

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Alberta organizations collaborate to promote living well at any age

In recognition of 2024 Alberta Seniors' Week—celebrated this year from June 3 to 9—three provincial organizations are teaming up to promote living well at any age. Alberta Blue Cross®, Healthy Aging Alberta (powered by United Way of Calgary and area) and Injury Prevention Centre—which together serve millions of older Albertans—are providing practical tips to help Albertans live their best lives as they get older.

“Maintaining a good quality of life and wellbeing at any age means keeping our minds and bodies active, and for older adults this takes on even more importance,” says Brian Geislinger, senior vice-president of Corporate Relations and Community Engagement with Alberta Blue Cross.

“Promoting actions for living well to seniors has a multitude of benefits—increased independence and longevity, enhanced feelings of wellbeing and decreased illness and injuries, such as falls. Being active, building strength and balance is crucial,” says Kathy Belton, director at Injury Prevention Centre, School of Public Health, University of Alberta.

Here are a few things to keep in mind to help you live your best life at any age:

- **Mind your mental health.** It's key to your wellbeing. Pay attention to how you feel, think, act and interact with those around you. Build positive support networks—which can include family and friends, neighbours, co-workers, faith communities, clubs or support groups. Connect with others in your community who share similar interests or values. Build resiliency by letting go of things you cannot change and recognizing the helpful support in your life. Recognize your emotions, express your emotions respectfully and learn to accept all of your emotions. Build healthy self-esteem by following your goals and interests without comparing yourself to others.
- **Stay socially connected.** Regular interaction with family, friends and the community play a crucial role in preventing social isolation. Engaging in group activities, using technology to keep in touch and tapping into local and community services and opportunities help strengthen these essential social bonds. These connections are vital for maintaining our mental health and enhancing our overall quality of life. Studies have found that strong social ties can lead to a longer, healthier life, reducing risks associated with loneliness and isolation, such as depression and high blood pressure.

- **Stay active.** Stiff joints and muscles are a common sign of aging, but don't let that deter you from staying active. Being active daily is critical to staying healthy and being able to continue to participate in many activities you enjoy, such as gardening, going for daily walks or playing with your grandchildren. In addition to staying active, consider daily exercises to build strength and improve your balance. Be sure to think about your body alignment, posture and engaging your core as you exercise.
- **Eat well.** A healthy diet is an important part of aging to help maintain energy levels, as well as to help manage conditions such as diabetes, heart disease or high cholesterol. Consult with your physician about your diet. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. Eat high-protein foods like meat, eggs and nuts. Eat foods that are high in fibre. Drink plenty of fluids, especially water. You can also explore options for meal delivery services if you need assistance with meals.
- **Prevent falls.** Falls are a leading cause of injuries for older adults. Take steps now to prevent falls in your everyday activities. Create a trip-free home by removing hazards, such as throw rugs, keep floors free of clutter, install safety grab bars in your bathroom, use handrails on stairs, and keep all areas of your home well-lit. Wear practical shoes (not open-toed) with a non-slip tread. Be aware that some medications may cause dizziness or drowsiness that can affect your balance. And be cautious when walking on uneven surfaces.
- **Make the most of your health benefits.** Albertans ages 65 and over are eligible for the Coverage For Seniors program sponsored by the Government of Alberta. This program is administered by Alberta Blue Cross and provides affordable access to a range of benefits including prescriptions. In addition, some seniors may have access to additional coverage through retiree benefit plans or may choose to top up their coverage with an individual retiree plan. These benefits can help you to maintain your health.
- **Look after your eye health.** As we age, there are many changes that occur in our eyes that affect our vision. Our eyes need more time to adjust to light, we lose depth perception, and our eyes become more sensitive to glare. Visit your local optometrist for an annual eye exam to support your vision health and provide early detection of eye diseases. The Government of Alberta covers one complete eye exam per benefit year for Albertans 65 years and older.
- **Consider your oral health.** Oral health is a key indicator of overall health, and is linked to many other conditions, such as heart disease. Continue to brush and floss daily. Regular dental checkups can help you maintain your oral health as you get older—and dentures can also help by restoring your ability to bite and chew food as well as helping you speak more clearly.

- **Check your hearing.** If you've suffered gradual hearing loss as many older adults do, you may not even realize how much you are missing. Having your hearing checked and getting hearing aids if you need them can help you to hear everyday sounds, such as the doorbell, phone and TV; make conversations more enjoyable; and help you feel more comfortable when talking to people—while making it easier for you to follow conversations and stay connected.

"Everyone plays a role in supporting the wellbeing of older adults, directly impacting the overall health of our communities. Elements like safe housing, social connections and adequate nutrition are fundamental to preventing illness and promoting wellness," says Mariam Elghahuagi, director of Healthy Aging Alberta. "Having access in our communities to the resources and supports we need is vital to maintain our health and continue as active, contributing members of our communities as we age. This Seniors' Week, let's strengthen our commitment to creating environments that empower older Albertans to lead vibrant and fulfilling lives."

For more information about Alberta Seniors' Week, visit www.alberta.ca/seniors-week.

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About [Alberta Blue Cross](#)

As the largest provider of health benefits in Alberta, we believe we have the potential and responsibility to impact people's lives for the better. We believe all communities should thrive, and we are committed to serving as a champion for wellness by promoting the health of Albertans.

About [Healthy Aging Alberta](#)

Healthy Aging Alberta (powered by United Way of Calgary and area), province-wide and made possible through generous funding by the Government of Alberta and other partners, is a "by community for community" initiative that empowers older Albertans to age how they choose. We work with community-based organizations and groups to ensure older adults have the opportunities and services they need to stay healthy, active and connected. We amplify community voices and collaborate with government and systems partners to focus on policies that uphold older adults' dignity and wellbeing. We believe all older Albertans deserve to thrive as valued and respected members of their communities.

About [Injury Prevention Centre](#)

The Injury Prevention Centre has supported organizations, communities and individuals to take actions to reduce their risk of injury for more than 20 years in Alberta. By focusing on preventing injuries, we save lives and keep Albertans out of emergency rooms and hospital beds. We work as connectors, providers and leaders committed to our vision of ensuring that "Albertans work and play hard, free from life-limiting injuries."



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