Assisting Hands® Home Care

Hand in Hand

eNewsletter

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The importance of having an *attitude of gratitude!*

We have an entire day set aside that is all about having gratitude: Thanksgiving. But what if we focus on gratitude each and every day and actually *feel* better?

As the adage goes: there is always something to be thankful for, and this year, perhaps more than others, may hold an even greater importance for having an "attitude of gratitude." This year has been beyond challenging, but one day we will look back and say this time has afforded us the opportunity to appreciate our health, our family, and our friends. Maybe this has helped us all put things into perspective by focusing more on taking care of the needs of our neighbors, serving others, and counting our blessings.

Our attitude sets the stage for how each day plays out. Attitude can affect our health, our relationships, and the very essence of our being. A positive attitude is always seeing the possibility in every situation as a potential gift. Think about it. Aren't positive people are pleasant to be around? They can make us feel grounded and safe.

Practicing gratitude is one way to help yourself or your loved one deal with troubles. It is understandable that seniors may get wrapped up in the less positive aspects of life. They may be dealing with the loss of loved ones, their own diminishing health, feelings of isolation, mobility issues, or slow, long days after a lifetime of

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having a career. All these can take a toll on one's mental well-being. It's easy to say one should strive for happiness, as if it is magic, but it's not always easy. However, there are a number of things we can do to help foster a better outlook, not just for our older loved ones, but for ourselves as well.

Keep a journal. Every day, look for three things – even the smallest – for which you are thankful. It can be simple. That morning cup of coffee, a phone call from an old friend, or a sunny day. Make it a point to look for pleasant surprises. Seek out things around you that you haven't noticed in the past. Perhaps a new bird is visiting your bird feeder. Read back through your writings often.

Personal visits. Taking the time to visit someone and let them know that they are important to you is an excellent way to show gratitude. If an in-person visit isn't possible, connect via FaceTime, or simply call them on the phone. The simple act of reaching out to others will provide a boost to both parties.

Meditate. Find a quiet, relaxing area, close your eyes and take ten deep breaths. Take a breath and focus on things for which you are grateful. When you exhale, say "thank you." This will help reduce your heart rate and blood pressure.

Once you get into the habit of practicing your attitude of gratitude, the benefits can be enormous. Many studies have shown that being kind to others and showing gratitude to those around us can have a positive impact on our mind and body. Feeling more relaxed, having improved self-esteem, being more optimistic and less anxious towards others are just some of the emotional benefits. Living a life of gratitude can also improve your sleep quality, increase your energy, reduce illness and physical pain, and decrease blood pressure. When we feel good and have good health – mind and body – we also strengthen our relationships with others.

Let your life be one of light. Be healthy and live a happier life by making gratitude part of every day. Happy Thanksgiving!

November is

National Family Caregivers Month

November has been designated as National Family Caregivers Month to honor the more than 40 million caregivers across the country who support aging parents, spouses, or other loved ones who wish to remain at home. It is important to recognize family caregivers as they take on so much – cooking, cleaning, managing medications and finances – they do it all for their loved ones.

According to the National Alliance for Caregiving more than a third of family caregivers were ages 50 to 64, and 7% of caregivers were age 75 or older. Often the recipient is a spouse with dementia or heart disease who needs a high level of care for 34 hours or more a week.

In times when seniors' health is top priority, feeling informed and supported can help alleviate some worry and uncertainty. Often times, that means asking for help. Turn to Assisting Hands® for compassionate and dependable in-home care. Their professional caregivers can provide much-needed respite care and senior services that enable family caregivers to receive the assistance they need. Assisting Hands® can also provide a plan of care for your loved one.



Keeping a positive outlook during the holiday season

This holiday season is, without a doubt, going to look different for us all. For many seniors, it can be difficult to stay positive and happy during this time of year - without a pandemic. This year, it is especially important to help our loved ones combat the feelings of isolation, lack of activity, and general depression that might occur during the holidays. Here are a few ideas that can perhaps boost their spirit – along with your own.

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Reminisce with your loved one

Memories of past holidays can bring up bad feelings during the holiday season for some. We must realize that memories are often some of the best things in our life. Instead of focusing on things that are different NOW, focus on all the good that has happened. Use the past to reminisce about your favorite things and people. Look through old photos, sing old songs, and remind yourself or your loved one what the holidays are all about.

This time of years is an ideal time to remember family and friends that have come into your life, reflecting on things that may have changed, but solidly focus on things that have not changed. Try using the holiday season to create a new photo album or scrapbook full of your favorite memories.

Sudoku:

The aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, once in each column, and once in each of the 3×3 boxes. This puzzle is challenging!

Visit www.krazydad.com for further tips and help about how to play – and good luck!

Sudoku puzzle courtesy of www.krazydad.com

3		2		8		6		
		6	5		9			4
	1				7			
				1		7	6	
5								8
	6	3		9				
			4				7	
6			9		1	3		
		5		7		4		2

Control your finances

It's common to feel like you need to spend a lot of money on gifts for others during the holiday season, but we must realize the true meaning of the holidays is being together with those we love, and those who truly love us would expect nothing more. Before you stress yourself out about the financial burden the holidays can hold, set a strict budget for yourself and stick to it. Doing so will ease your mind and help you refrain from overspending. This is sound advice for people of all ages!

Get into the holiday spirit

Sometimes all you need is a little cheer to get into the spirit of the holidays. If you're feeling blue, remind yourself about all the good parts of the season – the food, the decorations and entertainment. Help your loved one bake cookies or a pie, put up Christmas decorations, watch your favorite holiday movies, or make crafts. Of course, all of these things can be done safely if you must socially distance. Host a Zoom baking session by setting aside a time where you can virtually be together online. Of course, it's not the same as being together in person, but realize that this too will pass.

Talk with someone

It is very difficult to admit when you have feelings of loneliness or depression, and are simply not feeling the holiday spirit. This can be especially true when seniors may see the people they love enjoying the holiday seasons themselves. But the people around you care about you and are here to support you. Reach out to your family, friends or caregiver and let them know your feelings. These people can provide emotional support and help you find solutions to the issues you are facing. The holiday season is no time to feel alone!

Connect with those who matter most

During this time of year, family, friends and the people we love are typically the top priority. It's a time to appreciate and be grateful for all the people in our lives. For seniors having a hard time, connecting with the people you love can be a tremendous help. Providing love and support, your family and friends can help get you through the difficult holidays. Even better - you may provide the same thing right back to them! Call the people you love or ask them to call you. FaceTime with them if you can. Seeing a friendly, smiling face as you chat will do wonders for the soul!

This season, take care and fight the holiday blues. By taking care of yourself or your loved ones, the holidays can be a time of celebration, love and most importantly, hope for everyone. Have a Merry little Christmas.



Simply Delicious



Soft Christmas Cutout Sugar Cookies

Prep: 30 min; ***Bake:*** 10 min

Ingredients

- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 5 cups flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 2 Tbsp hot water
- 1/2 cup milk

Instructions

• Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

• Line baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

• Mix brown sugar, butter, and eggs together. Add vanilla. Mix until well combined.

• In a separate bowl, combine flour and baking powder.

• In another separate bowl, dissolve baking soda in hot water.

• Alternate adding 1/3 of the flour mixture, 1/3 of the hot water mixture, and a 1/3 of the milk into the brown sugar mixture. Repeat until mixtures and all ingredients are well combined.

• Using 1/3 of the dough at a time, spoon onto generously floured counter top and gently fold so the dough isn't sticky. (Be careful not to use too much flour, that will make the cookies tough.)

• Roll out to desired thickness and cut out with desired cookie cutters.

• Transfer the cutouts onto the parchment paper lined baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes. (Depending on the thickness of the cutouts, you may need to decrease or increase the baking time. For thinner cutouts, decrease the baking time. For thicker cutouts, increase the baking time.)

Best Cream Cheese Frosting

Ingredients

8 oz cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup butter, softened
1 tsp vanilla
3 - 3 1/2 cups powdered sugar

Instructions

• Combine cream cheese, butter, and vanilla. Beat until well mixed.

• Add powdered sugar and beat until smooth. (The amount of powdered sugar depends on the consistency you desire. The more powdered sugar you use, the thicker the frosting will be.)

Creamy Crock Pot Hot Chocolate

Prep: 5 min; ***Cook:*** 2 hours ***Serves:*** 6-8; double for party

Ingredients

- 1.5 cups heavy whipping cream
- 1 14oz can sweetened condensed milk
- 6 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups of milk chocolate chips (can also use half semi-sweet)

Instructions

• Stir together the whipping cream, milk, vanilla, and chocolate chips in a 5 quart crock pot (if doubling, use a 6-7 quart slow cooker/crock pot).

• Cover and cook on low for 2 hours, stirring occasionally with whisk, until mixture is hot and chocolate chips are melted.

• Once it is heated through and chocolate is melted, switch the slow cooker to the warm setting. Stir again before serving. (If you have trouble getting the chocolate to melt, turn to high temporarily).

• Garnish individual cups of hot chocolate with whipped cream or marshmallows.

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