

# OUTREACH

December 2021

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## Message from the Executive Director

*By Elizabeth Nykorowytch Macnab*

Finding good news is challenging. What we hear seems *deja vu*. Delta variant is "so last year". Omicron is the new Delta. Public Health Units lockdown parts of Ontario. Can the rest of the province be far behind?

In September, the economy was not on anyone's radar. Yet, Inflation, like the ghost of Christmas past, brought memories of 18% mortgages, job loss and worse.

We also have the extreme cost of housing. Rents for 1 bedroom apartments average \$1400 per month in some cities. The Supply Chain is rumoured to be collapsing ... Who hasn't experienced last week's \$49 Dinosaur Paws selling today for \$57?

We follow public health advice - get vaccinated, wear a mask, hand wash, physical distancing and limit the number of people we interact with. It's another "modified bubble" holiday season.

Is it any wonder that our anxiety levels are going through the roof?

We curated information to keep you living safely in community. There are tips on coping, healthy eating and a reminder on flu vaccinations.

We are reprinting recipes from last year's "virtual" baking exchange. We hope you enjoy making them again. When you do something for someone else, you also improve your mental health ... perhaps sharing these treats with someone is a start!

Stuck on finding a gift? Visit a thrift store to find something special. You'll be surprised at the treasures you'll discover at Plato's Closet, St. Vincent de Paul, Value Village or Goodwill stores. You can also make your own *Gift Certificate* with the gift of your time and talent or an experience.

Did you know that OSSCO offers free learning to 55+? Our member organizations do! Discover what lifelong learning with an OSSCO workshop or program could do to keep you educated and independent.

**Wishing everyone a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!**

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## for Adults 65 Years of Age and Over

Public Health Ontario

For the 2021-2022 influenza season, one high-dose quadrivalent vaccine (QIV-HD), one adjuvanted trivalent vaccine (TIV-adj), and four standard-dose quadrivalent vaccines (QIV) are available in Ontario through the UIIP for adults 65 years of age and older.

### High-Dose Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine

Canadian Recommendations Regarding High-Dose QIV The NACI Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2021-20223 has provided the following recommendation for adults 65 years of age and older regarding high-dose QIV: At the individual-level decision-making, “IIV-HD (high-dose QIV) should be used over IIV-SD (standard-dose QIV), given the burden of influenza A(H3N2) disease and the good evidence of IIV3-HD (high-dose TIV) providing better protection

compared to IIV3-SD (standard-dose TIV) in adults 65 years of age and older.”

### Vaccine Effectiveness of High-Dose QIV

A phase 3 randomized clinical trial<sup>9</sup> involving 2,670 adults 65 years of age and older compared the safety and immunogenicity of the high-dose QIV (QIV-HD) to that of two high-dose trivalent vaccines, each containing a different influenza B strain (TIV-HD1 and TIV-HD-2) over one influenza season.

The results demonstrated that the hemagglutination inhibition antibody responses of the QIV-HD were non-inferior to those induced by the TIV-HD1 and TIV-HD2 for the three shared strains, and superior for the Influenza Vaccines for the 2021-2022 Influenza Season 5 additional B-lineage strain.

The authors concluded that the addition of a second B-lineage strain did not inhibit the immunogenicity induced by the other three strains or compromise the vaccine’s tolerability.

# 10 Reasons to get the flu shot

1. Cut Your Risk Of the Flu In Half (or More)
2. You Won’t Get the Flu From the Vaccine
3. Close Quarters = Increased Risk
4. Avoid Missing Work Or Family event
5. Build Up Your Antibodies, The Sooner, The Better
6. Support Herd Immunity
7. Prevent Increased Risk of Pneumonia & Other Complications
8. Changes in Flu Strains
9. Less Doctor Visits
10. Simply Put, It’s Easy



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## ***Stress, depression and the holidays: Tips for coping***

*By Mayo Clinic Staff*

The holiday season often brings unwelcome guests — stress and depression. And it's no wonder. The holidays often present a dizzying array of demands — cooking meals, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few.

And if coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is spreading in your community, you may be feeling additional stress, or you may be worrying about your and your loved ones' health.

You may also feel stressed, sad or anxious because your holiday plans may look different during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

### Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

#### **Acknowledge your feelings.**

If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones for other reasons, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.

#### **Reach out.**

If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events or communities. Many may have websites, online support groups, social media sites or virtual events. They can offer support and companionship. If you're feeling stress during the holidays, it also may help to talk to a friend or family member about your concerns. Try reaching out with a text, a call or a video chat.

Volunteering your time or doing something to help others also is

a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. For example, consider dropping off a meal and dessert at a friend's home during the holidays.

#### **Be realistic.**

The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children or other relatives can't come to your home, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails or videos. Or meet virtually on a video call. Even though your holiday plans may look different this year, you can find ways to celebrate.

#### **Set aside differences.**

Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.

Continue

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**Stick to a budget.** Before you do your gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.

Try these alternatives:

- Donate to a charity in someone's name.
- Give homemade gifts.
- Start a family gift exchange.

**Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, connecting with friends and other activities. Consider whether you can shop online for any of your items. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for meal prep and cleanup.

**Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.

**Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.

Try these suggestions:

- Have a healthy snack before holiday meals so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks.
- Eat healthy meals.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Include regular physical activity in your daily routine.
- Try deep-breathing exercises, meditation or yoga.
- Avoid excessive tobacco, alcohol and drug use.
- Be aware of how the information culture can produce undue stress, and adjust the time you spend reading news and social media as you see fit.

**Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Find an activity you enjoy. Take a break by yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

Some options may include:

- Taking a walk at night and stargazing
- Listening to soothing music
- Reading a book

**Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

### **Take control of the holidays**

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.



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## Tips for Healthy Eating During the Holiday Season

*Laura Vergeer, PhD candidate in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Toronto*

With the holiday season upon us once again, it's easy to get caught up in all the festivities and lose sight of our intentions to eat healthy. Holiday weight gain isn't just a myth. Research suggests that "holiday weight" (i.e., weight gained during the mid-November to mid-January period) is a significant contributor to annual weight gain among adults living in Western countries (1,2). Studies have also shown that people who already have overweight or obesity are likely to gain more weight over the holidays, compared to those with a BMI of <math><25 \text{ kg/m}^2</math> (1).

Nonetheless, with a little careful planning and mindful eating, you can make healthier food choices this holiday season and avoid the holiday weight, even without missing out on your favourite festive foods. Check out these 5 tips for healthy eating during the holidays:

### **Offer to bring a healthy dish**

If a potluck event is on your social calendar this holiday season, offer to bring a healthy appetizer, side-dish or dessert that you'll enjoy and feel good about eating. It's an easy way to ensure that you'll have at least one healthier alternative to choose from at the buffet table. The holiday season is the perfect time to try out a new recipe, whether it be for the perfectly seasoned and roasted veggies, a festive salad or black-bean brownies. Do a little searching online to find recipes that sound delicious and nutritious. If you're not sure what qualifies as "healthy", consider checking out the Dietitians of Canada website (or their Cookspiration app) for dietician-approved recipes (3).

### **Do not skip meals**

Skipping breakfast and lunch in the lead-up to a big holiday dinner to "save" your calories for later may sound like a logical way to prevent weight gain, but research suggests that it may be associated with overeating later in the day (4). Instead of fasting, be sure to eat a healthy breakfast and lunch with a balance of fruits and veggies, whole grains and protein to keep your hunger levels in check, making you less

likely to overdo it at the main event.

### **Focus on your favourite foods**

With so many tasty-looking dishes before you, it can be easy to feel like you need to sample everything at a holiday event. But making an effort to focus on your favourite foods – while skipping the ones you're not as excited about – can be an easy way to save some calories and avoid overeating.

### **Eat slowly and mindfully**

Savouring each bite and taking a pause between courses can help prevent you from overeating. That second helping of turkey, stuffing and mashed potatoes might seem like a great idea at first, but allowing some time for your body to digest the food you've already eaten allows time for your brain to get the signal that you're actually full. Plus, it'll help save room for that dessert you've been eyeing (pumpkin pie, anyone?).

### **Mix in some water**

While it's perfectly fine to celebrate the festive season with a glass of mulled wine or eggnog, alternating between alcohol and water can help keep calorie intake in check and prevent dehydration.

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## Experiential Gifting

By Kaili Mandel

Experiential gifting as opposed to material gifts or simply "stuff", allow the recipient to have an experience, such as spa day, touring a vineyard or extracurricular activities.

Individuals have turned to experiential gifting in hopes to create a more sustainable environment avoiding plastic packaging, unnecessary gift wrap and items that may collect dust on a shelf or worse, end up in a landfill.

To find the perfect experiential gift, just pay attention. The people in your life are constantly saying, "You know where I'd love to go someday..." or "Wouldn't it be awesome to be able to..." Just listen and see what you can arrange an experience that fits for them. Create your own *Gift Certificate*, with the gift of your time or talent. If it's a higher ticket experience, go in with other friends or family members.

A trend we have noticed here at OSSCO are family members enrolling their loved ones in our educational programs. Not only are they learning and developing new skills, they are forging new connections with peers through shared experiences.

This year, we recommend the gift of photography lessons with OSSCO. We wanted to share a little about the course we offer which has inspired many to see photography from a fresh perspective.

Photography lessons can be a special gift that encourages creativity and brings a little more beauty into the world. Your loved one may be like me - having no clue how to use a DSLR camera and prefers to take all their photos on a smartphone. Any beginner to intermediate person can learn loads from this excellent OSSCO program.

If someone you know is feeling distress and can't get away for a "Spa Day", give them the gift of serenity when you suggest they come to OSSCO's virtual *Mindfulness Program*.

**Interested in learning more about these and other our courses *free to 55+?* Visit [www.ossco.org](http://www.ossco.org)**

## Experiential Gift Ideas

Photography Lessons

Spa Day

Museum Tour

Cooking Class

A Night at the Theatre

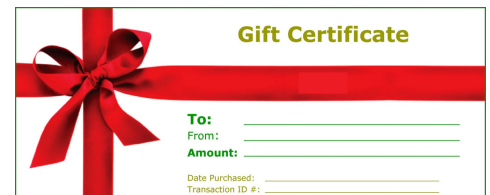
Christmas Market

Weekend Getaway

Dance Class

Casino

A Night at the Symphony



Make a *Personal Gift Certificate* for a friend or family...

**Tuesday Coffee & Conversation**

**5 x Snow Shoving Your Drive**

**Join Me for a Weekly Walk**

**Soup Tasting at My Place**

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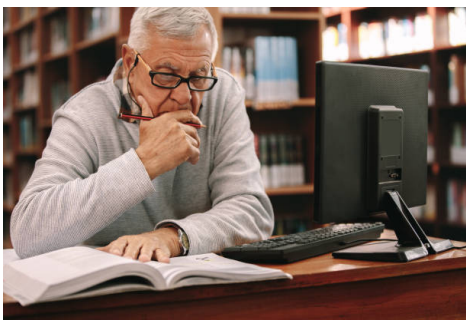
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## Benefits of Lifelong Learning for Seniors

By Arthur Bretschneider

For complete article visit:  
<https://www.seniorly.com/resource-center/health-and-lifestyle/benefits-of-lifelong-learning-for-seniors>

It's no secret that engaging your mind and keeping your brain active and stimulated can help ward off some of the disadvantages of growing older. Studies have shown that being a lifelong learner can help prevent both mental and physical decline during the aging process.

Continued learning allows individuals to be able to adapt to change, even in later years. This may lead to an increased ability to meet new people and form new relationships, which is an important skill to overall well-being. Socialization is especially important to elderly individuals, and the ability to build new friendships may be the key to moving forward and being happy.

### More Learning, Less Structure

For individuals who want to stretch their minds without the formality of a regular class, there are many options available.

#### Join a Book Club

Do a Google search or visit your local library. If the book club you want isn't available, you could always start one yourself. Persuade one or two friends to join you and ask them each to bring a friend or two.

#### Visit a Local Museum or Art Gallery

Many historical museums and art galleries offer discounts or free days during the week for older individuals. Most museums and galleries have rotating exhibits, so each visit will offer something new to learn.

#### Learn a New Language

Work with a friend to learn a new language using a computer program such as those offered by Rosetta Stone (many libraries have copies that may be borrowed). The practice of learning a new language is an excellent way to challenge your brain to think in new ways.

#### Become a Serial Hobbyist

The local craft store will most likely offer short-term classes in a variety of crafting techniques.

From knitting to painting or pottery, learning to work with your hands is a good way to keep your mind occupied while also creating something beautiful.

#### Learning On the Go

It's true that learning doesn't need to end when careers end. But it also doesn't have to be structured. Think outside the box when it comes to learning. Consider a podcast that explains a new idea while you go for your morning jog or clean the house. Listen to a book on tape while you drive to the golf course in a neighboring city.

### OSSCO® LEARNING TIPS...

Visit [www.ossco.org](http://www.ossco.org) for upcoming workshops and programs, *free to 55+*.

All programs delivered The OSSCO Way® keep you technologically savvy through photography lessons using your cell phone, unlocking the hidden writer in you or put your mind at ease through Mindfulness 101. TeleLearning workshops help keep you independent and living safely in community with topics on finances, well-being, government programs and more.

OSSCO® removes barriers to learning with practical, focused and unique learning activities.

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# Chocolate peppermint crinkles

*Courtesy of Shoana Jensen*

With the snow whirling at the Calgary Airport in November 2017, I had the pleasure to meet TV personality Shoana Jensen. She put me onto this recipe which was shared with CITYLINE viewers last year.

You can substitute 2 large broken Candy Canes for the peppermint extract. If you enjoy a less sweet cookie, you can substitute cane sugar for both the brown and granulated sugar. Enjoy. Elizabeth Macnab

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 3/4 cup light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 tsp peppermint extract
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips chopped (or dark mini chocolate chips)
- 1/2 cup confectioner's sugar

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt
2. In a small skillet, melt butter over medium heat
3. In a second medium bowl, whisk together the cocoa powder, brown sugar and granulated sugar.
4. Add the melted butter and whisk together. Whisk in the eggs one at a time until well combined.
5. Stir in the peppermint extract and chocolate chips.
6. Add the flour mixture and fold in until just combined.
7. Do not over mix
8. Roll and chill the dough for at least one hour
9. Heat the oven (with the rack in the middle position) to 350 F or 177 C. Line two rimmed sheet pans with parchment paper
10. Put the confectioners' sugar into a medium bowl.

11. Using a measuring tablespoon, scoop out a level spoonful of the dough into the palm of your hand and roll into a ball (dough will be sticky).

**TIP:** Keep a bowl with water handy to dip your hands in. You can also roll the dough and slice it.

12. Add cookie dough into the confectioners' sugar and roll it around to coat. Place on the prepared sheet pan.

13. Repeat, spacing the cookies about 2" apart. No more than 12 cookies per sheet pan.

14. Bake the cookies one sheet pan at a time until puffed or 10 minutes (you want them to be a little under done) .

15. Place the sheet pan on a wire cooling rack and let the cookies cool in the sheet pan for 10 minutes . Transfer to the cooling rack to finish cooling .

**NOTE:** You can freeze the uncooked dough. Form into a roll for up to 3 months...just slice and bake when defrosted!

If you like smaller cookies, this makes 28 sweet treats.

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# Greek Yogurt Lemon Olive Oil Cake

*jessicaseinfeld.com*

Long time OSSCO volunteers with Mediterranean heritage put me onto this easy to make and delicious cake. It's commonly found in Italy and Spain. You can use canola oil but olive oil gives this cake a distinct, rich flavour.

There are many version of this cake online. However, this is the closest to what Mary baked for me. You can also use a plant-based yogurt, to make a dairy free version. It's the perfect cake for sharing, and it freezes well...if there are leftovers!

Elizabeth Macnab

## INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 cups Greek yogurt (you can use plant-based)
- 1.5 cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 lemon - zested
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 2 tbsp powdered sugar
- 1 tbsp flour ( for dusting the pan)
- 1 tbsp butter or vegetable oil spray ( for greasing the pan)

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350 Fahrenheit or 177 Celsius.
- In a large mixing bowl whisk together the flour with the baking powder and sea salt. Set aside.
- In another bowl whisk together the eggs with the sugar until creamy. Add the vanilla extract, lemon zest and olive oil and whisk again until combined. Add the Greek yogurt and whisk until incorporated.
- Pour the wet mixture in the bowl with the flour mix and use a spatula fold together until combined.
- Prepare a non-stick loaf or bundt pan by coating it with a thin layer of the butter. Sprinkle with some flour tapping out all the excess. You can also line the loaf pan with parchment paper instead.
- Pour the cake batter inside the prepared pan and bake in the preheated oven until golden brown on top, for 35 to 45 minutes depending on the type of pan you are using.

- Check at 35 minutes by inserting a toothpick in the center.
- If toothpick comes out clean your cake is done, otherwise continue baking by 10 minutes and check again.
- Transfer the cake to a wire rack and allow it to cool completely before inverting onto a board or plate.

Once cooled, dust with icing sugar or make a honey lemon glaze.

## Honey Lemon Glaze

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon milk (or non-dairy milk)
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 ½ cups icing sugar

Whisk all ingredients together until smooth. Drizzle over cool cake.

Slice and enjoy this treat that's meant to be shared!

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