



MASE Monthly Newsletter



Proud Recipients of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

February 2020

Happy Valentines Day for February 14th. However, if your loved-one has Alzheimer's or another kind of dementia, the date might also bring about painful reminders of how much your relationship has changed. It can be difficult or even painful to celebrate Valentine's Day when your partner is unable or unwilling to actively participate. For many couples who regularly celebrated the day over the years, it might be even more painful to pretend it now doesn't exist.

Despite complications that come with the progression of dementia, there are still ways you can stay connected with your loved one, and appreciate your love for them, both past and present. Ultimately, acknowledging your partnership is the best you can possibly do for a partner with dementia, and for yourself. Remind them often that they are loved, that they love you, and that you both continue to share a strong connection.



Thought Provoking!



It is sad to see that after 30 episodes and 57 years of marriage, Prunella Scales and Timothy West have made their last trip together on Great Canal Journeys, due to Prunella's advancing Alzheimer's.

Screen legend Prunella revealed in 2013 that she was struggling with her memory, and could not even recall the year she married her husband – which was 1963.

Tim revealed the heartache at seeing his wife slip away amid her battle, admitting that while he cherishes the time he has with her, the effects of the disease make communication difficult.

'The saddest thing is that you just watch the gradual disappearance of the person you knew and loved and who you were once very close to. However if you live day to day it is manageable. It is when you start thinking of the past and you think, "Oh what a shame she can't do that any more", or you can't talk about this any more. Then it becomes quite distressing.'

For those of us who have been on that long journey with a loved one, this TV programme taught us many things. Most importantly that your tenderness and patience is the greatest help when in the final stages of this dreadful disease; and that when the most bitter of blows comes, when your loved one can't even remember you are, the one consolation is that **'You know and remember who they are and were'**.

What is a Senior Citizen?

A Senior Citizen is one who was here before; the pill, television, frozen foods, contact lenses, credit cards and before man walked on the moon.

"Time Sharing" meant togetherness, not holiday homes, and a "chip" meant a piece of wood. "Hardware" meant nuts and bolts, and "Software" wasn't even a word.

We got married first, then lived together, and thought cleavage was something butchers did.

A "stud" was something that fastened a collar to a shirt, and "going all the way" meant staying on a double decker bus to the bus depot.

We thought "fast food" was what you ate in Lent; a "Big Mac" was an oversized raincoat and "crumpet" we had for our tea.

In our day "grass" was mown, "pot" was something you cooked in, "coke" was kept in the coal house; a "joint" was cooked on Sundays!

We are the Senior Citizens of today - a hardy bunch when you think just how much the world has changed!



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Alzheimer's Society Dementia Helpline 0300 222 1122 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and Saturday and Sunday 10am - 4pm.

Coping with the cold weather



Keep warm to keep the bugs away

Cold weather can affect everyone, but if you are an older person then you need to take special care to keep warm because you will be more vulnerable to illness. This is especially so if you are seriously underweight, disabled, suffer from bronchitis, emphysema or asthma, or have experienced a stroke or any kind of heart condition.

Simple steps to follow

By following a few steps, you can make sure that you keep warm during the winter and protect yourself from common winter illnesses:

- Use room thermometers and keep your room at a temperature between 21C to 24C (70F to 75F). If the temperature falls below 16C, you may be at risk of hypothermia, a heart attack or stroke.
- Avoid sitting for long periods. Move around as much as possible - even doing the vacuuming will get your circulation going and warm you up. If you are unable to walk, just moving your arms and legs, as well as wiggling your fingers and toes, will help you to keep warm.
- Wear lots of layers of clothing, preferably of natural material or man-made fibres that breathe. Thermal underwear can help keep out the chill.

If you can afford to do so, you might want to consider heating your bedroom throughout the night. Otherwise, warm the bedroom before going to bed - use a hot water bottle and wear warm nightwear. You may decide to invest in an electric blanket, although this should never be used at the same time as a hot water bottle.

- Keep the bedroom window closed - evidence suggests that a cold draught to the head can cause your blood pressure to increase.
- Don't go outdoors without warm clothing and sturdy boots or shoes.
- Keep your feet warm by adding insoles to your shoes.
- Always cover your head, hands and feet (even if you're indoors) - you'll stay much warmer that way, especially as a lot of your body heat is lost through your head.

Eating properly means eating healthily

During the winter months, it is very important to eat food that will help you to build up your resistance. Hot meals and hot drinks will give you a feeling of wellbeing:

- Eat at least three times a day - including at least one hot meal.
- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables - five portions a day if possible (one portion of fruit equals, for example, one apple, orange or banana; two small fruits, such as plums, kiwis or satsumas; one cupful of berries; two to three tablespoonfuls of fresh fruit salad, stewed or canned fruit; or one glass (150ml) of fruit juice. One portion of vegetables equals two tablespoonfuls of raw, cooked, frozen or canned vegetables or one dessert bowl full of salad. Fresh vegetables and fruit are the 'best buy' nutritionally, but frozen, tinned, and dried produce count too).
- Have hot drinks throughout the day - including one before going to bed. In fact, you might want to keep a flask containing a hot drink by your bed in case you are cold during the night.
- You need protein, energy and vitamins and these can be found in bread (preferably wholemeal), milk, meat, fish, eggs, potatoes and beans (including baked beans).
- Try to keep in a stock of basic foods (dried, tinned or frozen) in case you have a brief illness or cannot shop because of the bad weather.



Are you living alone?

If you are alone, try to make sure that someone - a friend, relative or neighbour - can help with shopping, collecting prescriptions, paying bills, etc., if you cannot get out either because of the weather or because you become unwell. Check your local pharmacies to see if any offer a home delivery service for prescription items.

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: www.themasegroup.com

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