

## Trust Your Instincts – Choosing an Adult Day Program

by Naomi Berger

### Selecting the Appropriate Adult Day Health Care Model

First, decide which type of adult day health care program you need. The two types are: medical and social.

- **Medical Model Adult Day Health Care Program:** The medical model program offers adults who are chronically ill or in need of health monitoring access to nursing care, rehabilitation therapy, social work services, and assistance with personal care. Medical model programs have a registered nurse and rehabilitation therapists on site.
- **Social Model Adult Day Health Care Program:** This is the most common type of adult day center. The main function of the social model is to provide seniors with supervised care in a safe environment, as well as a place to socialize and stay physically and mentally active.

### Round-Trip Transportation is Key

Most adult day health care programs provide door-to-door, round-trip transportation. The vans should be equipped with an electronic lift and other equipment to accommodate people in wheelchairs, walkers, or canes.

### Trust Your Instincts

As Barbara Walters, the television celebrity and news personality says, “Trust your gut.” Ask yourself some questions when visiting the adult day care health care programs. What’s the first impression you have after walking through the door? Are the staff and patients happily engaged in activities together? Are the recreation and dining areas clean? Are the walls brightly decorated with patients’ artwork? Are there people who speak my language or come from a similar background? Are the activities offered age appropriate for me? Trust your gut!

### Emergency and Safety Plans

Every adult day health care program must have a medical and safety emergency plan. Ask the program’s director or the person who takes you on a tour to show you the written plan. Feel free to ask questions. For example, you could ask: What’s the procedure if someone goes into diabetic shock; or if someone falls? In an emergency, how are clients evacuated from the center? When touring the facility, notice if there are smoke detectors mounted on the walls. Do you see fire extinguishers? Ask if they have a defibrillator on the premise. Safety first!

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## Mission

To provide a comprehensive and coordinated system of services designed to promote the independence and dignity of older persons and their families in Muskegon, Oceana, and Ottawa – a mission compelling us to target older persons in greatest need but to advocate for all.



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## Activities for All

Adult day health care programs should have a posted weekly or monthly calendar of activities and events. If it's not already posted, ask for it when you're on your tour. Offerings should range from group activities such as exercise programs and drumming circles to activities such as arts and crafts, dominoes, or crocheting. Ask whether they provide trips to museums, shopping malls, baseball games or the local theater. Do they bring in outside guests to entertain, educate or inform individuals? It will quickly become apparent if the program is going the extra step to keep individuals motivated and actively engaged.

## You Are What You Eat

Adult day health care programs generally provide at least one healthy meal and a snack during the day. Specialty diets, such as low sodium, low sugar and low cholesterol, are accommodated at most programs. Ask the center for a copy of their weekly or monthly menu and, if possible, during your tour, taste the food.

## Personal Grooming Is So Important

Your loved one may need some assistance with personal grooming. Does the program have adequate staff to handle those needs, such as toileting, showering and other personal care? And, for those folks who are incontinent, does the staff handle toileting with sensitivity allowing the individual to maintain their dignity?

## The Choice is Yours

After evaluating and experiencing a few adult day health care programs, seeing the range of activities and enthusiasm of the staff, looking at the menus and simply "getting the feel" of the programs, you'll be in a better position to select the program that you feel is the most appropriate for your loved one. It's also a good idea to speak with participants about how they feel about the program while you are on your tour.

But in the end, the choice is yours. And remember, "Trust your gut." ❖



# Activities For People with Dementia

by Jennifer Buckley

It is common knowledge that elderly people with dementia lose their short term memory first and their long term memory last. For example, they often remember people and events from their earlier years but have difficulty remembering what they ate for breakfast the day before. A while back, a family member asked me “what do you do with someone who can no longer carry on a normal conversation?” The short answer is “Relax and have fun.” The long answer would require writing a whole book. A short summary of some activities includes the following:

1. Reminisce! Everything you do together lends itself to reminiscing. If the person can still speak fairly well, say, “Tell me about...” If his vocabulary is more limited, you may have to facilitate the story. “Do you remember when...” As you bake cookies together you can talk about favorite cookies, meals, etc.

2. Read aloud and use visual aids such as memory poems, family pictures, or stories about “the days gone by” stimulate reminiscences. Ideas include Chicken Soup for the Soul series and familiar short stories

3. Make music. Sing, hum, whistle, dance. Singing brings oxygen to the brain to help you think more clearly. Dancing exercises other parts of the body. Both increase your own sense of well-being as well as the well-being of the other person.

Sensory stimulation activities could include the following:

- Making lap quilts
- Talking books
- Walking
- Tutoring or visiting with children
- Happy hour with non-alcoholic drinks
- Brushing & fixing hair
- Ladies’ luncheons
- Painting
- Scrapbooks
- Flower arranging
- Baking
- Ice cream party
- Manicures
- Building with wood (include sanding)



Although these activities are written for residents of a retirement community or a nursing home, they certainly could be utilized for private use as well. Keeping the mind and body active are important for everyone, but especially your loved one with dementia. Do something that is enjoyable for both of you, and it makes it that much easier. ❖



## October's Website

[seniorresources.trualta.com](http://seniorresources.trualta.com)

## Quotes

Train your mind to see the good in everything.

*Unknown*

No matter what is happening, choose to be happy.

*Joel Osteen*

If you fell down yesterday, stand up today.

*H.G. Wells*

## This Month's Book

### *We're Stronger Than We Look*

by Jill Case Brown

Caregiver, are you overwhelmed? Do you secretly have bouts of despair, bitterness, and even hopelessness?

Rich in stories and unflinchingly pragmatic, *We're Stronger than We Look* is an invitation to look up and remember the life you've been given, the image of God that you bear, and the assurance that God loves you as much as you love the person entrusted to your care. This message is delivered by a caregiver who, while writing this helpful book, has cared for her paraplegic husband, who was suddenly disabled in a bicycling accident.





## Lead with Love and Crossed Fingers

by Gary Barg

As I have been known to say on more than a few occasions, “this year we are all caregivers.” To put it another way— these past two plus years, the separation between people who are actively caring for loved ones and those who are not yet doing so is much less defined than ever.

Now, even almost three years into this pandemic, it is not just caregivers whose lives have been swiftly upended with no reasonable end in sight. Now, this virus has made all our relationships with loved ones either better or more fragile. Now, we all are regularly thinking of the health and well-being of our loved ones. Now, the health of our local healthcare system is something that is concerning to all, as it is not when everyone is well.

I think this is an important teaching opportunity for family caregivers. We can help our friends, neighbors, and family members through the type of fear and uncertainty that we caregivers face daily.

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## The Art of Multitasking and Still Remaining Focused

by Maggie Almeida

Caregiving itself is an art. Many today are part of the Sandwich Generation who find themselves caring for both young children and teenagers as well as aging parents. Caregivers need to be professional multi-taskers to address everyone’s needs and not neglect their own. So, what should a good caregiver focus on? As many know, it’s a balancing act, but there’s an order to follow starting with the caregiver himself.

Step number one is to look out for number one: me, myself, I, the big cheese, the head beagle (just ask Snoopy). This may sound selfish, but it’s really the most unselfish place to start. After all, if number one is not well, you cannot take care of your other charges. If you have a good attitude, you can even overcome your own health issues with greater ease.

Those you care for also notice because they naturally behave as they see you behaving. This is called mirroring. One wise caregiver told me that her husband with Alzheimer’s was manageable because she knew that when her demeanor was calm, so was his. If she raised her voice, so did he. You can see where these lead. The caregiver had total control of her life if she managed her own emotions.

Step number two would be to give your attention to the next most vulnerable person you’re caring for. If it’s a child, have the older generation help since they may be acting childlike now. They may be able to play simple games with a child that you don’t have time for. Age and ability specific jigsaw puzzles, puppets, lying down with a child to get them to take a nap, or any other play related activity.

If your children are older, and you need to focus on Mom or Dad or Aunt Sally, have the older children help you in caring for your aged loved one. Keep it small and simple, but their involvement can mean the world to the older relative. It esteems them and they feel useful, as if the child needs their guidance. Some children feel esteemed when they’re asked to help, and it also builds their character to practice acts of kindness toward the elderly. If they want an example of the positive impact of a grandmother on a pop star, they all know, look at Will Smith. Even while accepting an American Music Award, he gave the credit to his grandmother. She must have been inspirational, but he also allowed himself to be inspired by spending time with her. Parents can make this happen and enhance the whole family dynamic as well as build its heritage.

In conclusion, look at multi-tasking as building blocks. Today many families are fragmented because a caregiver in the sandwich generation gets burnt out on both ends. As they focus on caregiving, there are levels of trust and affection that we build. When the stress gets too much, sometimes the “tower of family solidarity” gets knocked down. Someone yells or cries. This doesn’t mean that the tower is erased from memory. Go back and do something nice for yourself because you are the cornerstone of your tower. The other blocks will be added again and again. Focus on the big picture because your part in caregiving is a temporary role in a continuum. As soon as your duties end, you may be the one needing care. ❖

# The Skills – help offered from Trualta, a free resource for caregivers

## *P*ause! Take a Breath

In any difficult situation, take a minute for yourself to breathe. Your loved one is doing the best they can with the skills they have. So are you! If you take a calm approach in communicating, you can have more successful interactions with fewer frustrations.

### Set Up Your Surroundings

It may be harder for your loved one to focus on what you are saying. To improve communication, reduce sounds and sights that might be distracting.

### Use a Positive Tone and Body Language

If your loved one has dementia, they may rely more on reading your tone and body language than the words that you use. Start most conversations with a happy and welcoming approach.

### Stick to Simple Statements

We often use more words than we need to. If you provide one-step instructions to your loved one, you can help them be more successful during daily activities. Sometimes we also speak too quickly! Slow down and give your loved one extra time to process and respond.

### Reply, then Redirect

Your loved one may repeat questions or make rude comments. Respond to let them know you heard them and then help their brain move on to another conversation or activity.

For more helpful information on caregiving from Trualta, visit the website [seniorresources.trualta.com](http://seniorresources.trualta.com). ❖



*Lead with Love and Crossed Fingers, continued from page 4*

- We can show our friends, neighbors, and family members what it means to try and be prepared for any healthcare outcome.
- We can help teach our friends, neighbors, and family members the importance of interacting with others in times of duress.
- We caregivers and carers have long known the value of two sets of three words to get us through the tough times.

When talking with your loved ones do not forget to say I Love You as often as possible, and when encountering roadblocks when dealing with the system (financial, healthcare, government, insurance) remember the indispensable three words are, Who's your supervisor?

There are so very many things that are shared by all peoples in all nations around the globe, regardless if they are considered friend or foe by the nation in which you live. The extraordinarily thin layer of ozone which separates us from the blackness of space, love of our friends and family members, a good laugh, hugs and even the global ecology which we all share. And in regular times, these shared elements of humanity are not recognized. There are precious few times that we can see ourselves as all hurtling together in this Spaceship Earth and this is, for better or worse, one of these times.

And as any caregiver can tell our friends, neighbors, and family in these days in which we find ourselves, the best thing we can do is lead with love. And fingers crossed, this pandemic is quickly becoming a thing for the history books. ❖

# Healthy Eating Helps Seniors Stay Stronger and Live Longer

by Rebecca Rushing, BSN, RN

Sometimes getting older loved ones to eat balanced, nutritious meals can be challenging. For seniors who live in a setting where they receive meals prepared by an on-site team that provides healthy foods, it's easier to manage. But for seniors living alone, healthy eating can be something they don't pay much attention to.

Experts agree that a Mediterranean-style diet, with lots of vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains combined with reduced sugars and red meat, can actually help stave off cognitive decline. It can also have other health benefits, and according to Medicalnewstoday.com, many studies have been conducted that point to the long-term benefits of such a diet. An eight-year study of more than 5,200 adults aged 65 and older, combined with other similar studies for a total of 11,738 participants, showed that adherence to a Mediterranean diet showed a definitive improvement in life expectancy, even for those over age 65, according to the results published in the British Journal of Nutrition.

Despite the benefits of a healthy diet, there are many reasons why seniors may not get as much nutrition as they need:

- If they live alone and feel isolated, they may suffer from depression that leads to a lack of interest in things they used to enjoy, like food.
- They may be on a tight budget and foods like fresh produce are too expensive, so they rely on cheaper, starch-filled foods that are easy to prepare.
- They may have lost some of their sense of taste as they age, leading to loss of appetite if foods taste the same.
- They may have more cognitive issues than they realize, and shopping for and preparing foods have become too difficult for their abilities.
- There may be something medically wrong, and a visit to their primary care physician could help pinpoint why they are not interested in food.

While seniors who are less active need to eat fewer calories than they did when they were more active, getting the right nutrients in the right proportions makes a big difference. If you are a care provider for an older loved one, here are some tips on how you can help make sure they are getting nutritionally balanced meals. (Make sure to check with their primary care physician and discuss any dietary changes before implementing.)

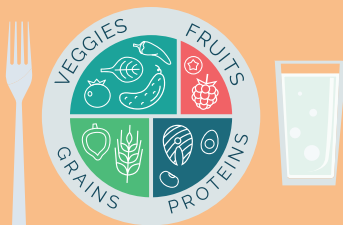
1. Create nutritionally balanced meals. Most Mediterranean diet websites suggest two to three servings of fruits and vegetables a day. They can be spread out or served as side dishes. For protein, try for three servings of fish or seafood and three servings of legumes each week. One weekly serving of nuts or seeds rounds it out, but these are high in calories, so keep that in mind. Add some pasta and red tomato sauces twice a week with olive oil and garlic. Try eating just two main meals a day while seated at a table, and snack according to the plan.
2. Make sure seniors are provided with colorful vegetables. The more color the better, and by offering different colors, seniors may be more inclined to try them to vary their diet. Taste buds change over time, so it might be the perfect time to add something different into a typical green bean or salad green side dish.
3. Remember not to overcook vegetables for better taste. Sometimes people overcook vegetables to make them easier to chew for seniors, but overcooking also makes vegetables lose nutritional value, mutes their taste, and makes vegetables mushy and less palatable.
4. Introduce colorful fruits that are easy to eat. Cut up papaya, mango, orange slices, grapes, cherries, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and other colorful fruits into small enough pieces to be easy, nutritious snack foods for seniors.
5. Replace red meat with fish or white meats. Fish is a great food for seniors because it's good for their health, it is simple to prepare and easier to chew than a big serving of red meat, such as a large steak. White meat chicken or turkey can be substituted for red meat and as a change from fish dishes.

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6. Reduce snacks or meals that include lots of sugar or butter. Try and steer clear of pastries, sugary beverages, cookies, donuts, and the like. Also steer clear of fried foods and snack foods like potato chips.

The National Council on Aging offers an infographic with links to many helpful websites for seniors who are dealing with things like food insecurity or who are unsure of what a healthy plate of food should contain. Also, there are food delivery services that deliver nutritional meals right to their doorsteps. Take advantage of these resources to help you manage your loved one's diet, and possibly increase their chances of living a long, fit, and healthy life, even if they start a healthy diet after age 65. ❖

## 6 Ways to Eat Well as You Get Older



1

### Know what a healthy plate looks like

See how to build a healthy plate at [ChooseMyPlate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov)



2

### Look for important nutrients

Eat enough protein, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and Vitamin D.



3

### Read nutrition labels

Be a smart shopper! Find items that are lower in fat, added sugars, and sodium.



4

### Use recommended servings

Learn the recommended daily servings for adults aged 60+ at [heart.org](https://www.heart.org)



5

### Stay hydrated

Water is an important nutrient too! Drink fluids consistently throughout the day.



6

### Stretch your food budget

Get help paying for healthy food at [BenefitsCheckUp.org/getSNAP](https://www.benefitscheckup.org/getSNAP)



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