

# A Guide to Living Well

STAYING HEALTHY  
& SAFE AT HOME

## Our Mission:

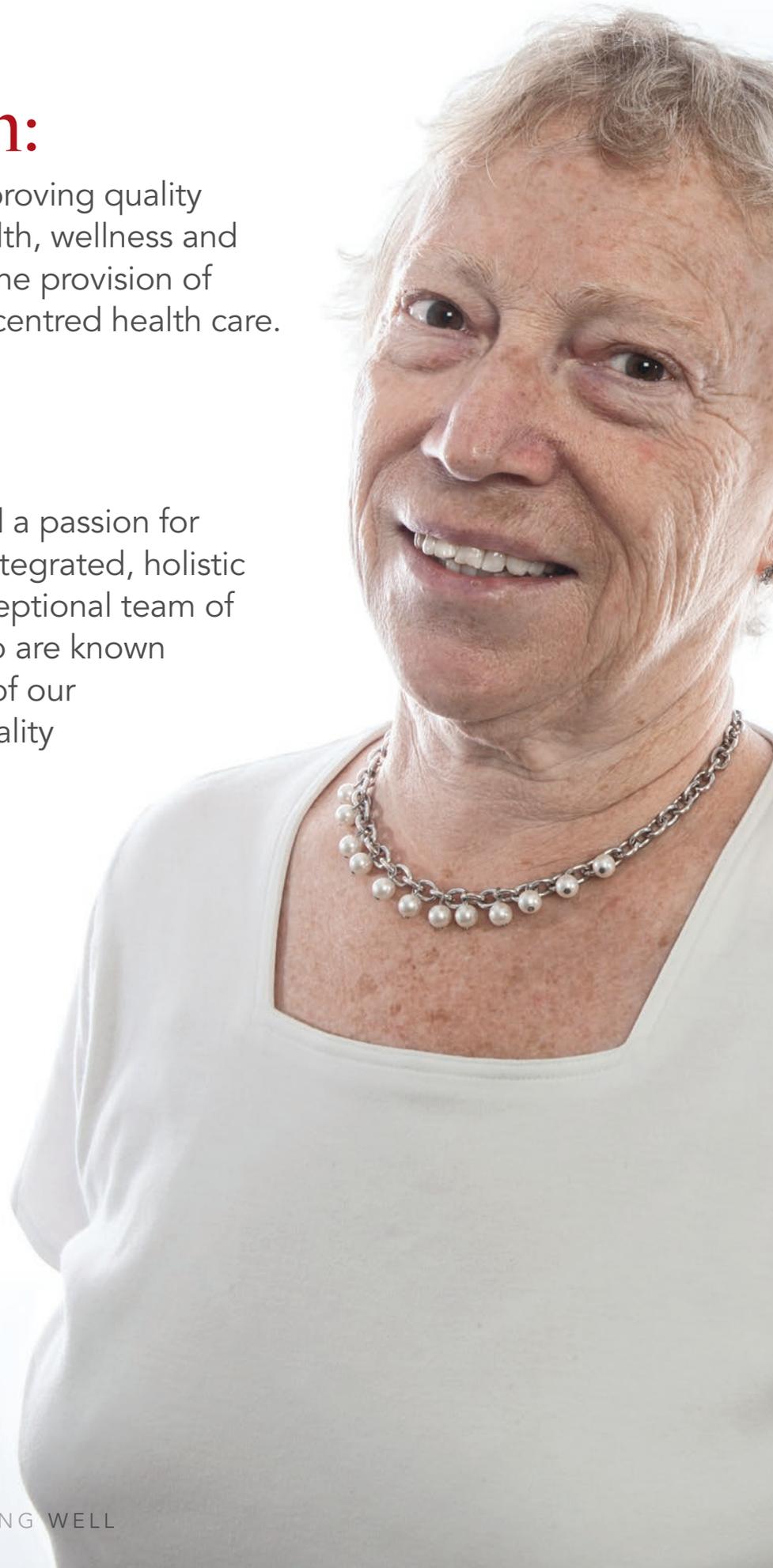
We are dedicated to improving quality of life by supporting health, wellness and independence through the provision of compassionate, patient-centred health care.

## Our Vision:

Driven by innovation and a passion for caring, we will provide integrated, holistic care delivered by an exceptional team of health professionals, who are known in the hearts and minds of our patients for the finest quality health care.

## Our Values:

- Patient-Focused
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Partnership
- Teamwork
- Transparency
- Respect
- Innovation





# You are Part of your Health Care Team

Health care professionals are trained in health care; you, however, are the expert when it comes to your body, your health and your needs.

Our relationship with you is a partnership. We at CarePartners will provide you with the information you need to understand your condition and to make choices about your lifestyle and treatment. In turn, we need you to share with us when your condition changes, when your medication or medical care changes and when you have questions or concerns. Together we will develop a plan for care and adjust things as they evolve.



# Your Privacy

CarePartners collects personal health information for the purpose of delivering service to you. Your personal health information is protected in accordance with the standards set out in the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004.

Your personal health information belongs to you; CarePartners may only collect, use or share it with your consent. Before you provide consent, it is important to understand how CarePartners uses your information:

- For the provision of direct health care
- To assist in administrative planning
- For quality improvement activities such as surveys and research
- For billing purposes
- For risk management activities
- As required by law

## Who has Access to My Information?

CarePartners only gives employees access to patient information if they require it in order to perform the duties of their job.

If your services are provided on behalf of the LHIN your personal health information will also be shared with representatives of that LHIN, as required.

Unless you direct us otherwise, CarePartners may share your personal health information with other health care providers who are involved in your care. This allows us to provide the best service possible to you. If you have concerns about this, please discuss them with a CarePartners manager.

CarePartners will not share your information with individuals who are not involved in your care (third party) without asking for your permission first, except as required by law.

## Protecting Your Information

CarePartners makes every effort to ensure that your information is protected against theft, loss and unauthorized use or disclosure. We have a comprehensive set of policies and procedures which directs how your information is collected, used, shared and stored. You may ask to see these policies by contacting a CarePartners manager. All CarePartners staff participate in privacy training sessions during orientation and on an annual basis thereafter. We store your information securely and according to record retention guidelines. When appropriate, it is destroyed in a secure manner.

## Accuracy and Accessing Your Information

We make every effort to ensure that your information is accurate; you have the right to request a review of your information should you feel that it is inaccurate.

You also have the right to access your personal health information. If you wish to access your personal health information you must make your request in writing and direct your request to a CarePartners manager.



## Questions and Complaints

If you have a question or complaint about CarePartners privacy practices, call the number on the back page of this booklet or contact the **CarePartners Privacy Officer**

1-866-885-7040 ext 2257  
privacyinquiries@carepartners.ca

Or you can contact the **Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner of Ontario:**

2 Bloor Street East,  
Suite 1400  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4W 1A8

Phone: (416) 326-3333  
www.ipc.on.ca

# Rights and Responsibilities

## As a patient you have the right to:

1. Be treated with respect
2. Actively participate in developing and updating your plan of care
3. Receive services that maintain your privacy and promote your independence
4. Receive services that recognize your unique needs and preferences
5. Be informed about the services CarePartners provides and be able to ask questions
6. Give and withdraw consent at any time related to providing health care services and the sharing of personal health information
7. Inform CarePartners of your complaints and concerns without fear of loss of services

## As a patient receiving services from CarePartners you have the responsibility to:

1. Treat your health care professionals with respect
2. Ensure other household members and visitors to your home treat your health care professionals with respect
3. Never abuse your health care professionals. Abuse includes threats, yelling, hitting or making sexual or humiliating remarks. Do not allow any household member or visitor to abuse your health care professionals
4. Participate in your care
5. Refrain from smoking tobacco or any other substance while CarePartners health care professionals are in your home
6. Put all pets in another room behind a closed door while CarePartners health care professionals are in your home
7. Ensure your driveway, walkway and stairs are safe and free of snow or ice
8. Be available at the scheduled time or notify CarePartners of your need for an alternate visit time
9. Always obtain the consent of the health care professional before photographing or videotaping



**Please note that our workers are professionals and they are **not allowed to:****

- Keep a key to your home
- Discuss other patients
- Become your power of attorney or witness the signing of documents
- Drive you or your family in your/their personal vehicle
- Have personal visitors while in your home
- Borrow anything from you or lend anything to you
- Sell anything to you or buy anything from you
- Connect with you on social media, such as Facebook

# CarePartners Services

- CarePartners provides community health care services in all 14 LHINs. Services are often government funded, but services may also be purchased privately
- CarePartners provides a wide variety of health care services to patients in their homes, at clinics, retirement homes, long-term care facilities, and workplaces
- CarePartners provides personal support, nursing and therapy services. Therapy services include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, dietetics, and speech language therapy
- Nursing services include wound care, palliative care, IV therapy, dialysis, chronic disease management and medication management
- Personal support includes assistance with bathing, dressing, walking, eating, and medications

## Contact Us

If you wish to arrange services, contact us at the phone number provided on the back of this booklet.





# General Home Safety

Seniors are more prone to injuries due to the changes that come with normal aging; these changes may include decreasing vision, hearing, sense of smell and sense of touch.

Decreasing bone density makes a senior more prone to fractures. When a senior is injured it may take longer to fully recover.

The good news is that there is a lot you can do to significantly reduce your chance for injury! This booklet contains information on how to reduce many of the potential hazards in your home and is designed for people of all ages and their families.



# Falls Prevention

One in four adults falls every year and falls can lead to serious injuries.

Here are some tips on preventing falls:

- Get up slowly from a bed or chair to avoid any sudden drop in blood pressure and ask for assistance when needed
- Watch for slippery surfaces when outdoors, especially in the winter
- Reduce hazards in your home
- Watch for pets, cords, and loose mats/rugs; secure mats and rugs to the floor
- Make sure that you have appropriate lighting both inside and outside of your home
- Install appropriately placed grab-bars for all toilets, showers and tubs, and add non-slip surfaces to all bathtubs and showers
- Clean up spills right away
- Take part in exercise programs that increase your strength and balance (always consult your doctor before beginning an exercise program)
- Wear non-skid rubber soled, well-fitting shoes with low heels. Avoid wearing only socks on wooden or tile floors
- If your health care provider has recommended a cane or walker, use it all the time
- If you are at risk for falling, consider wearing hip protectors to reduce your risk of injury
- Have a pharmacist review your medications as some medications can affect your balance or cause dizziness



# Medication Safety

Certain medications, herbal supplements and vitamins, when combined together, can have an unexpected reaction.

- Tell your health care provider about all the medications you take, including prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, herbal remedies, and supplements. Some medications can have unexpected reactions when taken together
- Always take your medications as ordered. Talk to your health care provider if you think you should change how you take a medication
- Store all medications out of the reach of children
- If you take narcotics, make sure they are not visible to visitors in the home
- Consult with your pharmacist if you are having trouble figuring out what medications to take at what time (a pill box or blister pack may help keep medications organized)
- When a health care professional is giving you a medication, always state your name clearly before you are given the medication
- Always carry a list of your medications with you
- Return all unused medications to your pharmacy
- Use only one pharmacy to ensure accuracy and consistency



# Preventing the Spread of Infections

Washing your hands is the simplest and most effective way to prevent the spread of infections.

Remember to wash your hands:

- Before providing health care
- After using the bathroom
- After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- Before and after preparing and handling food, especially after touching raw meats and fish
- After handling garbage
- After handling dirty equipment, dishes or utensils
- After handling animals or animal waste
- More frequently if you or someone in your home is sick

Always inform the CarePartners health care professionals if you or someone in your home has an infectious illness. Our team will take special precautions to ensure that your illness is not spread to others. If you have a cough or cold:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not into your hands
- Put your used tissues in the waste basket
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after coughing or sneezing



## Immunizations

Immunizations, including the flu shot, are an important way to both keep yourself from getting sick and prevent the spread of infections to others. Contact your health care provider or the local health unit to learn what immunizations are right for you and where they are available.

## Learning how to Prevent Infections from Spreading

If you or someone in your household has an infection, CarePartners health care professionals will provide you with important information on how to prevent spreading the infection, both to your household members and to our workers. The specific practices you will need to use depend on the type of infection, the task that is being performed, and the surrounding environment.

If you are a family member performing nursing care, our health care professionals may recommend that you wear protective equipment, such as gloves. You can purchase protective equipment at your local pharmacy.

## Concerns about Infection Control Practices

All of CarePartners health care professionals receive training each year on how to prevent the spread of infections. We know that avoiding infections is very important to patients and families so if you have any concerns about the practices of our workers please call the number on the back of this booklet and speak to a CarePartners manager.

# Sharps Safety

Sharps are needles or lancets. Used sharps are dangerous because they can spread diseases.

If you are using needles or lancets, always place the used sharps in a specially designed sharps disposal container. This container can be obtained at your local pharmacy where they will also advise you on how to dispose of the used container safely.

- **DO NOT** place used sharps in the regular garbage or leave them lying around the house
- **DO NOT** bend or recap used needles as you may injure yourself
- **DO NOT** reuse syringes, needles or lancets as this may increase your chance of infections

## Did you know?

Under the law, health care workers must use 'safety-engineered sharps' which are designed to protect the user from injury. If a CarePartners health care professional is using your syringes or lancets, we will be asking you to provide safety-engineered equipment which may cost more.





## Fire Safety

Make sure you have a working smoke detector on every level of your home and a carbon monoxide detector near your sleeping area. Test the batteries every 6 months.

Follow these important safety tips:

- Never leave a burning candle unattended – if you leave the room, blow out the candle
- If you are using the stove top, do not leave any cooking unattended
- Do not deep fry
- If you use oxygen, do not smoke in your home and do not let others smoke in your home
- Have an escape plan in the event of a fire
- If you do have a fire, do not try to put it out, leave your home and call 9-1-1



# Planning for Emergencies and Disasters

Extreme weather related disasters, power outages, floods, fires etc. are emergencies that happen when we least expect them. It is very important that you are prepared and have a plan in place in the event that services are not available. Being prepared will help keep you safe and make real emergency situations less stressful.

## Make a Plan

Develop a personal/family disaster plan. Remember to practice it. Draw up a floor plan of your home that shows all possible exits from each room. Plan a main exit route and an alternate exit route from

each room. If you live in an apartment, plan to use the stairs instead of the elevators. Identify safe places where everyone should meet if you cannot go home or if you need to evacuate.

## Gather Emergency Supplies

Prepare emergency supplies for at least three days, including:

- Medications – you should have enough of the medication you need to last at least three days
- A list of the medications you take regularly and their dosages, the name of the doctor prescribing them, and a list of any allergies
- Medical supplies - if you use medical supplies, have an extra three-day supply available
- Contact information for your health care provider(s) as well as relatives and friends who should be notified if you become injured or need assistance
- Important documents in a water-proof container
- Change of clothing and footwear, blankets and/or sleeping bag
- A flashlight, battery-operated radio and extra batteries in case of a power loss. Candles, matches and lighter (place candles in sturdy containers and do not burn unattended)
- A whistle to call for help
- Cash (including coins) to help you through the emergency period. (ATM machines and banks won't work without electricity and stores won't be able to accept credit cards)
- If you use oxygen, arrange for a back-up unit
- Three days worth of non-perishable food (that does not require preparation, cooking or refrigeration). Most importantly you will need water; one gallon (3-4 litres) of water per day per person. Don't forget a manual can opener
- Personal hygiene supplies, incontinent briefs. Include hand sanitizer in the event there is a limited supply of soap and water

## Be Informed

Listen to local radio or television for information from authorities. If the power is out, this is where a battery operated radio will come in handy. Keep a list of emergency contact numbers available by your phone. Keep a list of utility numbers i.e. hydro, gas, water etc. Notify your local hydro department now if you require electricity for medical purposes i.e. to run oxygen, suction machines, etc. – so they can ensure you are a priority during power outages.



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Everyone has a role in the prevention of abuse. Educate yourself about abuse. If you know someone who is at risk for abuse, offer support. Watch for warning signs; if you suspect abuse, report it.

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## Abuse Prevention

Abuse can take many forms – it may be physical, emotional, financial, or sexual. Victims of abuse are often afraid to speak out because they think it is their fault, but this is not true.

If someone is abusing you, or if you think someone is taking advantage of you, tell someone who you can trust, like a trusted family member, a friend, or your health care professional. You can protect yourself from financial abuse by:

- Never giving out financial information, such as your credit card number, to a stranger
- Never purchasing anything from a phone or door-to-door salesman
- Always checking with a trusted family member or friend when you are unsure if a financial or legal transaction is safe or trustworthy
- Only connecting on the internet with people you know



## Do you Have a Complaint or Concern? Need to Contact Us?

At CarePartners we take the quality of care we provide very seriously and are always working to improve our services. Please share your feedback with us – we want to hear from you!

To let us know of a complaint or concern, or if you just have questions, please use the contact information on the back of this booklet to contact your CarePartners manager or email [info@carepartners.ca](mailto:info@carepartners.ca)

We are always looking for patients and family members to help us design our programs and services. If you would like to become a volunteer patient advisor with CarePartners, please email us at [patientadvisor@carepartners.ca](mailto:patientadvisor@carepartners.ca)

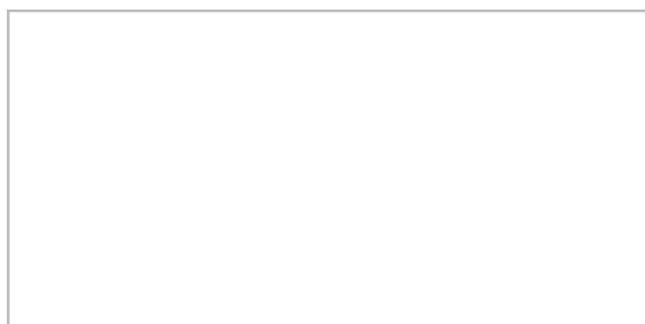
# Take Charge

## Be Your Own Health & Safety Advocate!

- ✔ Eat a balanced, healthy diet every day
- ✔ Involve yourself in social activities or games that stimulate your mind
- ✔ Stay active. Ask your health professional for a routine that safely fits your lifestyle and ability
- ✔ Reduce risks and hazards before an injury occurs – keep your home safe
- ✔ Ask for help when you need it
- ✔ Talk to your health care provider about your health and safety needs
- ✔ Make safety a priority in your everyday routine



To contact your local CarePartners branch, or to speak with the Branch Manager, use this contact information:



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