



2024 - Edition 5

CARE NEWS

Care in Midstream Newsletter

Keeping in touch

"Enjoy the little things in life because one day you'll look back and realise they were the big things."

If we, as adults, laugh out loud in glee when we see a squirrel run up a tree or suddenly skip down the street, most observers would find that odd or qualify the actions as childlike. We are expected to be more serious and prioritise work, work, and more work. The media bombards us with stories about celebrities and rich people's lifestyles, making that seem like what we should aspire to - expensive watches and clothes, elaborate vacations, and high-end vehicles. These become synonymous with luxury and our supposed life goals.

It's time to reclaim the definition of luxury and start enjoying the small things happily and simply. Happiness is everywhere you let it be - small things that happen every day. And this is what's big: realising it's there. It's mostly up to you.

Don't give up on your big goals - balance it out with enjoying life every step of the way. A smile, a kind gesture, a shared moment.

While we huddle up this winter and have more time to contemplate life, we should focus on the little things, celebrate the small moments that make life special, and bring sparks of joy to the lives of the people around us.

***Be loved and blessed,
The Care in Midstream Team***

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We would love to hear from you. If you have any feedback or news that you would like to share, please contact us at marketing@careinmidstream.co.za

Little Things

By Robert Blankenship

The little things of life
Are to most of no great affair
Such as the warmth of the sunshine's rays
Or the coolness of the evening air

The little things of life
Are so often unaccounted
But if we would stop and take notice
We would stand astounded

The little things of life
For such we have no time
The colorful leaves of fall
Or a ringing church bells chime

The little things of life
Seem to be missed by our eyes
A trees limb bending in the wind
Or the beautiful azure sky

The little things of life
Quickly appear then they are gone
Such as a smile on a strangers face
Or a lonely sparrows song

The little things of life
Like a word so kindly spoken
Can ease a wearied mind
Or help mend a heart that's broken

A thousand little things
Unnoticed by our eyes or ears
Is a thousand little blessings
Missed throughout our years.



How to Avoid Poor Circulation in the Winter

Poor circulation can cause many problems, including fatigue, cramped muscles and an increased risk of infection.

Causes of Poor Circulation Among Seniors

There are a few reasons why seniors are more susceptible to poor circulation in the winter. As one ages, blood vessels become less elastic and more rigid, making it more difficult for blood to flow through them. Additionally, many seniors have chronic medical conditions that can lead to inflammation and narrowed blood vessels. These conditions include diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure. Inactivity can also lead to poor circulation.

Symptoms of Poor Circulation

Poor circulation can cause a variety of symptoms, including fatigue, muscle cramps, cold feet and hands, numbness or tingling, slow-healing wounds.

Treatment Options for Poor Circulation

- Exercise is one of the best ways to improve your circulation. Regular exercise helps to keep your muscles active and supple which in turn helps your blood vessels function properly. Additionally, exercise helps to reduce inflammation throughout the body.
- Massage is a great way to improve circulation. Massage therapy helps to loosen tight muscles and promote relaxation, allowing blood to flow more freely throughout the body.
- Compression socks are specially designed to apply pressure to the legs and feet. This pressure helps to promote blood flow by keeping veins open and preventing pooling.

Prevention Tactics

The best way to prevent poor circulation is to live a healthy lifestyle. This includes eating a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, and not smoking. Diabetes or other medical conditions can contribute to poor circulation, so it's important to manage conditions carefully and follow a doctor's recommended treatment plan.

In addition to following a doctor's guidance, there are a few things one can do to prevent poor circulation:

- **Wear loose-fitting clothes:** Tight clothing can restrict blood flow so it's essential to wear clothes that fit well but aren't too snug.
- **Elevate your feet when possible:** Elevating your feet relieves pressure on your veins, allowing blood to circulate more easily. If possible, try elevating your feet for 10-15 minutes several times per day.
- **Stay hydrated:** Drinking plenty of fluids helps thin your blood and prevents dehydration which can lead to further



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Beat the Winter Blues and Boost Your Mood

Do you get the blues in winter? Do you dread the days when the temperatures start dropping and the sun starts setting early? Do you count the days to spring? If this sounds like you, it could be seasonal depression. Some people feel blue in winter, but others have depression. If you're struggling, take steps to learn more about seasonal depression and what you can do about it.

Is Winter Depression Real?

Many people feel more depressed than usual in the winter. It is not unusual. While some people just feel a little more blue or lethargic, others have a diagnosable condition - Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

SAD is a type of depression that changes in response to the season. The majority of people with SAD feel worse beginning in autumn and throughout winter. A minority experiences SAD in spring and summer.

Seasonal Affective Disorder is real and can significantly impact your life every year. It can make you moody and depressed. It can cause you to lose interest in activities you usually enjoy. SAD can also make you sluggish and fatigued.

Get Outside as Much as Possible: People tend to stay indoors much more in the winter for obvious reasons. If you live in a cold climate with short days, you may resist the urge to get out there. It's easier and more comfortable to stay warm inside. Push yourself past that urge and spend more time outside in the winter. You won't regret it. Any amount of exposure to sunlight during the day can counteract the effects of seasonal depression. It can help rebalance neurotransmitters and circadian rhythms. Morning daylight benefits the latter and can help you sleep better at night. When you must be inside, try to brighten your home and office. Keep blinds and drapes open and sit near windows. If trees block much of the light, consider trimming them a little.


Exercise Daily: Exercise is a natural mood booster any time of year. It increases endorphins, the neurotransmitters that make you feel good. Exercise also reduces stress and anxiety, two mental health symptoms that only make depression worse. If you're feeling fatigued due to depression, it can be a real challenge to get started. But once you do, you should experience increased energy and motivation. For bonus points, get exercise outdoors most days. An ideal way to reap benefits is to take a brisk walk in the morning. If you have a natural area, like a park or forest, nearby, even better. Time spent in nature boosts mood, improves mental health symptoms, and reduces stress and anxiety.

Maintain a Healthy Diet: Depression causes some people to eat less and lose weight, while others experience binges on comforting junk food. Resist the urge to eat sugary snacks for comfort and turn to healthy foods instead. Focus on a balanced diet of whole foods, including lean proteins, vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, and seeds.

Get Social: Depression is very isolating. The weather and your mood in the winter conspire to make you want to lock down, stay indoors, and be alone. The importance of socialising cannot be overstated. Social support is essential for all aspects of mental health. You can reach out to and benefit from others in several ways:

- Call a friend or family member to talk. Commit to reaching out at least once per day.
- Find a friend to walk with for fresh air, exercise, and socialise.
- Do volunteer work to keep you busy and get out of the house and around others.
- Join a support group for depression or SAD. It can be in person or online.
- Respond yes to social invitations, even if you're not in the mood. You'll feel better for going.

Take a Break if You Can: If time and finances allow, give yourself a break. Take a vacation somewhere warmer and sunnier to relieve the dreariness of a northern winter. Exposure to sunlight and warmer temperatures, coupled with a chance to relax and unwind, can be a powerful way to boost your mood even after you arrive back home.



"How kind the wind can be, how precious the morning sun, how bright the moon shines when you choose light over dark."

- Gemma Troy -

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Why Winter Can Make Dementia Symptoms Worse

Winter makes sundowning worse

The onset of shorter winter days can exacerbate sundowning. Sundowning is a collection of symptoms such as anger, aggression and irritation, which tend to occur at the end of the day - as the sun goes down - and into the night.

Winter can lead to depression

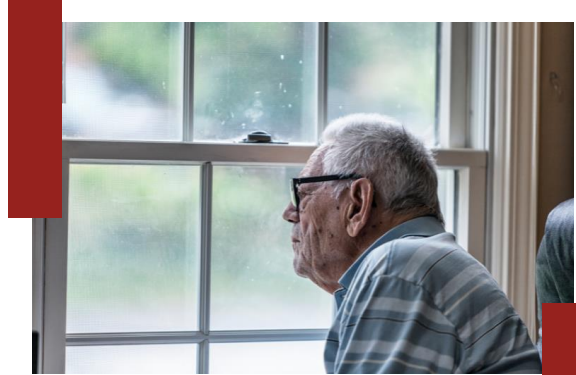
When the brain doesn't get enough daylight, it can lead to a form of depression called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Sometimes, SAD and sundowning can both occur during winter, making life increasingly hard for people with dementia.

Winter disrupts sleep

Sleep disturbances become more common as dementia progresses because it attacks the part of the brain that controls circadian rhythm - the internal body clock. During winter months, early evening darkness can cause further confusion.

Winter causes visual problems

Darkness can cause disorientation and intense frustration. Dementia already causes visuospatial problems, but these can become a great deal worse during darker days and nights. Shadows in dim lights add to the confusion and disorientation, sometimes causing people to imagine they can see something that isn't there. This could, in turn, make them even more anxious, angry, or agitated.



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Tips and Recommendations

Make the most of natural daylight - natural light and physical activity are proven to be a winning combination that helps to boost mood and reduce stress and tension.

Keep it calm - keep the room as peaceful as possible during the late afternoon and early evening. Try to keep evening activities soothing and low-key.

Let the light in - as natural light begins to fade, ensure rooms are brightly lit to minimise shadows and reflections.

Consider small changes. If the person usually enjoys an afternoon nap, try moving it forward a little to the early afternoon. Sleeping later than this can confuse the body's internal clock even more, making it impossible to nod off at night.



Winter Dressing Tips for Seniors



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Finding ways to stay warm is a priority in winter. Dressing smartly is essential; layers, warmth, and comfort should effectively guide wardrobe choices.

Choosing the Perfect Layered Clothing Styles

Effective layering is essential for combating cold without compromising on style. It starts with a snug base layer on your skin, ideally made from materials that wick away moisture. Over this, an insulated middle layer, such as wool or fleece, retains heat. The final touch is a protective outer layer that is resistant to wind and rain and keeps harsh weather at bay. This technique also adds a versatile dimension to one's wardrobe, allowing for adjustments based on indoor and outdoor settings. Layered clothing isn't just about functionality; it's an opportunity to play with colours, textures, and styles. With each layer, a new dimension of the outfit comes alive, encouraging creativity and personal expression.

Importance of Investing in Quality Thermals

Investing in high-quality thermal clothing is crucial for enduring cold climates without discomfort. Premium thermals, designed to lock in heat while ensuring skin breathability, form an invisible shield against the cold. These garments come in varieties that promise warmth and a gentle touch against the skin, eliminating common irritants of cheaper fabrics. Quality thermals provide a return on investment in warmth and durability. They are a long-term investment capable of providing consistent comfort year after year. Their ability to maintain their insulating properties even after multiple washes solidifies their importance in a cold-weather wardrobe.

Fashionable Accessories That Keep You Warm

Accessorising for warmth doesn't mean sacrificing style. The winter wardrobe becomes a canvas for elegant scarves, hats, and gloves. These pieces not only serve as layers of warmth but also as expressions of individual style. Scarves offer a protective layer around the neck while enhancing an outfit's appearance with a splash of colour or a hint of luxury.

Hydrate Your Skin – Moisturising Essentials

Cold weather demands more than just clothing attention; skin care is equally essential. Moisturising becomes a critical ritual in preventing the dryness and cracking caused by cold air. Face, hands, and lips are especially vulnerable and require products that create a barrier against the elements. Regular application ensures skin health and enhances the skin's natural barrier, making it less susceptible to the harsh effects of winter weather.



Care in Midstream provides the following services:

Assisted Living | Frail Care | Dementia & Alzheimer's Care
Short Term Care | End of Life & Palliative Care



Essential Foods to Keep Seniors Healthy During Winter

As winter temperatures drop, seniors may experience several health issues like respiratory discomfort, flu, etc., due to temperature imbalance in their bodies triggered by the cold weather. Therefore, ensuring seniors stay warm and comfortable during this time is crucial. A good diet is also essential to keep seniors healthy. Here are a few specific diet recommendations for seniors during winter.

What are the Best Foods for the Winter Season?

- 1. Lean Protein and Healthy Fats:** Seniors need lean protein and healthy fats in their winter diet for various reasons. Healthy fats provide essential fatty acids and keep the immune system functioning at its optimal level. This is especially critical during winter when colds and the flu are more common.
- 2. Iron-rich Foods:** Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) occurs when the lungs cannot supply enough oxygen to the body's vital organs. In winter, health conditions like ARDS are more common among seniors. Iron is an invaluable nutrient that helps to increase the production of red blood cells, which carry oxygen throughout the body.
- 3. Vitamin C-rich Foods:** Older adults are more susceptible to infection during winter. Poor temperature control or conditions like gastrointestinal infections can especially increase the risk of other related health concerns. Vitamin C and antioxidant-rich foods are healthy additions to winter diets to keep colds and flu at bay.
- 4. Root Vegetables:** Winter is the peak season for root vegetables, and they are known to be some of the most nutrient-rich vegetables with numerous health benefits. Root vegetables are high in vitamins A, B, and C and iron. Additionally, they are high in fibre and slow-burning carbohydrates, making them a nutritious addition to the winter diet to restore energy.
- 5. Vitamin D & Calcium-rich Foods:** Adequate calcium intake is essential to strengthening bones and muscles to avoid bone loss, risk of falls, and weakened immunity in seniors. In addition, vitamin D is also required for the absorption of calcium in the body. Winter means decreased exposure to sunlight, which is the primary source of vitamin D.
- 7. Soups:** Soups in the winter can help seniors stay warm and hydrated. Multiple nutrient-rich ingredients are easy to incorporate into soups, which can be a rich source of essential vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that can help seniors stay healthy. Besides, soups are generally easier to digest than other foods, which can benefit seniors with digestive issues during winter.



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