, fish, eggs, butter, milk, etc.

- Protein: Vegan tofurky or baked tofu, baked acorn squash filled with quinoa and pecans
- Sides: Sweet or mashed potatoes made with a milk alternative, vegan stuffing, any kind of vegetable or fruit
- Dessert: Dairy-free pumpkin pie, baked apples or pears with cinnamon

5. Whole30 - Focus on fresh, organic, whole foods with no added sweeteners. This diet looks very similar to the Paleo when cooking for Thanksgiving.

- Protein: Organic Turkey
- Sides: Mashed cauliflower, sweet potatoes, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, carrots
- Dessert: Baked apples or pears with a sprinkle of cinnamon

5. Gluten-free - Purchase gluten-free substitutes for anything that you would normally make that might include gluten (like stuffing or pie crusts).

- Protein: Turkey or salmon
- Sides: Mashed cauliflower, sweet potatoes, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, carrots, homemade gravy with gluten-free flour alternative to thicken
- Dessert: Pumpkin or apple pie with a gluten-free crust, baked apples or pears with a sprinkle of cinnamon

When it's all said and done, just remember Thanksgiving is not about the food, it's about the company.

Now, who's hungry?

Source: Jacobs, Rebecca. "A Healthy Thanksgiving Plate For 6 Popular Eating Plans." *FitOn*. <https://fitonapp.com/nutrition/healthy-thanksgiving-plate-for-the-most-common-diets>.



Mindfulness for the Busiest Time of the Year By Ann Brand, Ph.D.

Every year, nature beautifully shows us the purpose of each season. Spring brings new growth after everything has been dormant. In summer, nature bursts into life with long, sunny days, warm rains, and abundant flowers. Fall arrives and the light shifts and the trees turn brilliant and let go of their leaves. Winter then moves into darkness and dormancy to allow nature to have the nourishment it needs to burst forth in spring once again. And fall moves into winter regardless of whether the color of the leaves is brilliant or dull. Nature creates space for what is and continues on regardless of expectations.



When nature is preparing to rest and hibernate, our culture demands the opposite. As the days are getting shorter, our to-do list is getting longer. By the time we get to December, the entry to the darkest months of the year, we are busier than ever with activities and tasks. Much of it is enjoyable—holiday concerts, times gathering with friends and family around a table filled with good food, traditions and rituals that connect us with people and places we love. And yet we feel exhausted, stretched, frantic, and like we are not doing enough. We struggle to enjoy the people and traditions of the season and then judge ourselves for not being joyful enough.

Here are a few things to consider as we approach this busy season.

1. Check in with what matters: Taking an inventory of what matters to you about the activities and tasks of the holiday season gives you an opportunity to embrace what you love and let go of things that no longer enhance the joy.
2. Allow the unexpected: Things don't always go as planned. Let yourself feel the emotions that arise (disappointment, relief—they are all valid!), and then come back to what matters. Your intention will guide you in choosing how to navigate the unexpected.
3. Create space: Carve out space for yourself. Even if it is as simple as a cup of tea in solitude on a dark, winter morning. These intentional actions to create space can nourish and sustain us so we can participate in the rush of the holiday season without feeling depleted.

A regular mindfulness practice supports us in growing the skills we need to be intentional, be flexible, and create space when things get frantic. And even if you have never tried mindfulness before, dropping into the present moment through the breath, body, or any activity that connects you with your senses can bring some much-needed steadiness and calm.

Pausing to connect with what matters—to be aware of our expectations, check in with our emotions as they arise, and allow our experience to be just as it is—supports us in seeing things as they are, not as we think they “should” be. Then we can choose how we relate to what is happening in more skillful ways. We can see the small joys, allow space for imperfection, and heed nature’s call to create space for rest and stillness.

Ann Brand, Ph.D. is a college instructor and mindfulness teacher based in Eau Claire, WI. To find out more, visit www.annbrandmindfulness.com.

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THE EFFECTS OF CAREGIVING

In many families, it's assumed that caregiving for an older adult will be provided by a younger family member. While the experience of caregiving can be rewarding for some, the physical, financial, emotional, and psychological strain of caregiving can have wide-reaching impact on the family and friends of caregivers.





42% of Caregivers did not feel qualified to provide physical care


70% of Caregivers missed some time from work

\$10,423 Total average out-of-pocket expense

..... WHO ARE CAREGIVERS?

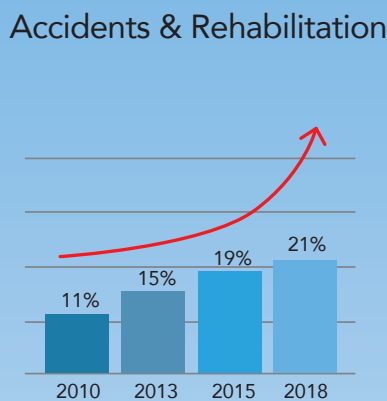
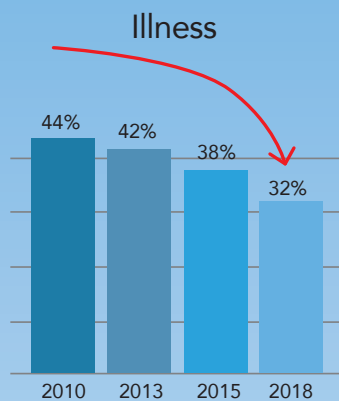
58%  of Caregivers are between the ages 25-54, with an average of 47 in 2018

51%  are more likely to be the adult child of the care recipient

56%  of Caregivers have children under the age of 18

WHY?

Smaller percentage of recipients need care because of illness while an increasing percentage require care because of an accident.



Long term care recipients are getting younger. In 2010, **81%** of care recipients were age 65 or older. While in 2018, **57%** of care recipients were 65 or older.

NEGATIVE IMPACT ON CAREGIVERS



Health & Well-Being

High Levels of Stress 53%
Health and Well-Being 46%



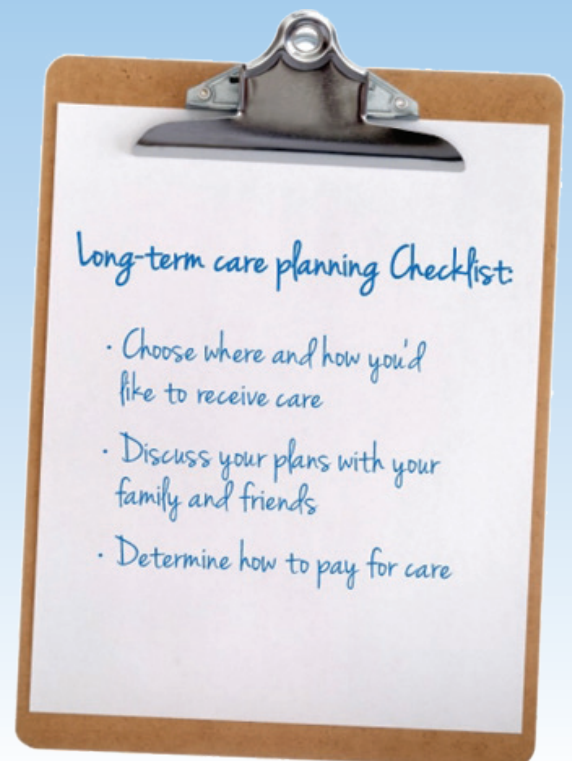
Finances

Paying for care with their own savings/retirement 63%
Reducing the base quality of living 42%



Career

Reported repeated absences 35%
Missed career opportunities 30%



Stages of Alzheimer's Disease and Four Tips to Help Caregivers Manage

By Becky Streeter

Though Alzheimer's Disease is largely classified as early, mid or late-stage, the Alzheimer's Association has further broken down cognitive decline into seven different stages based on common patterns of symptom progression. Not everyone diagnosed with Alzheimer's experiences the following stages at the same rate, and symptoms can progress on the scale anywhere from three to twenty years.

Stage 1: No impairment - Normal function.

Stage 2: Very Mild - May be normal age-related or possibly early warning signs of Alzheimer's. Forgetting locations of everyday items such as keys or glasses.

Stage 3: Mild - Noticeable to loved ones and measurable on clinical testing. Forgetting names of newly introduced people, performance issues at work or in social settings, retaining little of what was just read.

Stage 4: Moderate (Early-stage Alzheimer's) - Obvious deficiencies in medical interview. Decreased knowledge of current events, impairments with math problems, challenges with complex tasks such as organizing get togethers or managing finances, change in mood.

Stage 5: Moderately Severe (Mid-stage Alzheimer's) - Major gaps in memory and problems with cognitive function. Inability to recall personal information such as address or phone number, confusion about the time of year, trouble with simple math counting.

Stage 6: Severe (Mid-stage Alzheimer's) - Continual memory decline, significant personality changes, assistance may be required to complete daily activities. No recollection of current surroundings or recent experiences, imperfect memories of personal history, require assistance with using the bathroom, becoming suspicious and delusional due to inability to remember most faces, tendency to wander or get lost.

Stage 7: Very Severe (Late-stage Alzheimer's) - Inability to respond to environment, loss of speech and control of most or all physical movements.

Each stage takes its own course and varies from person to person, but usually mid-stage Alzheimer's is the longest period of time and usually results in dependency upon a caregiver. Here are four tips to help caregivers manage the increasingly hardest parts of the disease:

1. Set up a safe space

- Continually reminders about their diagnosis as it relates to their safety
- Carefully supervise, limit or prevent driving
- Install alarms, door locks and safety guards as needed
- Enroll with the Alzheimer's Association's Safe Return Program or obtain a medical or ID bracelet
- Continually assess the need for 24-hour care

2. Manage Behaviors

- Help maintain dignity
- Remember the loved one is still their own person and wants to make their own choices, be careful navigating difficult conversations
- Support and point out positive behaviors
- Try not to take negative behaviors personally

3. Structure Activities

- Help continue the normal, daily routine as much as possible
- Promote physical exercise
- Devise small projects to provide a sense of worth and accomplishment
- Set small, flexible goals for each day such as showering or coffee breaks

4. Take Care of Yourself

- Seek support and counseling for anxiety, frustration, grief, and sleeping problems
- Research skill-building techniques for Alzheimer's caregivers
- Take breaks and seek out adult day care programs or services that others can provide such as house cleaning and grocery shopping/delivery
- Make sure to prioritize yourself every once in a while and do something that makes you feel good



Source: Dwyer, Kristine LSW, MS. "Persevering Through Mid-Stage Alzheimer's Disease." *Today's Caregiver*. <https://caregiver.com/articles/persevering-mid-stage-alz>.

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