

# RESOURCES

## FORUM: Primary Care for Older Adults: An Urgent Need



On June 18, 2025, the Seniors Health Innovations Hub (SHIH) and Shawn Menard, Councillor Capital Ward co-hosted a forum *Primary Care for Older Adults: An Urgent Need*.

The goal of the Forum was to build awareness of the crisis in primary care for older adults, to share related advocacy approaches and to provide strategies to support healthy aging. The intended audience includes older adults and their families, as well as stakeholder and advocacy groups.

**The PURPOSE of this RESOURCES** document is to capture those items that address our 3<sup>rd</sup> goal: ***Provide strategies to support healthy aging.*** It is organized by the content given by the various speakers (their biographies are on the Forum [webpage](#)) followed by other resources that the SHIH Primary Care Team thinks would be beneficial to you and/or your caregiver(s). Please note these latter topics are definitely not a complete list of services to support 'aging in place'.

## Table of Contents

<b>CONTENT FROM THE SPEAKERS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
How to Obtain Primary Care .....	3
Health Care Alternatives .....	4
Ontario Health811 .....	4
Ottawa Community Paramedicine .....	4
Virtual Care Clinic.....	6
Be Proactive: Prevent Falls.....	8
AccessCSS .....	12
What is the difference between AccessCSS and Ontario Health atHome? .....	14
<b>OTHER USEFUL CONTENT.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Guide to Healthy Aging .....	15
Heart Valve Screening .....	16
Ottawa Public Health 7-1-1.....	17
Ontario Pharmacists.....	17
Federal Disability Tax Credit.....	19
e-Learning .....	20
McMaster Optimal Aging Portal .....	20

# CONTENT FROM THE SPEAKERS

This section of the document provides the content given by the various speakers (their biographies are on the Forum [webpage](#)) during the Forum.

## How to Obtain Primary Care

Dr. Philpott's Primary Care Action Team's June 2025 [announcement](#) indicated that they will use the names registered with Health Care Connect (HCC) to determine who will be attached to a primary care provider.

**If you don't have primary care or your care provider is a long distance away\***, be sure to register on Health Care Connect by either using [this link](#) OR phone 1-800-445-1822.

\* In early July 2025, the SHIH Primary Care Team received confirmation from Health Care Connect that the rules recently changed such that you can register with them even if you already have a primary care provider. At the time of publication of this document, the Health Care Connect website had not been updated for this information but HCC indicated that it will be.

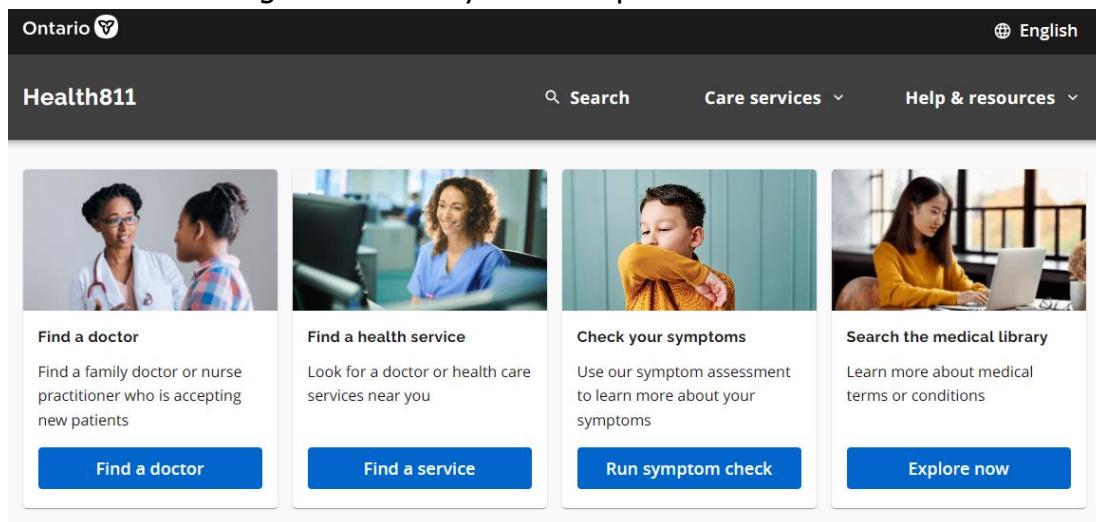
# Health Care Alternatives

## Ontario Health811

### **Get connected to health care 24/7 using Ontario [Health 811](#)**

Access safe, high-quality, free care and avoid unnecessary visits to the emergency room. This service is an easy way to get connected to care you or your loved ones need, but it does not replace your other touch point with your health care provider. In a medical emergency call 911 immediately.

These are the range of services you can expect to find on 811:



Ontario  English

Health811  Search Care services Help & resources

**Find a doctor**  
Find a family doctor or nurse practitioner who is accepting new patients [Find a doctor](#)

**Find a health service**  
Look for a doctor or health care services near you [Find a service](#)

**Check your symptoms**  
Use our symptom assessment to learn more about your symptoms [Run symptom check](#)

**Search the medical library**  
Learn more about medical terms or conditions [Explore now](#)

This service was previously known as Telehealth.

## Ottawa Community Paramedicine

The target population for this program is older adults and is offered as a way to facilitate aging at home, support for chronic diseases, assessments for acute illness and reducing unnecessary ER visits and system navigation.

At this time, referrals are primarily through hospital discharge teams, front-line paramedics and community partners. However, older adults and their caregivers/families CAN SELF-REFER; you do NOT need a family practitioner to complete the Request for Service Form.

This is only part of the form; use this [link](#) to obtain the fillable PDF form, which you will need to download to complete it. As a reminder, you do NOT need a family practitioner to submit this form. There is a box on the form to indicate you don't have a practitioner.

 Ottawa Paramedic Service  
Community Paramedic Program – Request for Service Form

ONCE COMPLETE, PLEASE FAX TO 613 580-6487

Please print clearly or complete electronically. Please call 613 580-2651 if you have any questions about this program.

PATIENT INFORMATION	
Name:	Health Card Number:
Date of Birth (YYYY-MM-DD):	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Primary Language: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
Phone (mobile):	Phone (home landline):
Email:	
Street Address:	Postal Code:
Emergency Contact Name:	Relationship to Patient:
Emergency Contact Phone:	Emergency Contact is POA <input type="checkbox"/>
Check here if it is best to book appointments through the patient's Emergency Contact person <input type="checkbox"/>	
PATIENT CONSENT	
Patient consents to this referral for the Ottawa Community Paramedic Program <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER	
<input type="checkbox"/> No Family Doctor or Primary Care Provider	

For further information on the Community Paramedicine program and to obtain information on how to submit a completed form, please contact the Community Paramedic Administration Line at 613-580-2651 or using this email: [CommunityParamedicine@ottawa.ca](mailto:CommunityParamedicine@ottawa.ca).

## Virtual Care Clinic

Subsequent to the Forum, it was brought to the attention of SHIH Primary Care Team that a virtual clinic was available in the region so we are including it here.

The [East Region Virtual Care Clinic](#) (ERVCC) ensures patients can access timely care by providing virtual care appointments for patients across Ontario Health's East Region (see map to the right for the area the ERVCC services).

The ERVCC is open from **1:00pm - 9:00pm, seven days a week** and has implemented a new patient registration process. You no longer need an account, login, or app to book an appointment. Please click on the links and enter your email address, date of birth, and health card number (if you have one) to begin the registration process.

If this is an emergency, please proceed to the nearest emergency department or call 911.

Please note the Virtual Care Clinic does not prescribe or refill any controlled substances under any circumstances.

### Register for an Appointment

The East Region Virtual Care Clinic (ERVCC) ensures patients can access timely care by providing virtual care appointments for patients across Ontario Health's East Region (see map to the right for the area the ERVCC services).

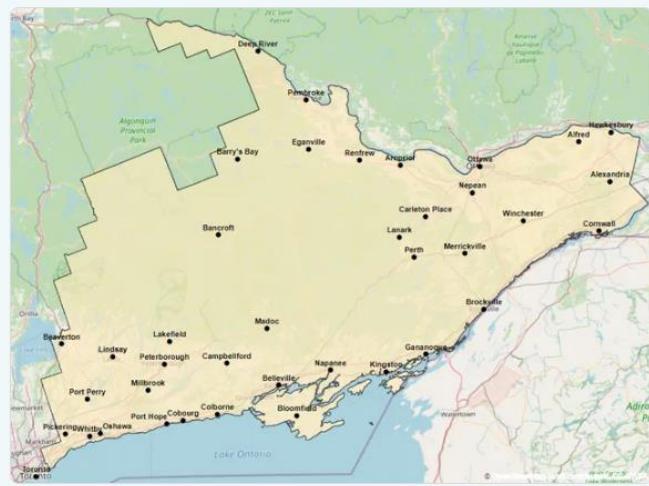
The ERVCC is open from **1:00pm - 9:00pm, seven days a week**

Your health and care is very important to us! Please see the information below regarding what health problems we can help with in a virtual appointment and when you may need to be referred for in-person care.

[Register for a virtual appointment here](#)

### Who we Serve

The **Ontario Health East** region spans from Pickering to Ottawa and Kingston to Pembroke. We serve patients throughout the region, who require timely medical care. Examples of those we care for include:



The ERVCC can help with certain health issues online, but some health issues are better treated in person. Your health is very important to us! If we think you need to see a Nurse Practitioner (NP) or doctor face-to-face, the NP might suggest you go to a clinic or the hospital.

Here's a list of health problems we can help in a virtual setting, and ones we can't:

### Appropriate for Virtual Care

If you are experiencing the following conditions, a virtual care appointment may be suitable:

- Urinary tract infection
- Ear pain (less than seven days; or if already treated)
- Sore throat (less than seven days; or if already treated)
- Skin problems, rash, or shingles (less than seven days)
- Tick bite
- Back pain or joint pain (less than two weeks)
- Stomach ache without fever (less than two weeks)
- Mild to moderate headache
- New dizziness
- Mild breathing difficulty
- Fever persisting for more than three days

### Not Appropriate for Virtual Care

For the following health issues, it is crucial to seek immediate medical attention at the nearest hospital emergency room:

- Requests or refills for controlled substances
- Acute/severe abdominal pain
- Life or limb-threatening conditions
- Acute chest pain
- Acute shortness of breath
- Extreme lethargy
- Signs or symptoms of stroke, such as changes in speech or weakness on one side of the body
- Reduced level of consciousness
- Severe headache ('the worst headache ever', sudden, severe)
- New difficulty breathing (trouble speaking, walking, breathing when lying on your back)
- Severe stomach ache with nausea/vomiting
- Baby under three months with a fever
- Baby aged three to twelve months with a fever for three days or more
- Severe and persistent elevated blood sugar ( $>20$  mmol/L) with increased thirst, fatigue, or dizziness
- Acute decline or loss of vision
- Acute paralysis or rapid, progressive loss of motor function

## Be Proactive: Prevent Falls

There is considerable information available concerning the impact of falls and falls prevention as reflected by the considerable information provided below.

1. Nancy Edwards mentioned these resources during her video presentation
  - a. Fall resources from Ottawa Public Health
    - [You Can Prevent Falls](#). This PDF document includes a checklist on how to identify and remove hazards in your home, as well as providing tips on managing your health and using safety aids.



The graphic features a green header with the text "You CAN prevent falls!" in white. The Ottawa Public Health logo is in the top right corner, and a photo of an older couple is on the left. The main text "The facts" is in the center, followed by statistics about falls and their consequences.

**You CAN prevent falls!**

**Ottawa | Public Health Santé publique**

**The facts**

Falls are the leading cause of injury among older adults in Canada:

- **20-30%** experience at least one fall each year
- **95%** of all hip fractures are due to a fall
- **50%** of all falls causing hospitalization happen **at home**

Falls can result in chronic pain, reduced mobility, loss of independence and even death.

**Protect yourself**

- [Stay Independent Checklist, Are You at Risk of Falls?](#)

There's a point system assigned to each question. If you score more than 4 points, you may be at risk of falling in which case it would be advisable to discuss your results with a care professional to find ways to reduce your risk.

## Staying Independent

Falls are the main reason why older people lose their independence.



**Are you at risk? Check each statement that is true for you.**

Check your risk of falling	Actions to staying independent
<input type="checkbox"/> (2) I have fallen in the last 6 months	Learn more on how to reduce your fall risk, as people who have fallen are more likely to fall again.
<input type="checkbox"/> (2) I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.	Talk with a physiotherapist about the most appropriate walking aid for your needs.
<input type="checkbox"/> (1) Sometimes, I feel unsteady when I am walking.	Exercise to build up your strength and improve your balance, as this is shown to reduce the risk for falls.

### b. Safer Bathrooms, Safer Bathing

Below is a screen shot of the first page of this PDF [document](#) that also provides installation considerations for grab bars as well as other important tips such as various tax credits that might be available.

**SAFER BATHROOMS, SAFER BATHING**

**GETTING A GRASP ON GRAB BARS**

**GRAB BARS AS A FALL PREVENTION TOOL**

 1/6 falls in older adults happen in the bathroom<sup>1</sup>

 You are **2.5 times** more likely to be injured falling in a bathroom than in any other part of your home<sup>3</sup>

Using a grab bar proactively could reduce your chance of falling in the bathtub by **100%** if you slip or lose your balance<sup>2</sup> 

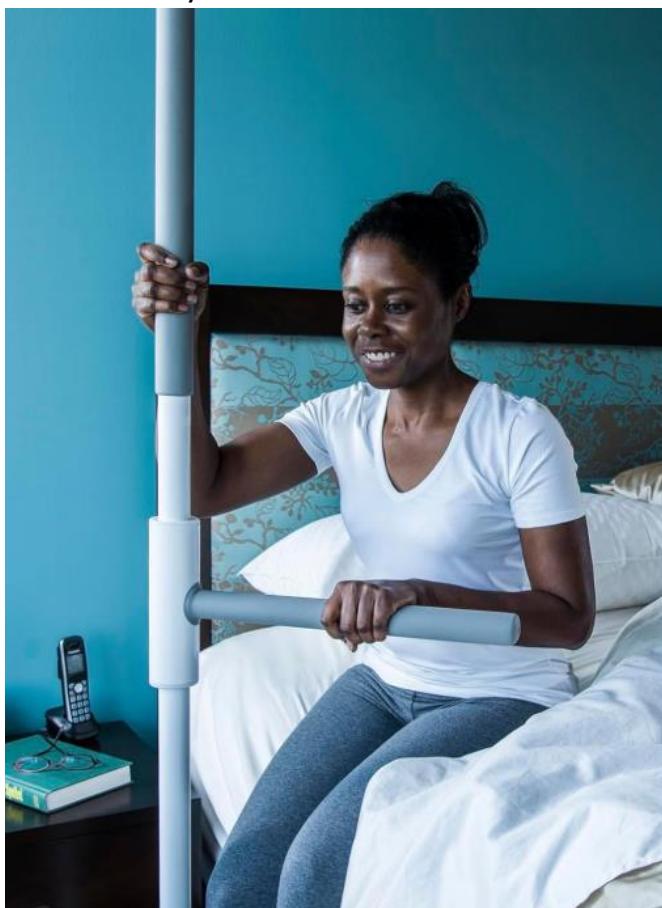
Having a grab bar in your bathroom "just in case" can reduce your chance of falling in the bathtub by **75%** following a slip or balance loss<sup>2</sup> 

Movements made while bathing can be challenging, especially when the ground is slippery. Grab bars help keep your balance while you bend, turn and twist.<sup>4</sup> 

**WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN SELECTING A GRAB BAR**

at least  When using a grab bar to recover your balance, you might need to grasp

- c. Superpole – a safety aid that can be used in various rooms



d. Graspable Handrails

In Ontario, graspable handrails on stairs must be designed to allow a user to comfortably grip the handrail with their fingers and thumb, ensuring a secure hold. The handrail should be continuous and free of obstructions that would interrupt a handhold, except for newel posts at changes in direction. The requirements are clearly set out in the Ontario Building Code



# AccessCSS

Community Support Services (website: [accesscss.ca](https://accesscss.ca)) support older adults, seniors and adults with disabilities. Their goal is to support individuals to remain safe, independent and healthy home. Community Support services are funded by Ontario Health East. These services play a vital role our health care system.

Please note the website is bilingual and there is a mechanism to search for services on your own; you don't need a healthcare provider in order to make a referral.



accesscss.ca

accessCSS

Connect to Community Support Services

Home About Find Services Service & Health Care Providers Providers EN / FR

## Services to support older adults, seniors and adults living with disabilities in Eastern Ontario

Supporting individuals to remain safe, independent and healthy home.

I would like to search for services myself.

I am a service/health care provider.

Find Services

Send a Referral

Watch later Share

Watch on YouTube

accessCSS English

AccessCSS helps older adults, seniors, and adults with disabilities, a brain injury, or dementia.

Search for services using our service finder. Should you need help, reach a navigator who will connect you to the services you need from our network.

There is a myriad of services available on this bilingual (English and French) website:

## Services



Adult Day Programs and Respite



Care Coordination and Navigation



Caregiver Support



Condition Specific Supports



Food and Meal Programs



Foot Care Services



Home Help and Home Maintenance



Health Promotion and Education



Palliative Care



Recreation, Fitness and Social Activities



Safety and Security Programs



Support and Care at Home



Transportation

To learn more

[www.accesscss.ca](http://www.accesscss.ca)

## Services



Programmes de jour pour adultes et services de répit



Coordination des soins et navigation



Soutien aux proches aidants



Soutien spécifique à une condition



Programmes d'alimentation et de repas



Soins des pieds



Aide et entretien à domicile



Promotion et éducation à la santé



Soins palliatifs



Activités récréatives et sociales, mise en forme



Programmes de sûreté et de sécurité



Soutien et soins à domicile



Transport

Pour en savoir plus

[www.accesscss.ca](http://www.accesscss.ca)

## What is the difference between AccessCSS and Ontario Health atHome?

AccessCSS focuses on community support to help people with daily living and social activities, while Ontario Health atHome ([webpage](#)) provides medical and rehabilitation care at home. Both are important but address different needs in health and wellness.

# OTHER USEFUL CONTENT

The following topics are other resources that the SHIH Primary Care Team thinks would be beneficial to you and/or your caregiver(s). Please note these are definitely not a complete list of services to support 'aging in place'.

## Guide to Healthy Aging



**Contents**

- [Introduction](#)
- [Primary Care](#)
- [Home Care & Supportive Services](#)
- [Caregivers](#)
- [Housing for Older Adults](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Maintaining Your Safety](#)
- [Healthy Living](#)
- [Understanding & Navigating Cognitive Decline](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Looking After Your Finances](#)
- [End-of-Life Choices](#)
- [Seniors Health Innovations Hub \(SHIH\)](#)
- [Acknowledgements](#)

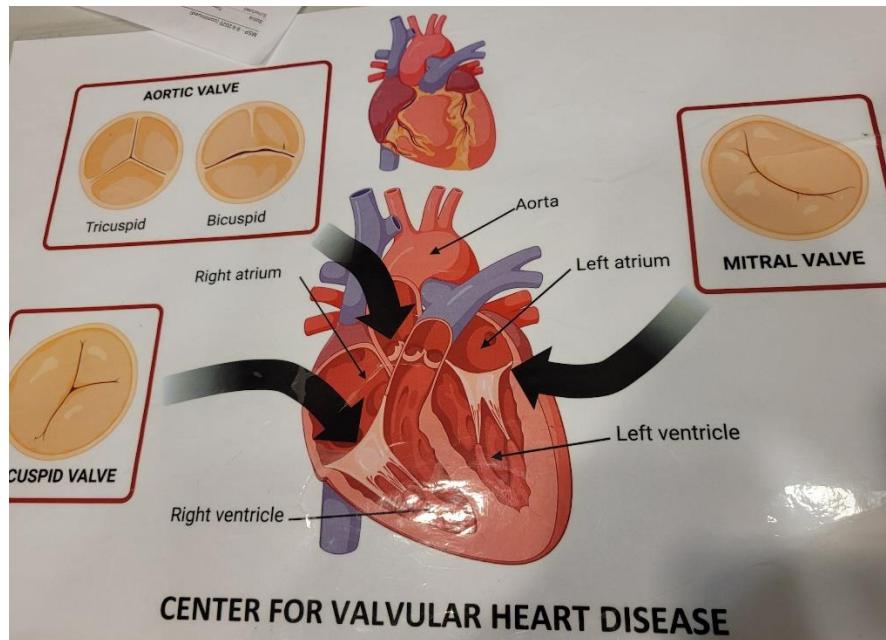
The online [Guide to Healthy Aging](#) is a valuable resource to support seniors. It was a creation of Seniors Watch Old Ottawa South (SWOOS), a Committee of the Old Ottawa South Community Association (OSCA), and is the precursor organization to the Seniors Health Innovations Hub (SHIH). The Guide continues to be hosted on the OSCA website. There were many volunteer contributors to create the Guide - health care and community support service providers, community associations, and local volunteers - who worked hard to make this Guide accurate and comprehensive. This Guide was introduced by Margaret Tansey during the Resource Information Agenda item at the Forum.

The Guide is a worthwhile resource to read and we encourage you to look at it. Hydration and dementia are examples of the many topics that are covered. The Guide is regularly reviewed and new topics considered; the section on Cognitive Decline was added recently.

## Heart Valve Screening

This is an example of a unique preventative health care service that we thought was important to share. The Ottawa Heart Institute Centre for Valvular Heart Disease has a Mobile Screening Program.

Valvular heart diseases are dysfunctions of the "doors" that direct blood flow within the heart. These diseases affect hundreds of thousands of people in Canada. Heart valve problems are often undetected, and late detection may have severe consequences. The Ottawa Heart Institute mobile screening program offers early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of valvular heart disease. For more information refer to their [website](#), and use [this link](#) to register.



# Ottawa Public Health 7-1-1

What is [7-1-1](#): People that rely on TTY relay services (teletypewriter) can dial 7-1-1 to connect for free with a Bell relay operator that can communicate back and forth with the caller and Ottawa Public Health. After calling 7-1-1 you will receive a response of "Bell Canada relay service" and then you can ask the relay operator to contact Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-6744.



COVID-19, Flu and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)      Public Health Services      Public Health Topics      Professionals and Partners      Reports, Research and Statistics      Multilingual Resources

Immunization services	<b>Have a health-related question?</b>					
Parenting and Prenatal Services	Ottawa Public Health is excited to announce that we are transitioning our Teletypewriter (TTY) service to the 7-1-1 feature. This change ensures that people with hearing or speech disabilities can continue to make and receive telephone calls via TTY relay services, with the assistance of a relay operator.					
Public Health Inspections	What is 7-1-1: People that rely on TTY relay services can dial 7-1-1 to connect for free with a Bell relay operator that can communicate back and forth with the caller and Ottawa Public Health. After calling 7-1-1 you will receive a response of "Bell Canada relay service" and then you can ask the relay operator to contact Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-6744.					
Quit Smoking Services	<a href="#">Canada Video Relay Service (VRS)</a> is another option available for clients who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired.					
Report an Animal Bite	Please review the following options to ensure you make the best call based on your needs.					
Well Water Testing	<a href="#">For health care professionals, community partners and other organizations</a>					
About Us	<a href="#">Frequently asked immunization related questions</a>					
Board of Health	<a href="#">Returning a message from Ottawa Public Health</a>					
Blog	<a href="#">8-1-1 Speak to a registered nurse (free, secure, and confidential health advice)</a>					
Careers, Volunteering, and Student Placements	<a href="#">2-1-1 Community Navigator</a>					
News and Public Notices	<a href="#">3-1-1 City of Ottawa</a>					
	<a href="#">Book an appointment at our Sexual Health Clinic</a>					
	<a href="#">Ottawa Public Health Dental Information Line</a>					
	<a href="#">Ottawa Public Health Neighbourhood Health and Wellness Hubs</a>					

# Ontario Pharmacists

Remember to use your local Pharmacist. Over the past few years, the range of services offered has expanded.

The [Ontario College of Pharmacists](#) (OCP) is the provincial regulatory body for pharmacists.

The source of the following info is from the Ontario Ministry of Health Pharmacies [webpage](#).

Pharmacies fill drug prescriptions and offer medication counselling to all members of the community. Pharmacists are also able to prescribe certain treatment options, including for some of the most common, medical ailments. Accessing this service will come at no extra cost to Ontarians, all you need is your health card.

In addition to filling drug prescriptions, many pharmacies offer one-on-one counselling to help you quit smoking or manage diabetes. Many also administer vaccines including the flu shot, from specially trained pharmacists to people 2 years of age and older.

## Pharmacy specific programs

### Prescriptions for common ailments

Pharmacists can prescribe certain medication to treat the following common ailments:

- acid reflux (gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD))
- acne
- canker sores
- cold sores (herpes labialis)
- dermatitis (atopic, eczema, allergic and contact)
- diaper rash
- hay fever (allergic rhinitis)
- hemorrhoids
- impetigo
- insect bites and hives
- menstrual cramps (dysmenorrhea)
- nausea and vomiting in pregnancy
- oral thrush (candidal stomatitis)
- parasitic worms (pinworms and threadworms)
- pink eye (conjunctivitis; bacterial, allergic and viral)
- sprains and strains (musculoskeletal)
- tick bites (post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent Lyme disease)
- urinary tract infections (UTIs)
- yeast infections

### MedsCheck Program

If you are taking multiple medications, the MedsCheck Program, available at most pharmacies, helps ensure that you are getting the most benefit from your medications and that you are taking them as prescribed.

Anyone taking a minimum of three medications and who has an Ontario health card is eligible for the MedsCheck Program.

## **Smoking Cessation Program**

If you want to quit smoking, you might be eligible to receive one-on-one support and counselling from a pharmacist as part of the Smoking Cessation Program.

Anyone who is eligible for the Ontario Drug Benefit plan can enroll in the Smoking Cessation program. It involves completing a readiness assessment and consultation, as well as a year of counselling sessions. The Smoking Cessation Program is part of the Smoke Free Ontario Strategy.

## **Federal Disability Tax Credit**

The disability tax credit (DTC) is a non-refundable tax credit that helps people with disabilities, or their supporting family member, reduce the amount of income tax they may have to pay.

If you have a severe and prolonged impairment, you may apply for the credit. If you are approved, you may claim the credit at tax time. By reducing the amount of income tax you may have to pay, the DTC aims to offset some of the extra costs related to the impairment.

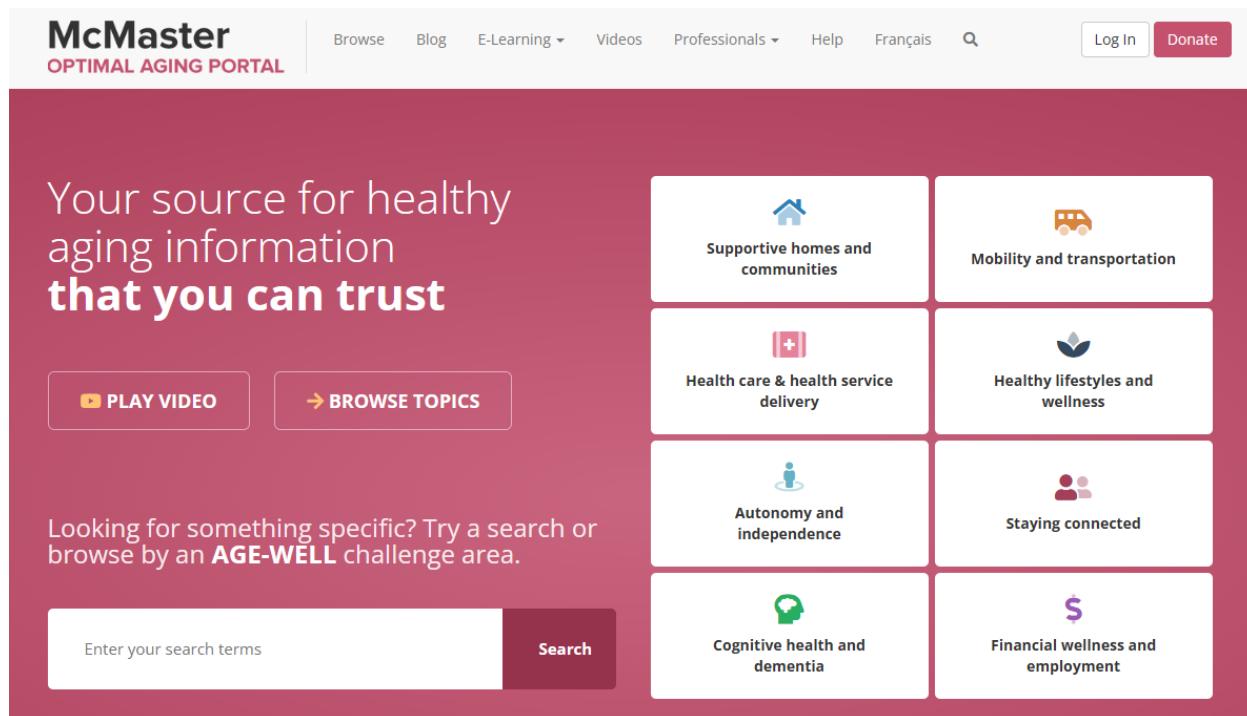
Read more [here](#) on the CRA website.

# e-Learning

Being and keeping informed is a wise preventative care approach.

## McMaster Optimal Aging Portal

Support for this Portal is largely provided by the Labarge Optimal Aging Initiative. [AGE-WELL](#) is a contributing partner. This portal provides direct and easy access to evidence-based information on health and social conditions to help you stay healthy, active and engaged as you grow older.



Your source for healthy aging information **that you can trust**

[PLAY VIDEO](#) [BROWSE TOPICS](#)

Supportive homes and communities

Mobility and transportation

Health care & health service delivery

Healthy lifestyles and wellness

Autonomy and independence

Staying connected

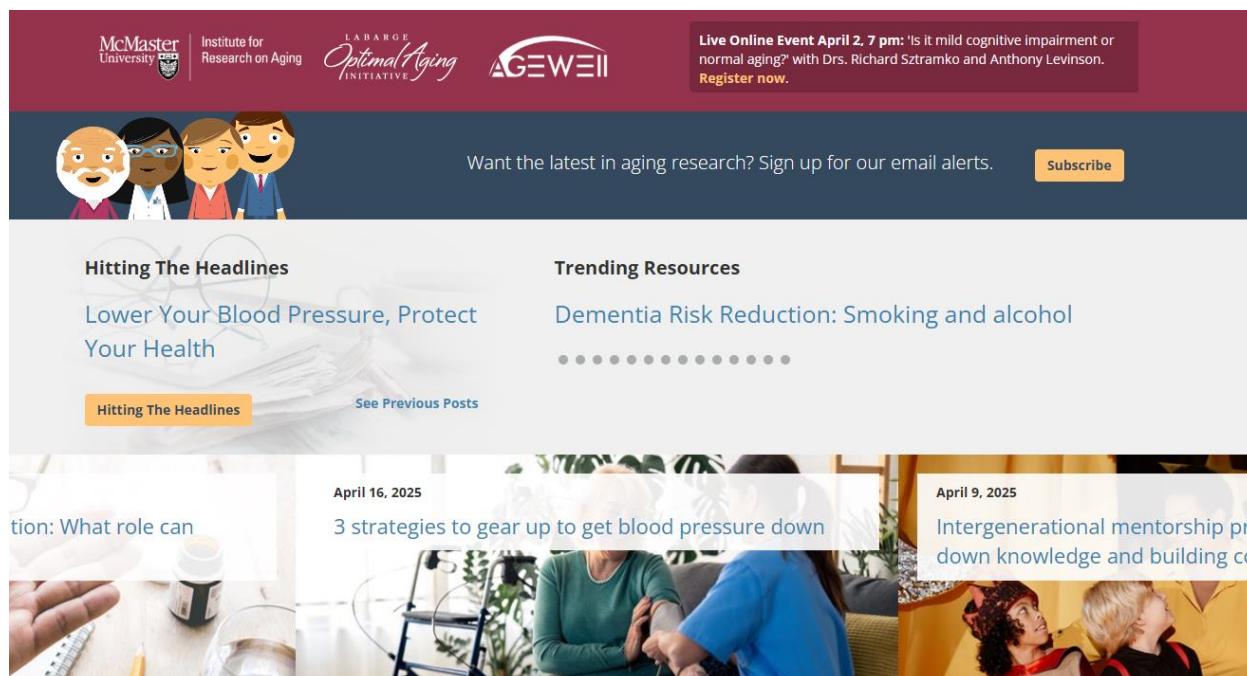
Cognitive health and dementia

Financial wellness and employment

Enter your search terms

Search

Live Online Event April 2, 7 pm: 'Is it mild cognitive impairment or normal aging?' with Drs. Richard Sztramko and Anthony Levinson.  
Register now.



Hitting The Headlines

Lower Your Blood Pressure, Protect Your Health

See Previous Posts

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Dementia Risk Reduction: Smoking and alcohol

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3 strategies to gear up to get blood pressure down

April 9, 2025

Intergenerational mentorship pro down knowledge and building co