Aging Well Education Series Offers Information, Support, and Connection for Older Adults and Caregivers

This October, residents across the Interlake-Eastern region are invited to explore practical strategies for healthy aging through the Aging Well Education Series, a free online webinar program offered by the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA) Community Wellness Team.

Inspired by National Seniors Day, Seniors' and Elders' Month in Manitoba, and Active Aging Week, the series aims to connect older adults, caregivers, family members, and community members with important information, resources, and supports that promote health, independence, and quality of life.

Something for Everyone

Whether you are planning for the future, supporting a loved one, or looking for information for yourself, the Aging Well Education Series offers valuable insights into programs and services available throughout the region.

"Healthy aging is not just for seniors," say organizers Marilyn Sitar and Jan Keryluk, both with the Community Wellness Team. "The knowledge and resources shared throughout the series can benefit anyone who wants to better understand the supports available in our communities."

Participants can choose the sessions that interest them most or attend the entire series. Once registered, attendees receive a single Microsoft Teams link that provides access to all live presentations.

Best of all, the program is completely free.

Topics That Matter

The series was designed around common questions and challenges faced by older adults and their families, with a focus on practical information that participants can use right away.

Sessions will cover topics such as:

- Home care services and how to access them
- Funding opportunities for accessibility devices and home modifications
- Falls prevention strategies

- Brain health and caregiver supports
- Community programs that help seniors remain independent
- Nutrition and healthy eating
- Physical activity through Tai Chi and Chair Yoga
- Resources for caregivers and family members

Falls prevention, in particular, is a central theme throughout the series. Participants will learn how factors such as vision, hearing, balance, strength, and physical activity can affect fall risk and what steps they can take to stay safe, active, and confident.

Learning About Hidden Supports

One of the goals of the Aging Well Education Series is to increase awareness of programs that many people may not realize are available.

For example, while many residents are familiar with Home Care services, fewer know about Adult Day Programs, which provide opportunities for social connection, recreation, wellness activities, transportation, and nutritious meals. Local Services to Seniors programs can also offer supports such as transportation assistance, wellness checks, meal programs, and friendly visiting services.

Participants will also learn about the Safe and Healthy Home for Seniors Program, funded by the Province of Manitoba and coordinated through March of Dimes Canada. Eligible seniors may qualify for funding to help cover accessibility devices and home modifications that improve safety, mobility, and independence at home.

Supporting Caregivers

Caregivers play a critical role in helping older adults remain healthy and independent. Recognizing the challenges caregivers often face, several sessions will focus specifically on caregiver supports and resources.

Presentations by the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba and the Wellness Institute will provide information on brain health, caregiver well-being, and practical tools that can help caregivers manage stress, build confidence, and care for themselves while supporting others.

Staying Strong, Connected, and Independent

Beyond physical health, the series emphasizes the importance of social connection and community engagement. Research consistently shows that staying connected can reduce isolation, support mental well-being, enhance cognitive health, and help older adults maintain their independence.

Organizers hope participants will leave the series feeling informed, empowered, and better connected to the supports available in their communities.

"We want people to know where to turn when they need help," say the Community Wellness Facilitators. "Whether someone is looking for services today or simply planning ahead, understanding what's available can provide peace of mind and help people make informed decisions for themselves and their families."

Expert Presenters

The series features a wide range of knowledgeable presenters from the IERHA and partner organizations, including:

- Community Wellness Facilitators Marilyn Sitar, Jan Keryluk, and Caroline LeClair
- Ashton Ahamad from March of Dimes Canada
- Samantha Holland from the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba
- Tricia Tyerman, Director of Health Services, Home Care, Palliative Care and Wound Care
- Dana Trapp and Amanda Dillabough, Services to Seniors Coordinators
- Beverley Airey, Regional Senior Support Supervisor
- Evan Van Dale, Chronic Disease Kinesiologist
- Amy Yonda from the Wellness Institute
- Manitoba Fitness Council-certified instructors Karen Wood and Melanie Johannesson

Accessible and Easy to Join

Participants can attend using a smartphone, tablet, laptop, or telephone. Microsoft Teams accessibility features, including live captions and screen reader compatibility, help ensure that individuals with hearing or vision challenges can participate fully.

For those who are new to online meetings, Community Wellness Facilitators are available to provide technical assistance before classes begin. Community groups and seniors centres are also encouraged to host "watch parties" so participants can learn and connect together.

Register Today

There is no limit on the number of participants who can register. Attend only the classes that work with your schedule, plus get two links for on demand classes to watch anytime.

To register, email **wellness@ierha.ca** or call toll free **1-877-979-9355**.

Whether you're an older adult, a caregiver, a family member, or simply interested in learning more about healthy aging, the Aging Well Education Series offers practical information, expert guidance, and valuable resources to help you stay stronger, healthier, and connected for years to come.

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