

NORTHERN HEALTH HOME CARE PACKAGES



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2019

Hello everyone and welcome to our December 2019 Newsletter.

I hope this newsletter finds you well.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care has been completed and an interim report has been published. We will be looking at the recommendations and determine how we may improve our program. Please be rest assured there were no sanctions or concerns for us at NH Home Care Packages.

This newsletter focus on some key elements of what summer can bring; surviving the heat, eating well and for some, the impact of loneliness.

Wishing you and your loved ones all the best for Christmas and the holiday season,

Julie Williams, Program Manager.

SURVIVE THE HEAT.

With the hot weather period commencing soon, we would like to remind you about looking after yourself in the heat. See the useful tips below.

Heat kills more Australians than any other natural disaster.

- Extreme heat can affect anybody.
- Heat can cause illnesses such as heat cramps and heat exhaustion which can lead to the life-threatening condition, heatstroke. Heatstroke is fatal. Those most at risk are older people, young children and people with a medical condition.

If you or someone you know is unwell call **NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24** for 24-hour health advice or see your doctor.

In an emergency, call 000.

Survive the Heat Tips.



Drink plenty of water

- Keep a full drink bottle with you.
- Take small sips of water frequently.
- If your doctor normally limits your fluids, check how much you should drink during hot weather.



Never leave anyone in a car in warm/hot weather



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Attachment:

Eating Well: A Nutrition Resource for Older People and their carers.





Stay somewhere cool

- Spend as much time as possible in cool or air-conditioned buildings (shopping centres, libraries, cinemas or community centres).
- Keep yourself cool by using wet towels, putting your feet in cool water and taking cool (not cold) showers.
- Block out the sun at home during the day by closing curtains and blinds.
- Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day.
- If you must go out, wear a hat and sunscreen and take a bottle of water with you.
- Eat smaller meals more often and cold meals such as salads.
- Watch or listen to news reports for more information.



Plan ahead

- Keep up to date with weather forecasts – watch the news daily.
- Cancel non-essential outings and plan essential activities for the coolest part of the day.
- Store medicines safely at the recommended temperature.
- Check that your fan or air-conditioner works well. Have your air-conditioner serviced if necessary.
- Look at the things you can do to make your home cooler such as installing window coverings, shade cloths or external blinds on the sides of the house facing the sun.



Check in on others

- Look after those most at risk in the heat – your neighbour living alone, older people, young children, people with a medical condition and don't forget your pets.
- Offer to help family, friends and neighbours who are aged over 65 or have an illness by doing shopping or other errands so they can avoid the heat.
- If you observe symptoms of heat-related illness, seek medical help.

Source (www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

CARING FOR OURSELVES WHEN WE CARE FOR OTHERS.

We recognize that many of you have caring responsibility. Carers Victoria are publishing a series of “self-care for carers videos” on their website.

The topics include:

- The Inner critic (telling yourself you are not good enough, or questioning your capabilities)
- Self compassion (Being kind to yourself)
- Barriers to self-care (struggling to take time out for yourself, negative beliefs associated with taking a break)
- Communicating with Health Professionals (Feeling confused or frustrated after an appointment)
- Shame (feeling guilty, embarrassed for needing support)

These videos plus further useful information for carers can be found at www.carersvictoria.org.au

Or speak with your Case Manager.

LONELINESS.

Loneliness is that negative feeling that arises when our social needs are unmet by the number and quality of our current social relationships. Older people are especially vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation. You can become socially isolated for a number of reasons, such as getting older or weaker, no longer being the 'hub' of your family, the death of spouses or friends, or through disability or illness.

Feeling lonely can be a bigger health risk than smoking or obesity.

Loneliness can affect our physical health (increased blood pressure, cholesterol and risk of developing cardiovascular disease, plus reduced brain function and even earlier death) and our mental health.

Loneliness can increase depressive symptoms as well as stress levels, the ability to regulate stress. Fear of negative evaluation, anxiety and anger, while decreasing optimism and self-esteem.

Tips for reducing loneliness

Your case manager may be able to assist if the below interests you.

Invite friends for coffee/tea-often friends, family and neighbors will appreciate an invitation and may be feeling the same way.

Keep in touch by phone- having a chat over the phone can be the next best thing

Staying connected using computers- if family friends live a long distance away, this is a good way to stay in touch (especially grandchildren). You can share emails, photos, have video chats (eg Skype) and even reconnect with old friends via social media (eg Facebook).

Fill your week- where possible plan your week and give yourself something to look forward to, like visiting a library, cinema, coffee shop.

Join the University of the Third Age (U3A)-this is an international movement aiming to encourage, educate and stimulate retired people in their "third age".

Join a Men's Shed-these are groups of men meeting in an environment that is friendly and safe.

The **Community Visitors Scheme** is funded by the Australian Government to provide companionship for to assist in preventing loneliness. You would be matched with a volunteer that will visit you at home for friendship and companionship.

The aim is to build connections and reduce isolation through social activities that you both may enjoy. This could be as simple as chatting over a coffee, reading or listening to a book together, enjoying a TV show or participating in a hobby, game or other activity.

The visitors are all trained, supported and have a current police check. They can be from a similar cultural background and speak languages other than English.

They are matched individually to you, your background and interests.

If you are interested in any of the above speak to your Case Manager as we have lots of resources and contacts.



EATING WELL:

Nutrition is always important, even (and especially, as we get older). Good nutrition will help you maintain weight, muscle strength, bone strength and independence.

Poor nutrition can lead to increased risks of infections, falls, hospital admissions, poor wound healing, muscle weakness and bone fractures.

Sometimes as you get older, or live on your own, it can be difficult to maintain adequate nutrition. This may be because you “can't be bothered” cooking or shopping (lack of motivation), dental problems, loss (or decrease in) the sense of taste and smell or lack of appetite.

WE HAVE INCLUDED AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR TIPS AND IDEAS ON EATING WELL TO ASSIST IN MAINTAINING OR IMPROVING YOUR WELL-BEING.

YOUR FEEDBACK:

We value all types of feedback including complaints and ways to improve what we do.

If you wish to provide any feedback you can:

- Talk to your Case Manager.
- Email us on HomeCarePackages@nh.org.au ,
- Write to us at NH HCP, 1231 Plenty Rd, Bundoora.
- Call me on 9495 3216.

OUR RECENT CONSUMER SURVEY RESULTS:

Thankyou to everyone who completed and returned our annual Consumer survey. Your feedback is very important to us and we will compile the responses and provide you with the results in the next newsletter.

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURES:

Our offices will be closed on the following days:

- Wednesday 25th December
- Thursday 26th December
- Wednesday 1st January 2020

Our afterhours service will continue to operate during this

time and can be contacted on **1300 881 078**

(if it is an emergency please call 000).

THE ENTIRE NORTHERN HEALTH HOME CARE PACKAGES TEAM HOPE YOU HAVE A LOVELY CHRISTMAS/HOLIDAY SEASON AND LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU IN 2020.

