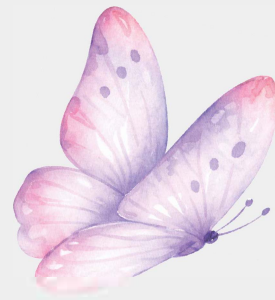


April

2026



MONTHLY PLANNER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Cup of Care Caregiver Group @ Lindale 12:00 PM	2 <i>3rd Stress Busting Class @ Brookdale Northshore 1PM</i>	3 Good Friday (Offices Closed)	4
5  <i>Easter Sunday</i>	6 Caregiver Education Group @ Elan 1:00 PM	7	8	9	10 <i>4th Stress Busting Class @ Brookdale Northshore 1PM</i>	11
12	13	14 Caregiver Group @ Brookdale 10 AM Time of Reflection W/ Dr. Praderio @ Lindale 12 PM	15	16	17 <i>5th Stress Busting Class @ Brookdale Northshore 1PM</i>	18
19	20 Caregiver Education Group @ Lindale 12:00 PM	21 Advance Directives Clinic @ Conviva Ayers 10:00 AM	22 Krafty Karegivers @ Lindale 12:00 PM	23	24 <i>6th Stress Busting Class @ Brookdale Northshore 1PM</i>	25
26	27	28 Grandparent Group @ CC Food Bank 10:00 AM	29	30		

Caregiving in
The Comfort of Home®

Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU... CARING FOR OTHERS”

Back Strain – Safe Lifting

Next to headaches, back problems are the *most common complaints* of healthcare professionals.

The back is made up of bones, muscles, and connective tissues that help support your body and allow you to move. As we age, these parts can become less flexible and weaker, which makes the lower back more likely to be injured. Back *strains* and *sprains* are common in caregivers and older adults, especially during everyday activities like bending, lifting, or walking.

A back *strain* happens when a muscle or tendon is stretched or torn. Tendons connect muscles to bones. Strains often occur from lifting something too heavy, bending the wrong way, or doing the same movement over and over.

A back *sprain* occurs when a ligament is stretched or torn. Ligaments connect bones and help keep joints stable. *Sprains* may happen after a fall, a sudden twist, or losing your balance.

You may be more likely to have a back *strain* or *sprain* if you:

- Have weaker back or stomach muscles
- Have arthritis or balance problems
- Are overweight
- Have tight leg muscles
- Have had previous back injuries

Common Symptoms

Symptoms of a back strain or sprain may include:

- Back pain that gets worse when you move
- Muscle tightness or spasms
- Stiffness or difficulty standing up straight
- Trouble walking, bending, or getting out of a chair
- A sudden sharp pain



Mild back strains and sprains can be diagnosed through a physical exam. The terms “strain” and “sprain” are often used interchangeably. X-rays or other tests may be ordered if the pain is severe, lasts a long time, or is accompanied by weakness or numbness.

Tips to Prevent Back Injuries

You can help protect your back by:

- **Staying active** with gentle exercises like walking or stretching
- **Using proper posture** when sitting and standing
- **Bending at your knees**, not your waist, when lifting
- **Keeping pathways clear** to prevent falls
- **Wearing supportive, well-fitting shoes**
- **Avoiding smoking**, which can slow healing

Article continues
on page 2

Proper Lifting

As a caregiver, you may have to help the person in your care move to a chair or be asked to pick up a heavy object. It is very easy to be injured doing this and left unable to perform your caregiving duties. A little attention to the safest way to move your body—and the person in your care—will keep you from unnecessary injury. Most muscle injuries to both the caregiver and care receiver are preventable if you follow some simple rules.

The proper use of our bodies is called **body mechanics**. It involves standing and moving in ways that prevent injury, avoid fatigue, and make the best use of strength. When you learn how to move, control and balance your own body, it's easier to control and help or move another person. These tips will help you use proper body mechanics and be safe.

1. Only lift as much as you can comfortably handle.
2. Always let the person you are helping know what you are going to do.
3. To create a base of support, stand with your feet 8"–12" apart with one foot a half step ahead of the other.
4. Bend your knees slightly.
5. Keep your spine in a neutral (normal arched curve, not stiff) position while lifting.
6. USE YOUR LEGS instead of your back to do most of the work—leg muscles are stronger than back muscles.
7. If you can adjust the bed, keep the top at about waist level. If it is low or you are tall, put one foot on a footstool to relieve pressure on your lower back.

Helpful Caregiver Advice for Moving a Person

Get training from a physical therapist for a specific move or a transfer.

1. ✓ **Plan the lift**—check the area for slippery spots or possible tripping hazards. Wearing non-skid heels and soles will be safer for both you and the person you are assisting.
 - ✓ **Tell the person** what you are going to do.
 - ✓ Before starting the move, **count with the person**, "1-2-3."
2. ✓ To feel in control, **get close to the person** you are moving or lifting.
 - ✓ Keep your **back in a neutral** position, knees bent, weight distributed between both feet. Tighten your stomach and back muscles to maintain a correct support position.
 - ✓ **Use your arms** to support the person.
 - ✓ Again, let your **legs do the lifting**.
3. ✓ **Turn, rather than twist**, your body.
 - ✓ **Breathe deeply** and **keep shoulders relaxed**.
 - ✓ When needing to give a lot of assistance with transfers, tie a strong belt or a **transfer belt around the person's waist** and hold it as you complete the transfer. In some situations, you may need a lift device, such as a Hoyer lift, to help you.
 - ✓ **Avoid twisting at the waist** when moving the person from bed to wheelchair. Instead of twisting, turn your whole body, starting with your feet.



Taking Care of Yourself— Vitamin C from Citrus Fruits

Citrus fruits like oranges and grapefruits are at their sweetest and juiciest in winter, when conditions are ideal for ripening. They're also packed with nutrients that support immunity and healing. Citrus fruits are especially rich in vitamin C. Vitamin C helps form immune cells, supports wound healing and tissue growth, and improves absorption of plant-based iron. While citrus won't cure a cold, regular intake may slightly shorten its duration. Eating whole fruits also provides fiber, hydration, and antioxidants that juice and supplements lack.

Be wary of medication interactions. Grapefruit and grapefruit juice can interfere with some medicines by blocking an enzyme that helps metabolize certain drugs. If you take prescription medications, ask your doctor before consuming grapefruit. Source: New York Times; How Healthy Is Citrus Fruit

Inspiration

If you see someone without
a smile, give 'em yours!
—Dolly Parton

Live Life Laughing!

Can't put a price on perfection!



Memory Care - Choose Safe Footwear

The soles of our feet have nerves that help us judge the position of our bodies. To work correctly, our feet need to be in touch with the ground and our shoes need to stay securely with the foot as we take each step, otherwise, falls may occur. Have the person with dementia wear sensible, low-heeled shoes that fit well and support the feet. There should be no marks on their feet when they take off their shoes and socks.



*Caregiving in
The Comfort of Home®*

Our Purpose

To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

Ordering Info

From the publishers of

*Caregiving in
The Comfort of Home®*

Caregiver Series

available from...

CareTrust Publications LLC

PO Box 10283, Portland, OR 97296

newsletters@comfortofhome.com

or www.comfortofhome.com

Comments and suggestions welcome.

©2026 CareTrust Publications LLC.

All rights reserved. Reproduction of any component of this publication is forbidden without a license from the publisher.

Some content in this publication is excerpted from *The Comfort of Home: Caregivers Series*. It is for informational use and not health advice. It is not meant to replace medical care but to supplement it. The publisher assumes no liability with respect to the accuracy, completeness or application of information presented or the reader's misunderstanding of the text.

***SAFETY TIPS* – Preventing Back & Neck Pain**

If you are overweight, lose weight. Excess weight puts extra stress on back and stomach muscles and on joints. One pound of extra weight puts four extra pounds of stress on knee joints. To help prevent injuries to yourself, get plenty of rest and maintain:

- Good nutrition.
- Physical fitness.
- Good body mechanics.
- A stress management program such as daily meditation.
- A stretching routine before you lift to get blood flowing to the muscles as well as to the discs between the vertebrae in the spine.
- A back strengthening exercise program.
- **Do not smoke.** Both smoke and nicotine cause your spine to age faster than normal.

Caregiver Assistance News

“ C A R I N G F O R Y O U ... C A R I N G F O R O T H E R S ”

Q U I C K Q U I Z

Moving or repositioning someone multiple times per day can add up quickly, especially when done without proper support or posture. Also, many caregivers move from one task to another without taking breaks, limiting their body’s ability to rest and heal. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. Back strains and sprains are common in caregivers and older adults, especially during everyday activities like bending, lifting, or walking.
T F
2. Sprains may happen after a fall, a sudden twist, or losing your balance.
T F
3. The terms “strain” and “sprain” are often used interchangeably.
T F
4. To create a base of support, stand with your feet 30 inches apart with one foot a half step ahead of the other.
T F
5. Body mechanics involves standing and moving in ways that prevent injury, avoid fatigue, and make the best use of strength.
T F
6. The back is made up of bones, muscles, and connective tissues that help support your body and allow you to move.
T F
7. To work correctly, our feet need to be in touch with the ground and our shoes need to stay securely with the foot as we take each step, otherwise, falls may occur.
T F
8. Vitamin C helps form immune cells, supports wound healing and tissue growth, and improves absorption of plant-based iron.
T F
9. One pound of extra weight puts four extra pounds of stress on knee joints.
T F
10. A stretching routine gets blood flowing to the muscles as well as to the discs between the vertebrae in the spine.
T F

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

April 2026 Event List

Virtual & In-Person Caregiver Education

When: WED. April 1st, 2026

"CUP OF CARE" Memory Cafe

Where: Lindale Senior Center @ 3135 Swantner St. Corpus

Type: In Person for Caregivers and Loved Ones

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

RSVP: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343 or Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

When: MON. April 6th, 2026

"Caregiver Education Group"

Where: Elan Corpus Christi @ 5144 Lipes Blvd. Corpus

Type: In Person

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

RSVP: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343 or Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

When: TUES April 14th, 2026

"Caregiver Education Group"

Where: Brookdale Corpus Christi @ 6410 Meadowvista Dr. Corpus

Type: In Person

Time: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

RSVP: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343 or Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

When: TUES. April 14th, 2026

"A Time of Reflection" with Dr. Nestor Praderio

Where: Lindale Senior Center @ 3135 Swantner St. Corpus Type: In Person

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

RSVP: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343 or Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

When: MON. April 20th, 2026

"Caregiver Education Group"

Where: Lindale Senior Center @ 3135 Swantner St. Corpus Type: In Person

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

RSVP: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343 or Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

When: WED. April 22nd, 2026

"Kraffy Karegivers"

Where: Lindale Senior Center @ 3135 Swantner St. Corpus Type: In Person for Caregivers and Loved Ones

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

RSVP: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343 or Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

Dr. Nestor H. Praderio, M.D.

Face to Face Dementia

Educational Program for the Caregiver

WHEN: WED. April 22nd, 2026

WHERE: Virtual

TYPE: Caregiver Support Program

TIME: 5:00 PM

RSVP: Texas Face to Face (361) 359-2199

**Grandparents & Other
Relatives Raising Children**

MCH Family-Empowerment Group

When: TUES. April 28th, 2026

Where: Coastal Bend Food Bank @ 5442 Bear Ln. CC

Type: In Person

Time: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

RSVP: 361-334-2255 or 361-232-5150

Alzheimer's Association

Where: Visit alz.org/CRF to register or call: 800-272-3900

TYPE: VIRTUAL/PHONE CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

For Additional Information contact:

Christina Edwardson

Family Caregiver Specialist

Office: (361) 883-3935 Ext: 51

Facilitations are provided by:

The National Family Caregiver Support Program



**COASTAL BEND
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**



Date	Time	Topic	A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS
-------------	-------------	--------------	---------------------------------------

All sessions are available on your choice of Zoom or telephone only!

Tuesday April 7	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	Supporting Independence & Dignity: Managing Self-Care in Dementia with Hollie Lowe, MA, LPC, NCC <i>Dementia is a progressive brain disease that can change a person's ability to manage everyday self-care tasks such as dressing, eating, bathing, and toileting. These changes are not a choice or a lack of effort. They are the result of changes in the brain. Join us to better understand the "why" behind these shifts and learn practical, compassionate strategies that help a person living with dementia maintain their highest level of independence and dignity.</i>	
Thursday April 9	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Truth, Lies, and Compassion: Ethical Communication in Dementia Care with Elliot M Sklar, PhD and Lucy Barylak, LMSW <i>This presentation explores the ethical and practical challenges of truth-telling in dementia caregiving. It examines when honesty supports well-being—and when compassionate redirection or "therapeutic fibbing" may be more appropriate. Through real-world scenarios, we'll consider how caregivers can navigate these complex moments with empathy and respect.</i>	
Tuesday April 14	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	Comunicarse de manera efectiva on Maxine P. Vieyra, Alzheimer's Association <i>A través de este taller, aprenderemos cómo la demencia afecta la comunicación. Describir cómo un enfoque centrado en la persona puede ayudar a la comunicación. Compartiremos estrategias que le ayuden a comunicarse con una persona que vive con demencia.</i>	
Tuesday April 21	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	Managing Family Conflict About End-of-Life Decisions with Barry J. Jacobs, PsyD <i>Only one-third of Americans have filled out an advance directive to let family members know what care they do or don't want in the event they are unable to speak for themselves. That leaves many adult children to guess about what an aging parent with severe dementia would want--opening the door for intense debate and even fighting among those siblings. In this highly interactive workshop with psychologist Barry J. Jacobs, Psy.D., co-author of The AARP Caregiver Answer Book, we will talk about the importance of advance directives but also how adult children can draw upon their parent's beliefs and values to make the right decision for them. Case illustrations will be used throughout.</i>	
Wednesday April 22	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	La presentación explica el síndrome vespertino with Isabel Maria, Agencia de Ancianidad del Norte Centro Texas <i>La presentación explica el síndrome vespertino, una confusión y agitación que ocurre al final del día en personas con demencia. Se analizan causas como el estrés, necesidades no satisfechas y el entorno, y se ofrecen estrategias para mejorar el cuidado. También incluye recursos locales para apoyar a cuidadores. **Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection**</i>	
Tuesday April 28	2:00 pm Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 pm Mountain 11:00 am Pacific	Caregiving Without a Roadmap: Insights for Cancer Caregivers with Melina Pineyro, MPH <i>Behind every cancer diagnosis is a caregiver – a parent, partner, sibling, or friend – quietly navigating medical appointments, emotional strain, and financial pressures. This webinar explores the lived experiences captured in Caregiving Without a Roadmap: Insights from Cancer Caregivers, a national listening-session report developed by the National Alliance for Caregiving in partnership with CancerCare. Through real caregiver stories, we'll examine the gaps in support, the emotional toll of caregiving, and the practical realities that often go unseen.</i>	

MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAMS & EXTRA HELP GUIDELINES

~2026 Income and Resource Limits ~

MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAMS (MSP)

Program	Single Income Monthly	Couple Income Monthly	Single Resource	Couple Resource
QMB	\$1,350	\$1,824	\$9,950	\$14,910
SLMB	\$1,616	\$2,184	\$9,950	\$14,910
QI-1	\$1,816	\$2,455	\$9,950	\$14,910

- **QMB:** Payment of all Medicare premiums, deductibles, copays, and coinsurance the Medicare enrollee would otherwise have to pay
- **SLMB:** Payment of the Medicare Part B premium
- **QI-1:** Payment of the Medicare Part B premium

EXTRA HELP (LIS) ~ HELPS PAY SOME OF MEDICARE PART D EXPENSES

Full LIS Single Monthly Income Limit	Full LIS Couple Monthly Income Limit	Single Resources	Couple Resources
\$1,995.00	\$2,705.00	\$18,090	\$36,100

All limits are **ESTIMATED** amounts based on 2026 FPL. Monthly income at or below FPL + \$20 monthly income disregard; income is rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

If you or someone you know have any questions regarding eligibility to the above programs, call to schedule an appointment with a **BENEFITS COUNSELOR who can evaluate your Medicare and/or possible Medicaid entitlements. "OR" If you would like to schedule a presentation regarding the above programs, please call the **AREA AGENCY ON AGING/COASTAL BEND AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER:****

2910 Leopard St. (361) 883-3935
Corpus Christi, TX 78408



COASTAL BEND
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

*The "**BENEFITS COUNSELING PROGRAM**" is a service through the Area Agency on Aging / Coastal Bend Aging & Disability Resource Center (AAA/CBADRC), which are programs of the Coastal Bend Council of Governments (CBCOG)*

The Area Agency on Aging is funded in part by Texas Health and Human Services

Stay Connected. Stay Independent.



The Area Agency on Aging has partnered with the National Council On Aging to provide a FREE digital technology education program to help promote aging well.

Participants will:

- ✓ Learn about digital technology and how to use a smart phone or device
- ✓ Chose your own learning plan
- ✓ Learn at your own pace
- ✓ Learn how to stay connected with friends and family
- ✓ Have access to in person and online support
- ✓ Earn digital credentials
- ✓ Learn how to create an email or set up your online accounts

Registration is required! Call for more information 📞 361
883-3935



Body Mechanics

POSITIONING, MOVING, AND TRANSFERS



Body Mechanics for the Caregiver

Body mechanics involves standing and moving one's body so as to prevent injury, avoid fatigue, and make the best use of strength.

When you learn how to control and balance your own body, you can safely control and move another person. Back injuries to nursing home aides are common, so when doing any lifting be sure to use proper body mechanics.

General Rules

- Never lift more than you can comfortably handle.
- Create a base of support by standing with your feet 8–12" (shoulder width) apart with one foot a half-step ahead of the other.



- DO NOT let your back do the heavy work—USE YOUR LEGS. (The back muscles are not your strongest muscles.)
- If the bed is low, put one foot on a footstool. This relieves pressure on your lower back.
- Consider using a support belt for your back.

Helpful Caregiver Advice for Moving a Person

These pointers are for the caregiver only.

1. • Tell the person what you are going to do.
• Before starting a move, count with the person, "1-2-3."



2. • To feel in control, get close to the person you are lifting.
• While lifting, keep your back in a neutral position (arched normally, not stiff), knees bent, weight balanced on both feet. Tighten your stomach and back muscles to maintain a correct support position.
• Use your arms to support the person.
• Again, *let your legs do the lifting.*



3. • Pivot (turn on one foot) instead of twisting your body.
• Breathe deeply.
• Keep your shoulders relaxed.
• When a lot of assistance is needed with transfers, tie a strong belt or a transfer belt around the person's waist and hold it as you complete the transfer.



Prevention of Back and Neck Injuries

To prevent injuries to yourself, get plenty of rest and maintain:

- Good nutrition
- Physical fitness
- Good body mechanics
- A program for managing stress

Common Treatments for Caregiver Back Pain

If you **do** experience back pain:

- Apply a cold ice pack to the injured area for 10 minutes every hour (you can use a bag of frozen vegetables).
- Get short rest periods in a comfortable position.
- Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart and hands on hips, bend backwards. Do 3–5 repetitions several times a day.
- Take short, frequent walks on a level surface.
- Avoid sitting for long periods because sitting is one of the worst healing positions.

As the caregiver, you should seek training from a physical therapist to provide this type of care so as to reduce the risk of injury to yourself or the person in your care. The therapist will correct any mistakes you make and can take into account special problems. To determine the best procedure for you to use, the therapist will consider the physical condition of the person you care for and the furniture and room arrangements in the home.

Moving a Person

When you have to move someone—either in bed or out of bed—remember these tips:

- Plan the move and know what you can and cannot do.
- Let the person do as much work as he is capable of.
- Avoid letting the person put his arms around your neck or grab you.
- Use a transfer belt to balance and support the person.
- Place transfer surfaces (wheelchair and bed) close together.
- Check wheelchair position, **brakes locked**, armrests and footrests swung out of the way.
- Let the person look to the place where he is being transferred.
- If the person is able, place his hands on the bed or chair so he can assist in the movement. If the person has had a stroke or is afraid, have him clasp his hands close to his chest.
- Ask the person to *push* rather than *pull* on the bed rails, the chair, or you.
- Work at the person's level and speed and check for pain.
- Avoid sudden jerking motions.
- Never pull on the person's arms or shoulders.
- Correctly position the person. (This helps the body regain lost function and helps prevent additional function loss.)
- Have the person wear shoes with good treads or sturdy slippers.

NOTE

To encourage independence, let the person assist as he is able. It's okay for the person to stand up partly and sit back down. ■

This article was excerpted from *The Comfort of Home: A Complete Guide for Caregivers*; CareTrust Publications. *The Comfort of Home* is available everywhere books are sold or visit comfortofhome.com.

Editor's Note: *This article is intended for educational purposes only. For specific advice, contact the appropriate healthcare professional.*



Transferring a Person

By Family Caregiver Alliance

Tips to Help Caregivers Move or Transfer a Loved One with Mobility Limitations

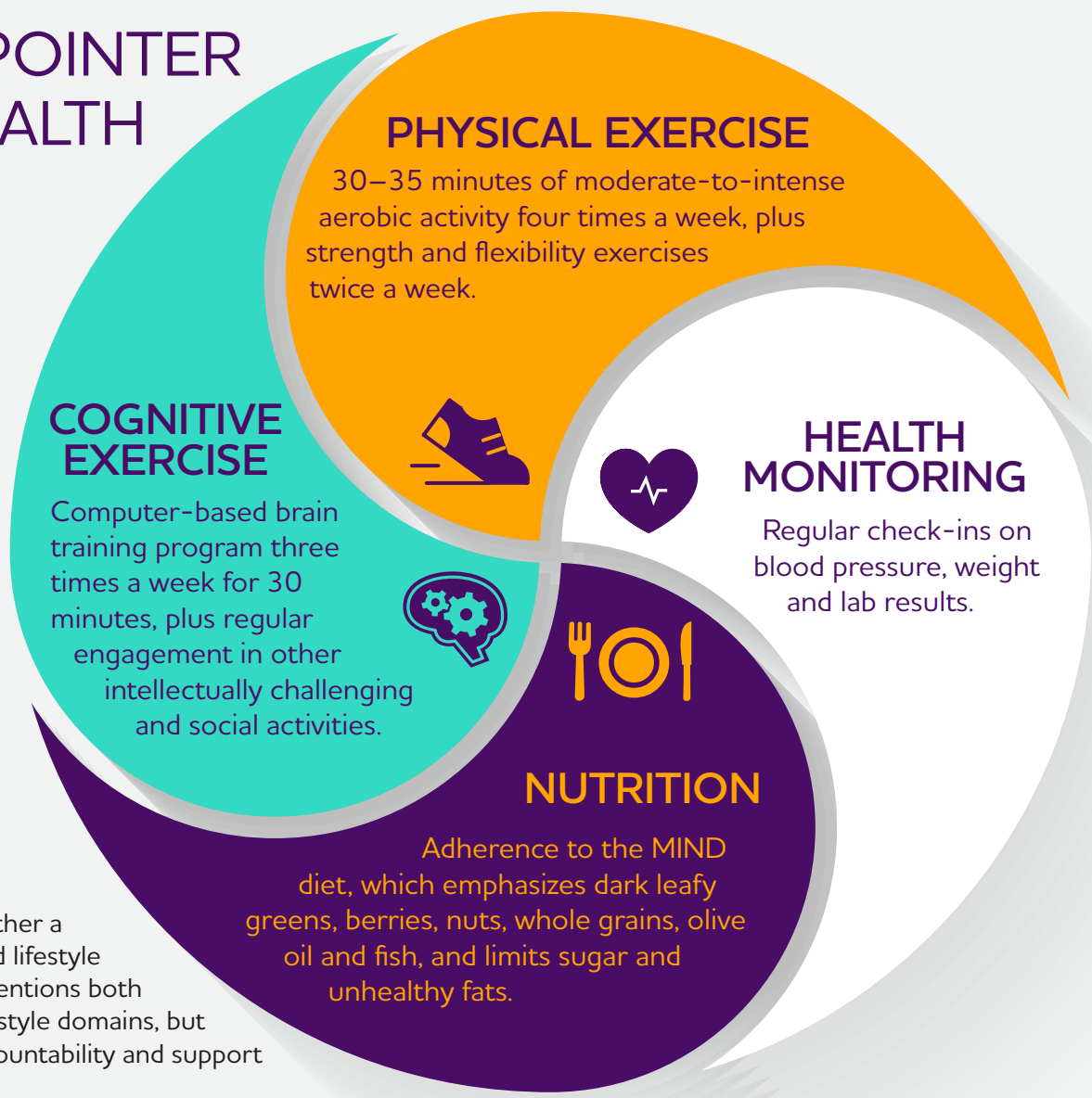
- Learn proper body mechanics. Ask for a physical therapy referral from your physician to teach you how to use your body so you don't get hurt.
- Save your back. If you feel a strain, get help; don't do it alone. This is for your safety and for the safety of the person you are trying to move. If you hurt your back, you aren't going to be able to care for someone else.
- Talk to the person and explain what you are doing and going to do. Talk through the process as you continue with the transfer, ask him/her to help you when able.
- Make sure the person's legs are on the floor before trying to stand. Use a high, firm chair with arms whenever possible. It is easier to move someone from there than from a sofa or overstuffed chair.
- If someone is in bed, first roll him/her to the side of the bed and help him/her to a sitting position with feet flat on the floor.
- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart with one foot slightly in front of the other. This provides you with your base to support you and your loved one.
- Bend at the knees, not the waist. Your knees will support you and save your back. Flex your knees and hips when lowering someone into a wheelchair, chair, or bed, using the armrests for support when available.
- Place your arms around the person's waist. Do not have the person put his/her arms around your neck, as that can pull you forward and cause you to lose your balance. If the person feels a need to hold on to something, have him/her put arms around your waist or on your shoulders.
- Have your loved one lean forward before trying to stand. Use a rocking motion to create momentum, if possible. Let him/her know when you are going to start, e.g. you're going to stand on the count of three. Bring the person as close to your body as you can.
- To swivel someone, use your legs; these muscles are strong and can help you pivot. Do not twist at the waist. Take small steps, keep your back and neck in a straight line.

U.S. POINTER Results Show That Healthy Behaviors Have a Powerful Impact on Brain Health

This two-year clinical trial found that simultaneously targeting risk factors for cognitive decline – including regular physical activity, a brain-healthy diet, cognitive and social engagement and health monitoring – can improve brain function in older adults. While the cognitive health of all participants in U.S. POINTER improved, the group* that followed a more structured program improved even more, helping to protect thinking and memory from the normal decline that often comes with aging over the two-year period of the study. These results provide powerful, actionable guidance for promoting brain health in aging populations.

Learn more at alz.org/uspointer

THE U.S. POINTER BRAIN HEALTH RECIPE*



*Participants followed either a self-guided or structured lifestyle program. The two interventions both focused on the same lifestyle domains, but differed in structure, accountability and support provided.



FOR ALL CASES

Use the TALK tactics

- T**ake it slow.
- A**sk simple questions.
- L**imit reality checks.
- K**eep eye contact.

A person living with dementia may be easily agitated or afraid. Tell the person you are there to help.

Address firearm safety

When speaking with a caregiver, ask if there are weapons in the home where the person with dementia lives. If so, advise the caregiver to remove firearms altogether. If that is not possible:

- » Store the weapon in a gun safe or locked container.
- » Store the key in a safe location.
- » Store the gun unloaded, with a safety lock.

WANDERING CALLS

Recognize wandering by looking for these clues a person may need help:

- » Blank or confused facial expression.
- » Inappropriate attire.
- » Unbalanced or shuffling gait.
- » Unaware of unsafe actions or situations.
- » Age (Dementia is more likely with advanced age, but can also affect those under age 65).

DRIVING CALLS

Help ensure a positive resolution to a driving incident.

- » Issue a citation to create a paper trail.
- » Do not let the person drive home.
- » Follow local agency protocols for reporting the incident to the DMV.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT CALLS

Situations of abuse and neglect can be complicated and require careful response.

- » If the person is injured, transport to a hospital immediately.
- » If the person is not injured but in immediate danger, move them to a safe location (preferably a hospital if in compliance with agency policy).
- » If the person is not in immediate danger, offer referral to available resources.
- » Always involve Adult Protective Services.

SHOPLIFTING CALLS

If a person living with dementia unknowingly walks out of a store without paying:

- » Attempt to resolve the issue with the store manager instead of arresting the person and filing criminal charges.
- » Inform the person's caregiver about the incident and recommend the person be accompanied on future shopping trips.

DISASTER RESPONSE

To move a person from danger and help keep them calm in evacuation situations:

- » Avoid physical force or restraint.
- » Be creative to get the person to act as needed.
- » Provide one-on-one instruction.
- » Deliver step-by-step directions using simple language.
- » Try to relocate the person to a quiet place.
- » Use distraction by giving the person a simple task.
- » Ensure the person is watched, at all times, to prevent wandering.

RESOURCES

These tips are part of the Alzheimer's Association® "Approaching Alzheimer's: First Responder Training" online education program. Learn more at alz.org/firstresponders. Other resources for you and your community members include:

- » Association 24/7 Helpline: **800.272.3900**
- » Website: alz.org®
- » Safety Center: alz.org/safety



Becoming a dementia-friendly business means empowering people living with dementia to shop comfortably, remain as independent as possible in their community and continue to engage in activities they enjoy.

Why do dementia-friendly shopping experiences matter?

As businesses, creating dementia-friendly services is central to maintaining continuity in the quality of life for people living with dementia. Additional benefits include:

- **Enhanced customer service:** Dementia-friendly experiences attract new customers and strengthen your relationship to the community you serve.
- **Inclusivity for all:** Extra services and more relaxed and supportive shopping environments provide an inclusive experience for not only customers affected by dementia, but other people with cognitive differences.
- **Increased competitiveness:** Dementia-friendly features give your business an edge as customers feel more comfortable and welcomed to take their time while shopping.
- **Improves brand reputation:** Community members will recognize that your business ensures customers are well looked after and receive the support they need.

- **Demonstrates your commitment** to work towards global dementia-friendly and accessibility standards.

Everyone in your business has a role to play in contributing to a dementia-friendly environment!

Dementia-friendly staff training and communication:

Ensuring your employees are trained to recognize and assist customers affected by dementia is vital. Here are key things to consider:

- **Learn more about dementia:** Provide training to your staff so they are aware of the signs and symptoms of dementia, can better understand what it might be like to live with dementia and can identify when a customer might be living with dementia and how they can offer support. To learn more about the next steps you can take in becoming dementia friendly, visit alzheimer.ca/dfc.

- **Provide personalized service:** Get to know regular customers, including their likes and dislikes, to offer more tailored assistance.
- **Encourage interaction:** Build a staffing model that allows employees to offer more time and attention to customers who need it.
- **Be welcoming:** A smile and a warm greeting can make a significant difference. If a customer seems lost, offer help with a simple question, like, “Can I help you find something?”
- **Clear communication:** When assisting customers, ask one question or provide suggestions one at a time. Avoid overwhelming them with multiple questions or requests.
- **Assistance with checkout:** If a customer is having difficulty at the self-checkout or using the point of sale (POS) machine, offer support as needed.

Tip: Speak slowly, make eye contact and do not rush.



Did you know?

The physical environment and design of store displays, waiting areas, customer service areas and signage can all play an important role in improving the shopping experience for a person living with dementia and their care partners.

How to create a dementia-friendly physical environment:

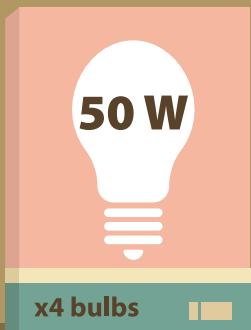
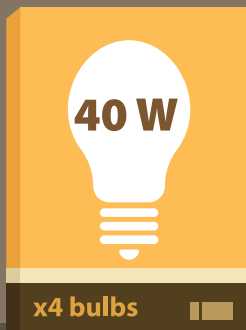
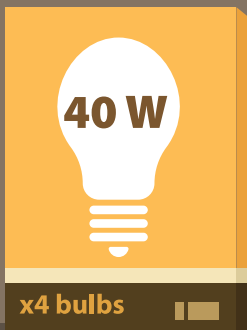
- **Accessible spaces:** Provide ramps, handrails and accessible elevators. Ensure the parking lot has accessible spots and a designated drop-off/pick-up area near the entrances and exits.

Consider having staff assistance available in these areas if possible.

- **Seating and rest areas:** Place comfortable seating throughout the store, especially near high-traffic areas, to give customers a place to rest. Comfortable seating should include chairs that are not too low to the ground and have armrests to assist those who need support getting up.
- **Quiet areas:** Consider providing a quiet space for customers who may be overwhelmed by the noise of a busy shopping environment.



Improve the readability of signage by using simple fonts (e.g., **Arial** or **Calibri**), bold text and capitalizing the first letter of each word. Avoid highly stylized text and symbols. Ensure signs have a matte surface and there is good contrast between the background and text.



Sale \$5.99

Sale \$5.99

- **Reduce noise:** Ensure background music is at an appropriate volume level. Turn music off or turn down the volume during “quiet shopping hours” for a peaceful shopping experience.
- **Simple signage:** Use clear, easy-to-read signs with large text and universally recognized symbols. Place signage at eye level against plain backgrounds and have signs or arrows that guide customers around the store for increased wayfinding.
- **Lighting:** Ensure natural lighting to avoid confusion caused by shadows and glare. Bright or harsh lighting should be avoided.
- **Contrasting colours:** Use contrasting colours for floors, walls and doorways to help customers living with dementia identify key areas. This includes using bright strips (e.g., yellow or red) on stairs and other changes in elevation.
- **Clear aisles and displays:** Keep aisles clear of clutter and ensure products are displayed in an organized way.
- **Simplify décor:** Simplify décor and furnishings to reduce visual stimulation where possible. Limit placing mirrors in public areas as a décor and use for functionality only (e.g., in washrooms or fitting rooms).
- **Implement easy to use and supportive carts:** If your store provides shopping carts, ensure they are well-maintained,

light, easy to maneuver and placed in an accessible area of the store. Consider offering wheelchairs with shopping baskets on the front, this will allow care partners to offer the person living with dementia a seat and involve them in the shopping.

- **Accessible washrooms:** Provide gender-neutral and family washrooms and fitting rooms so care partners and family members can provide assistance if needed.

To learn more, please review the tip sheet for dementia-friendly spaces at alzheimer.ca/dfc/resources.

Tip: Place commonly used items at eye level so they are easier to find. Ensure price tags and labels are large, clear and legible.

Dementia-friendly relaxed shopping hours

Consider setting up dementia-friendly relaxed shopping hours or slow lanes to enhance customer experience.

- **Choose the right time:** Offer relaxed hours early in the day, as people living with dementia may experience fatigue or confusion later.
- **Welcome customers:** Ensure staff are available at the entrance or in a drop-off area to greet customers.

- **Encourage a relaxed shopping experience:** Support staff members to keep a calm environment, answer questions if they come up and allow customers the time they need to complete transactions.
- **Signage and awareness:** Ensure other customers know about the relaxed shopping hours (such as through signage and awareness campaigns). Slow lanes should be clearly marked and dedicated to customers needing extra assistance.
- **Adjust the environment:** Adjust lighting and lower the music volume to reduce sensory overload.
- **Reduce or limit distractions:** During relaxed shopping hours, avoid scheduling business activities such as receiving shipments or stocking shelves to limit noise and distraction.
- **Support staff:** Pair new staff with experienced employees who are trained in dementia-friendly practices.
- **Rest areas:** Place additional seating areas around the store so customers can take breaks as needed.
- **Aisle photos:** Consider adding photos or signs at the end of aisles to help customers locate items.
- **Extra assistance:** Offer help with finding, bagging or carrying purchases to cars or taxis.

For more information, or to learn more about dementia and dementia-friendly communities, reach out to your local [Alzheimer Society](#) or visit the [Dementia-Friendly Canada website](#).



Financial contribution from



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.