



## November is National Family Caregivers Month

Over 50 million people, or more than one in four Americans were family caregivers at some point last year, according to the National Family Caregivers Association. A family caregiver takes care of or assists a chronically ill, disabled, or elderly loved one.

November is a time to celebrate, honor, thank, and support family caregivers. This month is for everyone. The truth is there is not going to be a family in America that isn't impacted by caregiving at one time or another. Caregiving is a societal issue that we all must face.

National Family Caregivers month is important because it allows us to recognize caregivers and let them know they are appreciated.

So what can you do to show your support for a friend or family member that is involved in caregiving?

### Here are a few suggestions:

☞ Be in touch. Call or arrange a visit. Don't be a stranger. Caregivers often feel isolated from the rest of the world.

☞ Stop by and bring fresh flowers and say thank you for all that they do.

☞ Offer to sit with the caregiver's loved one while they run an errand, take a nap, or just get out of the house for a few hours.

☞ Bring over a home cooked meal, or several frozen meals the family can heat up if they are not up to cooking.

☞ Pick up a light-hearted movie, a funny card or a favorite book to brighten the caregiver's day.

☞ Offer to pick up groceries or stop by the pharmacy to fill a prescription to save the caregiver from another errand.

☞ Show them that you care. It only takes a minute to reach out and let someone know that they aren't alone. It'll mean the world to them!

**I am only one, but I am still one.  
I cannot do everything,  
but still I can do something.**

**— Helen Keller**



Source: [www.nfcares.org](http://www.nfcares.org)

## Words of Wisdom

The most important thing  
in life is to learn how to  
give out love, and to  
let it come in.

Morrie Schwartz

## Caregiver Stress

Who is a caregiver? You are a caregiver if you give basic care to a person who has a chronic medical condition. A chronic condition is an illness that doesn't go away. Some types of basic care are helping with bathing, dressing and feeding. Helping with household chores like cleaning, cooking and shopping are also basic care. Persons with chronic medical conditions may be affected by cancer, stroke, multiple sclerosis or dementia and may need extra help.

If you are a caregiver, you might be doing these things for another person:

- ☞ Lifting
- ☞ Turning him or her in bed
- ☞ Bathing
- ☞ Hugging
- ☞ Dressing
- ☞ Feeding
- ☞ Making him or her smile or laugh
- ☞ Cooking
- ☞ Shopping
- ☞ Crying with him or her
- ☞ Paying bills
- ☞ Running errands
- ☞ Sharing memories
- ☞ Giving medicine

How do you know if caregiving is putting too much stress on you? Listen to yourself. Are you feeling

sad or blue? Are you crying more than before? Does your energy level feel low? Do you feel like you don't have any time to yourself? Are you having difficulty sleeping?

If you are feeling overwhelmed please understand these feelings are not wrong or strange. Caregiving can be very stressful. Caregivers carry the weight of the world on their shoulders.

Some doctors refer to caregivers as the "hidden patient." If you don't take care of yourself and stay well then you won't be

able to help anyone else. Taking care of yourself is very important. Talk with your friends and family members. Ask them for help in giving care. You are not a failure because you ask for help.

Look for help in your community. Where can you find out about community services that can help you or provide information? A good place to begin is with your local Area Agency on Aging. They can link you to community resources to assist you in your caregiving responsibilities. In Ohio call the Ohio Department of Aging at 1-866-243-5678 to be connected to your Area Agency on Aging. For out-of-state assistance call the National ElderCare Locator 1-800-677-1116.

*Source: COAAA's Caregiving In The Home Education Series, American Academy of Family Physicians. Submitted by: Lynn Dobb Education Manager COAAA.*



## Dementia

Do you know a loved one or a friend that was once told they had “hardening of the arteries?”

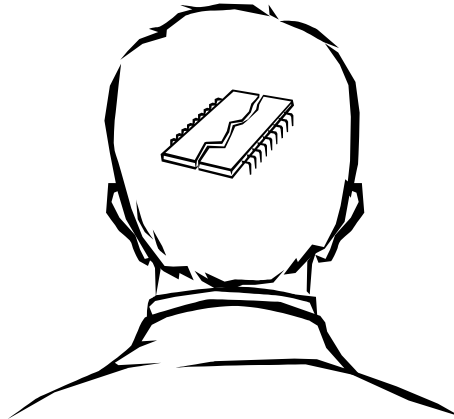
Do we still believe that “hardening of the arteries” leads to the loss of mental function as we age?” No, we do not.

There is no such thing as senility. Growing older for most people means that they can and will maintain full mental function. However, older people may experience some loss of cognitive function that is specifically isolated to memory. This is also known as forgetfulness. It is important to distinguish between forgetfulness and the impairment known as dementia.

### What is dementia?

Dementia is used to refer to a group of symptoms that result in the decline of intellectual functions, such as remembering, thinking, and judgment. This decline, or deterioration, is severe enough to interrupt normal daily activities and relationships.

The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer’s disease. Alzheimer’s disease causes tremendous emotional disruption in the older adult’s life, not to mention the lives of their loved ones. It steals the person’s personality and their ability to interact with others.



Experts believe that by the year 2050, the number of people affected by Alzheimer’s disease in the United States may reach 14 million. Currently, 4 million people in this country may have this disease.

Another form of dementia is known as multi-infarct dementia. In multi-infarct dementia, small strokes develop and cause a progressive reduction in mental sharpness.

It occurs most often in diabetics and those with cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure. Treatment of all forms of hypertension helps prevent this type of dementia.

Dementia is not considered normal aging and afflicts only about 10 percent of persons over the age of sixty-five. Fear of losing one’s memory is quite understandable, therefore, it is important to work on keeping one’s mind sharp. Mental exercises such as reading, working crossword puzzles, conversing, and maintaining close, meaningful relationships with other people can be beneficial.

It is important to stay active and involved as we age. In other words, follow the common phrase—  
“use it or lose it!”

*Submitted by: Lisa Marie Gibson, Program Coordinator, Franklin County OSU Extension.  
Source: Rowe, J.W. & Kahn, R.L. (1999). Successful Aging. Dell Publishing.*

## Safe Handling of Holiday Turkey Dinners

To avoid spending the entire holiday working in the kitchen, many people are purchasing Ready Prepared Holiday Turkey Dinners from their grocer. These dinners allow you to spend more time with your loved ones and less time cooking and cleaning.

Properly prepared and handled foods can assure a safe holiday meal. Follow these steps to make sure your meal is safe as well as convenient.

### Hot From the Oven

#### If Eating Within 2 Hours...

Pick up the food HOT and keep it HOT. Keeping foods warm is not enough. Harmful bacteria multiply fastest between 40 and 140 °F. Set oven temperature high enough to keep the turkey at 140 °F or above. (Use a meat thermometer). Stuffing and side dishes must also stay HOT. Covering with foil will help keep your food moist.

#### If Eating Much Later...

Don't try to keep the food hot longer than 2 hours. They will be safer and taste better if you:

- ☞ Remove all stuffing from the turkey cavity immediately and refrigerate.
- ☞ Cut turkey off the bone and refrigerate. Slice breast meat. Legs and wings may be left whole.
- ☞ Refrigerate potatoes, gravy and vegetables too-in shallow containers.
- ☞ Reheat foods thoroughly to 165 °F until hot and steaming. Bring gravy to a rolling boil. Stir and rotate foods reheated in the microwave.

### Cooked and Refrigerated

Keep cold foods COLD. Refrigerate as soon as you get home (always within 2 hours). Plan to serve your meal within 1 to 2 days. Reheating a whole turkey is not recommended. If you plan to reheat a turkey, cut the meat off the bone. Slice breast meat. Legs and wings may be left whole. Refrigerate in shallow containers. Buying a refrigerated, fully-cooked stuffed turkey is not recommended.

### Leftovers?

These short but safe limits will help keep refrigerated food from spoiling or becoming dangerous to eat.

#### Refrigerator Storage at 40 °F or Below

- ☞ Cooked Turkey – 3-4 days
- ☞ Stuffing and Gravy – 1-2 days
- ☞ Other Cooked Dishes – 3-4 days

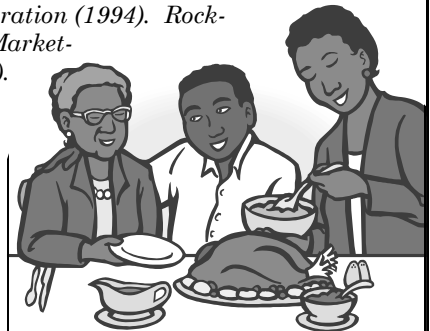
#### Storage in the Freezer at 0 °F or Below

- ☞ Turkey Slices or Pieces – 4 mos.
- ☞ Turkey Covered with Broth or Gravy – 6 mos.
- ☞ Cooked Poultry Dishes – 4-6 mos.
- ☞ Stuffing and Gravy – 1 mo.

For more information about food safety, call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. Happy Thanksgiving!

#### Sources:

*U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Extension Service, (1994) Washington, D.C. • Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration (1994). Rockville, MD. • Food Marketing Institute, (1994). Washington, D.C. • National Turkey Federation, (1994). Reston, VA. Submitted by: Jennifer Even, FCS Agent, Hamilton County, OSU Extension.*



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## For More Information...

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For more information, other Ohio State University Extension resources and links to your local county extension website, visit (without the www):

*http://ohioline.osu.edu/*



**Senior Series**  
Ohio State University Extension and Ohio Aging Networks Working Together to Address Older Adult Issues

### **Senior Hotline ♪ Volume 8, Issue 6**

*... a newsletter for older adults or those who care for an older adult*

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