Social Connections

How we spend our time and who we spend our time with plays an important role in our health. Time spent with loved ones and friends, on hobbies, or participating in your community can help your physical and emotional health.

Being part of a healthy social network is important for your health.

- Several factors can affect feeling socially connected, such as:
  - Living alone
  - Having more than one health condition
  - Fear of falling
  - Limited contact with family and friends
  - Limited access to transportation or affordable transportation
  - A fixed income
  - Not feeling comfortable out in your neighbourhood
  - Life changes (e.g. retirement, death of a spouse, change in health)
  - Not being aware of community services and programs
  - Challenges using new technology for communicating (e.g. smartphones, tablets)

Some people can be more at risk for social isolation due to specific challenges (e.g. physical or mental health) or life circumstances (e.g. caregivers, newcomers to Canada, Aboriginal people, LGBTIQA community members).

- Staying socially connected can lower your risk for:
  - Falls or injuries
  - Hospital admission
  - Elder or financial abuse
  - Harmful alcohol use or smoking
  - Mental health issues

- Staying socially connected results in:
  - Increasing positive emotions
  - Reducing negative emotions, such as feelings of isolation, loneliness, depression and anxiety

- Stay connected by:
  - Finding out what is available in your community. Call 211 to learn about local community and social services.
  - Visiting a local community centre, seniors centre, faith-based group, community garden, or library for opportunities to be with others.

Talk to your health care provider about what you can do to stay healthy and connected.

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If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.