



# OUTREACH

August 2019

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Ontario's Premier Seniors Conference & Information Fair 2019

## Message from the Executive Director

*By Elizabeth Nykorowytch Macnab, CHRL*

At a recent consultation for the Ministry of Seniors & Accessibility, members of the Liaison Committee including OSSCO gave feedback on 4 focuses - safety/security, healthy active living, employment and aging at home/communities. Through our discussions, transformed the term "healthy" into wellbeing.

The importance of wellbeing means that we do not have to put ourselves into a "healthy" box. Some of us will acquire a disability or something making us "unhealthy". Our wellbeing will always continue if we adjust to living life differently and to live well. Some of us will develop a chronic disease - cancer, dementia, arthritis, and many others. Yet, with proper health care and support, we can live to our optimum well-being.

This year, Ontario's Premier Seniors' Conference and

Information Fair focuses on health and wellbeing to help us live our lives to the maximum of our abilities. With over 30 exhibitors, you can learn about the importance of flu vaccinations to prevent critical illnesses or remaining active to strengthen bones, improve balance and stimulate the mind. Our signature event brings together over 250 seniors, including their families and caregivers to explore programs and services, and learning sessions where knowledge experts will share 'life hacks' to maintain your quality of life.

A corner stone of wellbeing means remaining socially active. Our Conference and Information Fair gives you plenty of time to socialize. You have opportunities to meet new people and reconnect with friends throughout a day of exploration and learning. So mark your calendar for November 5th to discover new things, how to access resources and what is available to live well as you age.

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## Why your Voice Matters in Science and Research!

By Amanda Jenkins & Alexis Fabricius, OA-INVOLVE AGE-WELL



Many people have an idea about what science is, how it's done and the type of knowledge that it creates. However, there are numerous approaches that are not well-known, both inside and outside of the scientific community, that yield important insights and require involvement from the lay public (including older adults). Some approaches want to know about a particular group's lived experience of a certain phenomenon (e.g. What is it like to live with a hip replacement?), though other approaches go further and break down the boundaries between scientists and participants. In participatory approaches, 'participants' become 'co-researchers', which means that they take an active role in the research, instead of having research done on them. We at OA-INVOLVE think there is tremendous value in this.

A participatory approach is especially important for technology research because it improves the functionality, usability, and quality of products geared towards older adults. One way that OA-INVOLVE meaningfully includes older adults is through the Older Adult Research Partner Group (OARPG). Here, older adults contribute to innovation and help shape research with researchers. For example, some of our members have attended conferences, helped with data collection and analysis, and created arts-based products to disseminate our research results. Check out the picture of OARPG member Ian, who is speaking to a researcher about her work on technological supports for caregivers. To find out more about the research that we do with older adults please visit <http://www.oa-involve-agewell.ca/>. We encourage you to get involved in science - your voice matters.



**Have you seen OSSCO's updated website?**

**Visit [www.ossco.org](http://www.ossco.org) for up to date information and upcoming events!**

## Tips for Managing your Medicines at Home

By Lorraine Hulley MSc, Pro Health Navigators Canada



87% of seniors take one prescription drug, 36% take 5 or more, and 38% use over-the-counter medications. Here are 8 tips to manage medications at home:

- 1. Keep all everything you take, including supplements in one location.** Use a container that can be carried if you are taken to hospital. Keep an up to date list of the contents of the container. Only use one pharmacy.
- 2. Store Medication properly:** Usually this means in a cool and dry place- Refrigerate if indicated.
- 3. Create a medication list** of all prescription, non-prescription and natural supplements.

Record:

- Name and strength
- How often taken
- What dosage

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- Who prescribed it
- What it treats

Keep a copy with the bin that contains your medications and another in your wallet.

**4. Pre-sort medications for the week:** Use a pill organizer, or have your pharmacy blister pack your medications.

**5. Double check for negative drug interactions:** If you take three or more prescription medications, book a yearly free medication check by your pharmacist.

**6. Make sure medication instructions are clear:** Ask your pharmacist about the drugs you are taking so you fully understand.

**7. Set up a medication reminder and tracking system:** Create a chart to check off when you take a pill. Setting alarms as reminders are helpful too. There are also smartphone apps available.

**8. Plan ahead for medication refills:** Use automatic renewal reminders offered by pharmacies. Get a 90 day supply medications you take regularly.

Pro Health Navigators Canada provide navigation support, coaching and communication for patients and families in today's complex health care system.

Call 905-562-6883 or email at [info@prohealthnavigatorscanad.a.com](mailto:info@prohealthnavigatorscanad.a.com) for a free consultation to see if their services are right for you.

[www.prohealthnavigatorscanad.a.com](http://www.prohealthnavigatorscanad.a.com)

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*Our knowledge. Your peace of mind.*

## Seniors' Tips for Foot Health

*By Dr. Lloyd Nesbitt, Podiatrist*



If you are over 65, then you have over 100,000 miles on your feet! Nonetheless, that doesn't mean it's too late for foot comfort. While you can't trade in your feet like a new set of tires, there are lots of things you can do for your feet in order to walk in comfort:

1. Wear good quality running shoes or the shoes designed especially for walking. Many seniors love to wear their running shoes all day long.

2. Corns and calluses can be painlessly treated by a podiatrist. Don't use over-the-counter remedies as they can damage surrounding skin. Relief of pain is often instantaneous with a visit to a podiatrist.

3. Corrective procedures are being performed by podiatrists in their offices to permanently remove such problems as corns, ingrown nails, etc. The treatment is virtually painless and you can walk right away.

4. Gentle exercises such as moving your feet in circles or up and down help to improve mobility and flexibility.

5. Calf stretching exercises reduce tightness in the back of lower leg muscles particularly with women who are used to wearing higher heels and change to lower heeled shoes. By leaning against the wall and placing one foot forward and one foot back, bend the forward knee and you will feel the calf muscle of the opposite leg stretch. Hold for ten seconds.

6. Add cushioning to your feet. Soft soled shoes help, but consider an insole such as "Spenco" which is a thin flat foam insole that will add lots of cushioning to your feet. As you get older, the fat pad under the bones at the ball of the foot tends to get displaced forward and therefore reduces the cushioning at the ball of the foot.

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7. Consider having your foot mechanics evaluated by a podiatrist. Structural imbalances that lead to bunions and callouses can be corrected at your age. A podiatrist can take casts of your feet and have an orthotic device fabricated to be worn comfortably in your shoes to reduce pressure to those areas that are experiencing excessive strain. A store bought "orthotic" is not prescribed to your foot but sometimes can lend a bit of help.

8. Ingrown nails can be sore. The nail can penetrate the skin and act as a foreign body. Avoid chemical "cures". Again a foot specialist can painlessly clip away a segment of the nail for immediate relief and then a procedure can be performed by laser to permanently remove the offending nail border while leaving the rest of the nail intact.

9. Varicose veins are common in your age group. The best thing you can do for them is to elevate your feet when you can. The next best thing is walking. The worst thing is dangling your feet, at the side of the bed, for example.

10. Circulatory problems are common particularly in diabetics. Your family physician, podiatrist or vascular specialist can evaluate your circulation. Smoking is the worse thing for your circulation since it takes only one cigarette to

reduce blood flow through your arteries.

11. Walking programs are an excellent idea for exercise and fitness. Get clearance from your family doctor first and then once you have comfortable walking shoes or running shoes, start your program gradually and build up your distances slowly. Avoid hills at first or uneven terrain that can create an ankle sprain.

Keep walking, and by offering your feet a little extra care and attention, they should keep you going for many more miles to come!

LLOYD NESBITT DPM  
PODIATRIST

## What is 211?

By Find Help Information Services / 211



911 is probably the first telephone number most people have to memorize (besides their own). When facing an emergency – police, fire, ambulance, you would call 9-1-1. When facing a non-emergency and seeking up-to-date information or referral to government, health, community and social services in Ontario, call 2-1-1.

211 is the easy-to-remember 3-digit information helpline and online database. It is Ontario's go-to source for all things social and human services. 211 is free, confidential and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year (even on holidays) in more than 150 languages! Whether you are searching for meals on wheels, assistive devices, transportation to appointments, long-term care or housing options, 211 can connect older adults and those caring for aging parents to a variety of services and programs available in your community.

When you dial 2-1-1, our telephone lines are answered live by certified Community Navigators who help people navigate the complexities of the human services system quickly and easily. Our toll-free number is 1-877-330-3213. On 211Central.ca, there are over 60,000 programs and services listed in our database. 211 is also accessible by text (21166), live chat (211Ontario.ca/chat) and email (info@findhelp.ca). The 211 blog on 211Ontario.ca hosts articles of relevance to older adults with lots of information available about accessing financial assistance, home support services, recreation and education programs and more!

Next time you're looking for non-emergency help in the community and don't know where to turn, remember to call 2-1-1! Help starts here.

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## Difficulties Seniors Face with Financial Services

By Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments (OBSI)



OBSI has been helping Canadian consumers and financial services firms resolve disputes for over 23 years, and we are well positioned to observe the difficulties faced by senior consumers when they have a problem with the financial services they use.

Seniors face a number of barriers when accessing financial services. They may not know all the right questions to ask and that can leave them vulnerable. Sometimes there are physical barriers, like a disability. Sometimes it can be communication challenges, where they may become overwhelmed by lengthy legal documents. It can also be that they don't want to be seen as rude or unknowledgeable.

Seniors have reported to us being overwhelmed by lengthy disclosure documents that contain too much information and require extended periods of attention and focus. Some seniors encounter difficulties because they have not read all the information that is provided to them.

Technology offers some innovative solutions for the challenges faced by seniors, but in general they are less likely to seek out and take advantage of new technologies. Even seniors who are comfortable with technologies, such as online banking, are nevertheless more vulnerable than younger consumers because they may not be aware of the security measures that they need to take to protect themselves.

This July OBSI released its first ever Seniors Report, documenting the experiences of seniors using its services. For the full report, or for more information about OBSI and our process, you can visit our website at [www.obsi.ca](http://www.obsi.ca).



## The Devastating Impact of the Flu in Seniors

By Sanofi Pasteur



In March 2017 Mike Leone's life changed forever. As he lay trembling on the floor, he shouted out for a neighbour to call 911. This decision may have saved his life. Upon hospitalization, Mike was diagnosed with influenza – a virus which left him weak. During his stay in the hospital, Mike developed two bacterial pneumonias and sepsis, had a tracheostomy done and was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. He spent 93 days in the hospital and 48 days in the ICU. Prior to contracting influenza, Mike was active and enjoyed socializing with friends. He now lives on just the first floor of his home, can no longer drive and is dependent on personal support workers. "The hardest part for me is not being able to live a normal life," said Mike Leone. "I can't go to the senior club every day as I

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used to, and I don't feel like myself anymore."

His son Umberto Leone, a pharmacist, remembers vividly how difficult this journey has been for their family. "We thought we were going to lose him," said Umberto Leone. "I'm so grateful my dad made it out of the hospital. This experience opened my eyes to the dangers of influenza and the importance of being protected."

Mike is one of 12,200 people hospitalized for influenza-related illnesses every year in Canada,[i] with seniors accounting for 66% of this number.[ii]

There are now flu vaccines designed specifically for seniors. Ask your doctor about the flu vaccine that is recommended for you.

[i] Schanzer, D.L., Sevenhuysen, C., Winchester, B., & Mersereau, T. (2013). *Estimating influenza deaths in Canada, 1992-2009*. *PLoS ONE*, 8(11), e80481.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0080481>

[ii] Government of Canada. *FluWatch*. April 8-14, 2018.

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**SANOFI PASTEUR** 

## Stop a Fall Before it Happens!

By Toronto Public Health



Falls are the leading cause of injuries among Canadians 65 years and over. Falls account for 85% of older adult injury-related hospitalizations, making falls the leading cause of injury-related admissions. Almost half of the older adults who fall are likely to suffer from a serious injury. For example, a hip fracture or a concussion. Fall-related injuries are also associated with:

- Increased disability
- Reduced mobility and independence
- Higher likelihood of admission to a long-term care facility
- Increased risk of premature death

What can I do to prevent a fall?

Falls are both predictable and preventable. The following strategies can help you to reduce the risk of a fall:

Assess your risk for a fall by using the Fall Risk Self-Assessment Tool:

- Exercise regularly
- Eat balanced meals
- Manage medications
- Use home safety checklists
- Use assistive devices
- Go for regular health check-ups

For more information on how to prevent a fall before it happens visit Toronto Public Health's Fall Prevention site (<https://www.toronto.ca/health/injury-prevention>) or call Toronto Health Connections at 416-338-7600.

 **TORONTO**  
Public Health

**Are you interested in Ontario's Premier Seniors Conference & Information Fair 2019?**

**For more information about this signature event, please read page 8 of this newsletter.**

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## Indus Community Services

By Indus Community Services



Indus Community Service (Indus) supports our growing communities to manage change through quality client-centered social & health services and responsive public education.

Loneliness and social isolation are major problems that impair the quality of life amongst older adults, and older adults with limited social interactions are more prone to mental and physical health concerns. Indus offers a wide range of programs and services, including Adult Day Services, Caregiver Support, Seniors Wellness, Friendly Visiting, and Telephone Reassurance.

We aim to provide best-in-class senior care programs, Indus is helping seniors to stay in their home longer than ever, and alleviating pressure on the hospital and long-term care

centres. Health Services is also highly regarded for providing respite and support to caregivers. Through these programs, we provide patient/client-centred care to frail and/or cognitively impaired individuals in a safe and encouraging environment. Our services promote healthy aging, encourage an active lifestyle, and ensure that the privacy and dignity of all our participants remain intact. Indus offers culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the entire community and has a special expertise in South Asian Cultures

We have locations to serve you in Mississauga and Brampton.

If you would like more information about our program, services and ways to get involved, please call 905-275-2369 or email [info@induscs.ca](mailto:info@induscs.ca). [www.induscs.ca](http://www.induscs.ca).



**Are you interested in submitting an article for OSSCO Outreach?**

**We want to hear from you! Email [info@ossco.org](mailto:info@ossco.org) today.**

## Lady Info. Inspired, Informative, Innovative.

By Lady Info, OSSCO



Lady Info will give information based on personal knowledge on not very well know centres, activities, and programs that are elder inclusive. Are you inspired? Want a similar program in your town. Contact Lady Info at OSSCO and let's see what we can do!

Do you have a library card to the Toronto Public Library? With a library card, there are many wonderful services you can take advantage of. Get help searching for a job, researching a paper or homework assignment and much more.

Ask A Librarian is available over the phone, in-person or online. You can call **Answerline** at 416-393-7131 to make a free 30 to 60 minute appointment with a librarian.

Interested in learning about other services in your community? Let us know!

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# Age Friendly Communities

By Ontario Age-Friendly Communities Outreach Program



Age-friendly communities (AFC) enable people of all ages to be healthy, safe, valued and engaged in society.

Communities that are age-friendly are committed to creating an environment that is free from social and physical barriers, and is supported by inclusive policies and services. AFCs optimize health for older adults by increasing opportunities for community participation, employment and volunteering. This contributes to reducing social isolation, improving mental health and increasing physical activity.

The Ontario AFC Outreach Program supports over 80 communities in Ontario that have taken action to become more age-friendly. The Outreach Program helps increase awareness of age-friendly concepts; share best

practices within and between communities; and plan, implement and evaluate age-friendly initiatives. The AFC Interactive Maps showcase the age-friendly initiatives in Ontario that are improving communities' outdoor spaces and public buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, and communication and information.

For more information about AFCs or how to take steps towards making communities more age-friendly, visit <https://sagelink.ca/age-friendly-communities> or contact the Outreach Program's Knowledge Broker via email at [brancacl@providencecare.ca](mailto:brancacl@providencecare.ca).

## Ontario's Premier Seniors Conference & Information Fair 2019

By Stacy Chung, Communications & Programs Specialist, OSSCO

Seniors are the fastest and largest growing demographic in Canada, with the proportion of seniors in Canada expected to double by 2025. Canadians continue to live longer life spans and in response, OSSCO created our signature event Ontario's

Premier Seniors Conference & Information Fair more than 10 years ago to better understand the needs of seniors and promote health & well-being amongst this growing demographic.

In 2018, OSSCO moved this signature event to a new venue to accommodate this growing interest from seniors and positive response from exhibitors and sponsors, which lead to a sold out exhibitor hall!

This year, Ontario's Premier Seniors Conference & Information Fair will be returning to Julius Event Centre in North York, Ontario on Tuesday November 5, 2019. As an exhibitor and/or sponsor, you have an opportunity to share information about your programs and services by directly reaching a diverse group of over 250 seniors, including their families and caregivers.

Don't miss the opportunity to connect, meet and engage!

For more information, please contact Stacy Chung at [programs@ossco.org](mailto:programs@ossco.org) or 416-785-8570 ext 223.

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