

Ideas for living and staying well >

# The *Wellness Guide* for carers



+ **Deakin University** School of Nursing  
**Department of Human Services**  
Older Persons Health Promotion Program

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**[www.deakin.edu.au/dhs/wellness\\_guide](http://www.deakin.edu.au/dhs/wellness_guide)**

# Contents >

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction                            | 2  |
| How to use the Guide                    | 2  |
| 01 <b>Becoming a ‘Carer’</b>            | 4  |
| 02 <b>Caring relationship</b>           | 6  |
| 03 <b>Healthy body</b>                  | 8  |
| 04 <b>Ageing process</b>                | 10 |
| 05 <b>Exercise</b>                      | 12 |
| 06 <b>Good food guide</b>               | 14 |
| 07 <b>Hearing and seeing</b>            | 16 |
| 08 <b>Healthy mind</b>                  | 18 |
| 09 <b>Managing stress</b>               | 20 |
| 10 <b>Personality and coping</b>        | 22 |
| 11 <b>Social contact and activities</b> | 24 |
| 12 <b>Peace of mind</b>                 | 26 |
| 13 <b>Personal safety</b>               | 28 |
| 14 <b>Help is available</b>             | 30 |
| 15 <b>Respite and residential care</b>  | 32 |
| 16 <b>Using the Internet</b>            | 34 |
| Resources                               | 36 |
| Print and audio visual resources        | 43 |
| Notes                                   | 44 |

# Introduction

*The Wellness Guide for Carers* is an easy-to-use directory that contains helpful information and handy hints on:

- how to live and stay well
- where to find information on health-related topics
- how to seek help from available community services.

We have developed this Guide in conjunction with older carers. The Deakin Research Team hope you find this Guide helpful and easy to use.

## How to use the Guide

Each topic is discussed over two pages. It has a number of sections:

**1 A summary** of the main issues as seen by the carers and ‘direct quotes using the carers own words.’ *All the agencies suggested for contacting are in italics.*

### 2 Handy hints

#### HANDY HINTS

- dot point ideas for action

### 3 Where to find help

#### Where to find help

A list of the services and agencies mentioned on this page:

- local telephone numbers in the Barwon region, Victoria
- 1800 freecall and statewide phone numbers
- websites

Ring them up or look at their websites to get the extra information you need and to ask for these services to assist you directly. They are there to help you!

## 4 Your notes

### YOUR NOTES

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Write down extra information to build up your own knowledge about health and useful resources, and make the Guide work for you.

### Help for using the Guide

- You don't have to read it all in one go, just the pages that are relevant to you at the time.
- The information here is also relevant to the person you care for, so use these ideas to benefit their health and wellbeing too.
- A Resource index at the back of the book lists all information referred to in the 'Where to find help' sections. This is a quick way of getting phone numbers and web addresses.
- There is a Notes page at the back of the book to add extra hints and contacts you discover.

We hope the Guide helps you to look after your own health and wellbeing and makes it easier to find the information you need as a carer.



**Good luck and good health from the carers and the Deakin team.**

## Feelings

'People who become carers can find it hard to adjust. It is OK to be upset.'

In the early days of becoming a carer, you may experience a wide range of feelings—shock, sadness, anger, grief. It may be helpful to seek counselling to discuss these feelings and help you adjust to the changes in your life. Social workers are available at hospitals and rehabilitation centres for crisis counselling for patients' families. Talk to your general practitioner about a referral to a psychologist. Call *Carers Victoria* for free telephone counselling.

'You need to talk to someone.'

## Adjustment for all involved

'It is very hard for anyone to lose their independence. It was a huge adjustment for all of us.'

The person you care for will also be experiencing many changes and a wide range of feelings. Be involved with them, try to understand their needs and allow them as much independence as possible. If you are worried that their behaviour seems erratic or they become withdrawn or moody it is important to seek help early.

'I have found peace of mind by reading about the illness.'

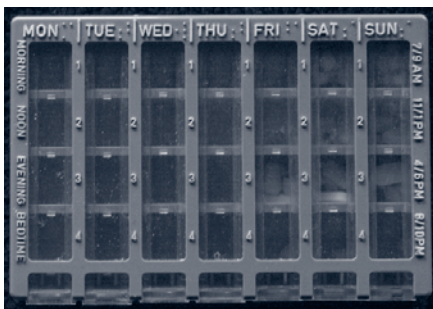
## Going home

'Be prepared for new people to enter your life and your home. They are there to help you.'

People with physical disabilities may need additional assistance with personal care tasks. *District Nursing* may assist in your home with nursing care and medication, and *Home Help* with cooking, cleaning, bathing and dressing. Discuss how to set up these arrangements with the social worker before going home from hospital. Home alterations for accessibility, such as ramps and bathroom alterations may be needed. Contact the *Aged Care Assessment Service*. Once at home, ask your local council about which *Home and Community Care* services you are eligible for. There are costs for most services.

# HANDY HINTS

- Acceptance of a caring role comes with time
- Older, frail people often have trouble coping with change so stick to familiar habits when possible
- Find a general practitioner or other health professional who will explain the condition you are dealing with in ways you understand. Ask questions and get them to keep you up-to-date
- Decide to have your own general practitioner or use the same one as the person you care for
- Keep a diary of health issues and changes to take with you to appointments
- Learn about the medication required by the person you care for
- Medications can be sorted into a 'dosette' box according to the time and day they need to be taken. A pharmacist can do this for you or you can do it yourself
- Go to relevant information sessions if you have the time and energy
- If you became a carer because of a transport accident you may be eligible to lodge a claim with the *Transport Accident Commission* (TAC)
- Always seek medical advice if you have concerns about any changes or problems
- Contact *Carers Victoria* about their information, education and counselling services
- Always ask what costs are involved for services and keep a record



## Where to find help ?

### Local telephone numbers

Aged Care Assessment Service 5279 2246

District Nursing—See Community Health Centres, page 38

Hospitals—See page 39

Local Government—See page 40

Your general practitioner \_\_\_\_\_

Psychologists in the Yellow Pages

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Carers Victoria 1800 242 636

Transport Accident Commission 1800 332 556

### Websites

[www.carersvic.org.au](http://www.carersvic.org.au)

[www.tac.vic.gov.au](http://www.tac.vic.gov.au)

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## Choices in caring

Becoming a carer is not usually a deliberate choice for most people. However, you can make choices about how you undertake your role as a carer.

‘You are entitled to a life—you don’t have to give up everything. Create some independence for yourself.’

## What is it really like to be a carer?

‘Caring takes a lot of effort, time and patience.’

It is important to consider the long-term nature and complexity of some caring roles. Many carers feel that their families and friends do not really understand what it is like to be a carer. They do not realise the demands that are placed on a carer 24 hours a day. The carer agencies listed, can provide information on caring, to help you and others understand this complex role.

‘Tell others not to expect too much of you for the time being.’

## Transferring from independence to dependence

‘I’m a security blanket—he likes me to be there.’

Many carers have to cope with the growing dependence rather than independence of the person they care for, especially if that person is elderly or has declining health. The person being cared for is often unaware of the strain the carer is under, which can be quite frustrating.

## Carer, plus other roles

‘You have to learn new skills.’

Many carers may need to work as well as do all the household tasks, like cooking, cleaning, home maintenance and book keeping, even if these tasks were not their role before they became a carer.

Enrolling in a class at your local community centre could help with learning new skills. Talk to *Carer Respite* about respite so you can attend classes.





# HANDY HINTS

- Be clear about your role as a carer
- Know your limits and learn to say 'no'
- Find out where to go for help
- Take care of yourself and your other relationships
- Recognise and discuss your needs with each other, your family and friends and tell them that you need time out to do things for yourself
- Never try to do too much at once
- Be a little bit selfish with your time and put yourself on top of the list occasionally
- Set routines can be helpful, but be flexible as things often change
- Take advantage of offers of help or outings that you can manage
- Have shared pleasures with the person you care for, like listening to music, reading, looking at photos or sitting in the garden
- Remember the good times

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## Where to find help



### Local telephone numbers

Aged Care Assessment Service 5229 1922

Community Centres in the Yellow Pages

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Commonwealth Carelink Centres 1800 052 222

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre 1800 059 059

Carers Victoria 1800 242 636

### Websites

[www.carersvic.org.au](http://www.carersvic.org.au)

[www.commcarelink.health.gov.au](http://www.commcarelink.health.gov.au)

[www.geelonginfo.com.au](http://www.geelonginfo.com.au)



## Staying as healthy as you can

‘Take care of yourself. If you are not in good condition you cannot look after anyone.’

Being a carer puts a further strain on your health and sometimes prevents carers from seeking health treatment. It is really important to have regular medical check ups and to use prescribed or ‘over the counter’ non-prescription medication safely.

## What can I do?

‘Always talk to your doctor about health worries—not the person over the road!’

As well as eating well and exercising regularly, there are many things you can do to maintain health. Ignoring problems is not one of them!

## Healthy heart—1 2 3

**1 Quitting smoking** is the single most important thing you can do to reduce the risk of heart disease. The *Quitline* is a telephone service providing information and support for smokers who want help with quitting and for people who are concerned about family or friends who smoke. **2 Alcohol in moderation.** As people age, the amount of alcohol that is safe to drink decreases. If you drink alcohol, limit your intake to no more than two standard drinks a day. Drink other fluids, like water or soft drink, at the same time to prevent dehydration. Check with your doctor if there are any risks associated with taking your medication and drinking alcohol. **3 Lose weight if you need to.** Healthy eating and being physically active will assist weight loss and improve blood pressure levels. The *Heart Foundation Heartline* can help with dietary advice.

## Back care

‘Bend zee knees.’ Many carers have to provide physical assistance to the person they care for in activities of daily living, like showering and dressing. Carers need to learn safe physical handling techniques and to use the most suitable equipment. A physiotherapist can advise you on safety and appropriate aids and equipment.

## Continence

Good bladder habits are important for a healthy lifestyle. Try to drink at least 6 to 8 cups of water or other fluids a day (unless otherwise advised by your doctor). Juice, cordial, soft drink, milk and jelly can all be counted as fluids. Limit the amount of caffeine and alcohol you drink. Do regular pelvic floor exercises—men as well as women!

# HANDY HINTS



- Your own health is important too, so have a regular medical check up
- It is never too late to make healthy lifestyle changes
- Don't put off visiting your doctor because of your carer commitments
- Shop around until you find a general practitioner who listens to you
- Carefully follow instructions for prescription medication and use only as directed
- For information about medicines call Medicines Line
- Seek advice from relevant allied health professionals as needed and follow this advice
- Call the National Continence Helpline for pelvic floor instruction leaflets and the public toilet map
- If alcohol is causing you problems call the Australian Drug Foundation
- If you have a chronic illness attend a Better Health Self-Management course at a Community Health Centre
- Have a rest and relax when you can

## Where to find help



### Local telephone numbers

Continence Advisor 5260 3333

Physiotherapists—See Community Health Centres, page 38

Your general practitioner \_\_\_\_\_

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Australian Drug Foundation 1800 069 700

Heartline 1300 362 787

Medicines Line 1300 888 763

National Continence Helpline 1800 330 066

Quitline 131 848

### Websites

[www.adf.org.au](http://www.adf.org.au)

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

[www.contfound.org.au](http://www.contfound.org.au)

[www.heartfoundation.com.au](http://www.heartfoundation.com.au)

[www.quit.org.au](http://www.quit.org.au)

[www.toiletmap.gov.au](http://www.toiletmap.gov.au)

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## Life stages

**‘We have a beginning and an end.’**

The human life span is about 85 years, with a maximum life duration of about 115 years. People are now living longer, so more attention needs to be given to quality of life. A key characteristic of older people today is their youthful outlook. They do not see themselves as being old.

**‘Getting old is all in the mind—if you don’t look in the mirror! Ageing is nothing to do with what the calendar says.’**

## What will happen to you as you age?

**‘It is different for everybody. It comes on gradually.’**

No two people age in the same way. Ageing causes changes in physical appearance and function. As you age, the likelihood of having some health impairment increases, yet older adults today are healthier than ever before. If you are worried about a health problem that is not a normal part of ageing, seek medical advice. If you are advised to use aids, like a walking stick or frame, then do so for safety sake.

## The impact of ageing on your role as a carer

**‘I know that I need a rest and it’s becoming more so as I get older.’**

Older carers must cope with their own age-related health issues along with the demands of care giving. The way a person copes depends on their personality, the availability of social support and their own physical and mental health. Carers need to allow themselves ‘time out’, to focus on their own health and wellbeing, to continue in their caring role.

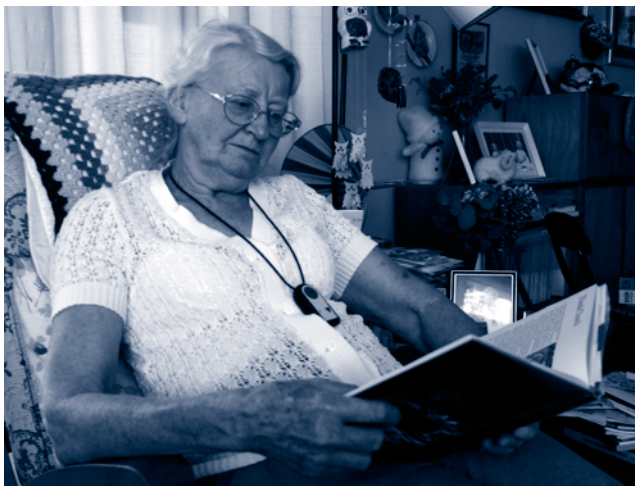
## Successful ageing

**‘Try to avoid taking ageing too seriously. Be realistic. Getting older is a normal process.’**

Some people age more successfully and more healthily than others. Some of the characteristics of the ‘successful agers’ are—concentrating on what is important and meaningful, having a positive outlook and meeting new challenges. For healthy ageing, it is important to stay active, both mentally and physically. The best approach for optimising health has to do with our own behaviour regarding nutrition, exercise, stress management and lifestyle choices.

# HANDY HINTS

- Sort out what matters to you
- Work out what you are able to do and what your limits are—reassess this over time
- Recognise that your independence may reduce
- Focus on the positives of ageing. Mix with positive people—the chirpy ones
- Draw on your own experience, wisdom and resources
- Talk to your family and friends about your changing needs
- Don't demand too much of yourself
- 50 is the old age of youth, 60 is the youth of old age
- Apply for a Seniors Card if you are 60 or over
- If you are 75 or over ask your general practitioner about having an 'Annual Health Assessment' which looks at physical and mental health
- Admit that you may now need some help and don't be too proud to accept it
- Be flexible and keep living simply
- Keep as active as possible
- Take time to care for your own health
- Continue with healthy living habits as you age



## YOUR NOTES

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## Where to find help ?

### Local telephone numbers

Your general practitioner \_\_\_\_\_

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Commonwealth Carelink Centre 1800 052 222

Council of the Ageing 1800 136 381

Seniors Card Hotline 9616 8241

Seniors Information Victoria 1300 135 090

### Websites

[www.commcarelink.health.gov.au](http://www.commcarelink.health.gov.au)

[www.cotavic.org.au](http://www.cotavic.org.au)

[www.seniors.vic.gov.au](http://www.seniors.vic.gov.au)

**Why should I exercise?**

‘The most important thing for us carers is to keep fit and well.’

Regular physical activity is very important at any age. Keeping fit assists older people to carry out their daily activities by improving their strength, balance and endurance. Exercise can reduce the risks of future ill health and can improve heart and lung functioning. Surprisingly, moderate exercise actually reduces fatigue.

**Social and emotional benefits**

Exercise also has social and emotional benefits. Group activities promote social interaction and exercise has been shown to have beneficial effects on the stress levels and sleep quality of older carers. Exercise is also very helpful if you feel depressed. Physical fitness is crucial to maintaining independence.

**How much and what type of exercise?**

‘Walk with a friend or neighbour, even if it is just around the block.’

People of all ages can improve their health and wellbeing by starting some moderate exercise. The *Heart Foundation* recommends that people include 30 minutes or more doing moderate physical activity, such as brisk walking, on most days. This exercise can be in 10-minute blocks throughout the day. Muscle-strengthening exercise, or strength training, is important for maintaining muscle and bone mass and increasing the metabolic rate. This means doing weight-bearing exercises, using light weights or dumbbells. Start slowly with any new exercise routine and get professional advice if unsure of how to begin.

**Falls prevention**

‘Exercise should be guided by safety. When you’re tired, have a rest.’

One in three older people fall each year, which can result in injury and reduced independence. Falls usually occur because of loss of balance, fatigue, poor eyesight or tripping over obstacles around the house. Doing regular exercise and becoming physically stronger can help you to prevent falls. Contact *Safe and Independent Living, Foothold on Safety* for specific falls prevention information.



# HANDY HINTS

- Get into a routine of exercising, daily if you can
- Take up a gentle exercise like Tai Chi or Yoga, swimming, walking or using an exercise bike indoors
- Contact your local Community Centre about exercise classes
- Do some gardening
- Play a sport that you enjoy and can do easily—golf, bowls, tennis
- Have a medical check up before starting a new exercise program and ask your doctor to recommend suitable exercise for you
- Stop exercising and seek medical advice if you have pain in your chest or feel dizzy
- Get some initial instruction for new activities, like strength training and use of weights, from a qualified fitness instructor at a gym or health centre
- Join University of the Third Age exercise classes for people over 50 and take as many courses as you like for an annual subscription of \$50
- Be aware of safety when exercising, use correct footwear and be falls conscious

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## Where to find help

### Local telephone numbers

Barwon Older Adults Recreation Network  
5222 1263

Community Centres in the Yellow Pages  
Safe and Independent Living  
5260 3310 or 0409 141 135

University of The Third Age Geelong  
5225 5940

Your general practitioner \_\_\_\_\_

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Active for Life Infoline 1800 638 594

### Websites

[www.sail.barwonpcp.org.au](http://www.sail.barwonpcp.org.au)

[www.vicfit.com.au](http://www.vicfit.com.au)



## Good nutrition is not just 'tea and toast'

Good nutrition is essential for health at any age and increases energy levels, which is very important for carers. Good nutrition is eating a variety of fresh and healthy foods. Older people still need high levels of vitamins, minerals, protein and carbohydrates. Eating three meals a day will provide the variety and quantity of food needed.

## Food groups and quantities

**'Eat for health—plenty of salads, fresh fruit and vegetables.'**

A well balanced diet includes food from each of the food groups every day. The recommended daily diet for an older person is:

- One to two serves of protein—meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts and legumes.
- Three serves of dairy—milk, yoghurt and cheese.
- Five serves of a variety of carbohydrates—bread, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles.
- Seven serves of fruit and vegetables—two fruit and five vegies.
- Fluids—6 to 8 serves of water, cordial, fruit juice or milk.
- It is good to reduce fat, sugar and salt and limit alcohol.

## Changing your diet

**'Eat properly as there is only one of you and you can't be replaced.'**

Changing cooking styles and eating habits can be very difficult, especially when you are a busy carer. Sometimes it helps to get some new ideas. Dietary guides for older adults are available from the *Department of Health and Ageing* and the *Heart Foundation*. You might like to consult a dietitian at the local *Community Health Centre*, especially if you have particular dietary needs because of an illness such as diabetes.

## Budget cooking

**'Plan meals with budget, time and ease in mind.'** As a carer, saving money and time is usually a very important consideration. Buying fresh ingredients and cooking them yourself is cheaper than buying prepared foods and 'take aways'. If you feel too tired to cook all the time then consider having *Meals on Wheels* delivered by your local council or a private home help agency.





# HANDY HINTS

- Eat for health, prepare home made soups and casseroles
- Don't buy unhealthy food
- Buy food with the red tick from the Heart Foundation
- Use the healthy eating tips often available at doctors' consulting rooms or in supermarkets
- Invest in a good, practical recipe book
- Ask family and friends for their easy, healthy recipes and keep them in a file
- Be well organised, shop one day and cook the next
- Cook double and freeze half, label and date the frozen food and throw out the old food
- If time is tight shop at the supermarket rather than individual shops
- Use some good quality prepared sauces and add your own fresh ingredients
- Opt for healthy take aways like BBQ chicken without the skin and no chips!
- Go out for a meal once a week, if you can afford it
- It's OK to have an occasional special treat, enjoy!

## Where to find help



### YOUR NOTES

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### Local telephone numbers

Dietitians—See Community Health Centres, page 38

Dietitians, Home Help or Meals in the Yellow Pages

Meals on Wheels—See Local Government, page 40

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Diabetes Australia 1800 640 862

Department of Health and Ageing  
1800 020 103 (extension 8654)

Heartline 1300 362 787

### Websites

[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

[www.heartfoundation.com.au](http://www.heartfoundation.com.au)

[www.yellowpages.com.au](http://www.yellowpages.com.au)

‘Don’t assume that if something is going wrong it’s just a sign of old age—get it checked.’

## Hearing

‘Never put anything in your ear smaller than your elbow!’

As you grow older the chances of developing a hearing loss become greater. The cause may simply be an accumulation of ‘wear and tear’ over a lifetime. Fifty per cent of people over 60 can expect to have a significant loss of hearing.

## What can I do?

Some people may be able to have their hearing improved with medical treatment. The first step is to consult your general practitioner who will check to see if you require medical attention. You may be referred to a specialist in hearing, called an audiologist, for a hearing assessment. If there is a hearing loss, the audiologist will discuss what can be done to help. Each person will have different communication needs and lifestyle preferences for which an individual hearing improvement program will be developed. The fitting of a hearing aid can be part of this program.

## Good eye care can save your sight

Good eye care can assist driving, walking, reading and playing sport. Eyesight problems do increase with age and can limit your independence and enjoyment of life. However, losing your sight does not need to be something you ‘put up with’ as you get older. Most eyesight problems have no obvious symptoms in the early stages and can only be detected by a thorough eye examination.

## What can I do?

‘Remember to have the person you care for checked out too.’

Have your eyes tested by your general practitioner or your local optometrist. They will make an initial diagnosis and will refer you to other eye care or health specialists if necessary. Remember, reading glasses are for reading. Many falls occur when people use the wrong glasses.

# HANDY HINTS

- Get your hearing and eyesight tested regularly by your general practitioner
- Australian Hearing can help you choose a hearing aid or a listening device
- The Office of Hearing Services may be able to help you receive subsidised hearing services
- To clean your ears, regularly wipe around the outside of the ear with a damp cloth. Don't poke around in your ear.
- People over 60 should have their eyes checked at least every two years
- People with diabetes or a family history of glaucoma, people who have spent a lot of time in the sun, and those from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background need earlier and more frequent visits
- Eye examinations are covered by Medicare and most optometrists bulk bill
- The Victorian Eyecare Service provides eye care at low cost for pensioners and others of limited means who live in country Victoria.



## Where to find help

### Local telephone numbers

- Better Hearing Australia 5221 1042
- Optometrists in the Yellow Pages
- Vision Australia Foundation 5221 4100
- Your general practitioner \_\_\_\_\_

### Freecall/statewide numbers

- Australian Hearing 13 17 97
- Office of Hearing 1800 500 726
- Office of Hearing Services 1800 500 496 TTY
- Optometrists Association 9486 1700
- Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind  
1300 559 987
- Victorian Eyecare Service 9349 7434
- Vision Information Line 1800 331 000

### Websites

- [www.health.gov.au/hear](http://www.health.gov.au/hear)
- [www.hearing.com.au](http://www.hearing.com.au)
- [www.rvib.org.au](http://www.rvib.org.au)
- [www.vicoptom.asn.au](http://www.vicoptom.asn.au)
- [www.visionaustralia.org.au/visioninfo](http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/visioninfo)
- [www.yellowpages.com.au](http://www.yellowpages.com.au)

### YOUR NOTES

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## Emotional wellbeing

There can be no denying that being a carer takes its toll on the emotional wellbeing and mental health of carers. Some surveys have shown that, at times, carers do not have enough emotional support. Feelings and emotional wellbeing are difficult for many people to understand, let alone talk about easily.

## Feelings

**‘Do not feel guilty. We can only do our best. If we are not feeling good about ourselves, how can we help others?’**

You may experience a broad range of feelings, both positive and negative, throughout your time as a carer. These include feelings of pride and a sense of achievement for the wonderful job you are doing. Feelings like guilt and anger are very normal responses to the grief and loss many carers experience. If these feelings become overwhelming and are not acknowledged then you may be putting your emotional wellbeing at risk. Always seek help before things get out of hand.

## Acceptance and acknowledgment of the situation

**‘We need to make wise and balanced decisions about our lives.’** As a carer, you may wish that your life was different and your role was easier. For many people, acceptance of the reality of their situation can be very hard, so it might help to settle for acknowledgment instead. This means that although you may not like your carer role, you acknowledge that this is the way it is.

## What can I do?

**‘Live in the moment and deal with problems when they happen.’** It is very important to be self-aware and to know your limits. Learn to recognise signals in yourself that indicate you are too stressed or becoming anxious and depressed. Being able to speak openly to a trusted person about your feelings and your emotional wellbeing can be very helpful. This person might be a family member, a friend or your doctor—whichever you feel really comfortable with. Make note of an emergency contact service like *Lifeline* that is available 24 hours to help you.

# HANDY HINTS

- Make time for yourself as an individual, not only as a carer
- Do something that you enjoy and are respected for as an individual
- Switch off from your caring role when you can
- Have an interest or hobby—it doesn't matter what it is, just do it!
- Read the newspaper or watch TV to keep up-to-date with current affairs
- Join your local library
- Take time to maintain relationships with your family and friends
- Laugh a lot
- Learn to accept outside help if and when you need it
- Take each day as it comes
- Talk about your feelings to a trusted friend or family member
- Seek professional help from your doctor or a counsellor if you are concerned that you are not coping
- Call Carers Victoria for free telephone counselling or to arrange a low-cost counselling session with a local counsellor



## YOUR NOTES

## Where to find help



### Local telephone numbers

Libraries in the the Yellow Pages

Lifeline 131 114

Mental Health Services—See page 40

Mental Illness Fellowship of Victoria

5229 8827

Your general practitioner \_\_\_\_\_

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Carers Victoria 1800 242 636

Mental Health Department 1800 066 247

Vic Health 9667 1333

### Websites

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

[www.health.gov.au/hsdd/mentalhe](http://www.health.gov.au/hsdd/mentalhe)

[www.mifellowship.org](http://www.mifellowship.org)

[www.vichealth.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.gov.au)

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## What is stress?

**‘I know that sometimes I am so uptight that even the ringing of the phone is enough to make me jump.’**

Stress is a normal part of everyday life. Stress has been described as the physical ‘response of the body to any demand placed upon it’.

Our nervous system reacts in the same way whether we are reacting to fear or excitement—your pulse quickens, your heart beats faster, you take shorter breaths and feel on edge. Too much stress reaction, or ‘distress’, is not good for physical and emotional wellbeing.

## How do you recognise that you are too stressed?

**‘For me, it’s emotional overload. I get exhausted and become disoriented and start saying “I don’t care anymore.”’**

Being a carer may be extremely stressful at times. Continuous extreme stress and tension can cause physical symptoms, like headaches or stomach pain, and can interfere with sleeping and eating patterns causing tiredness and irritability. Sometimes it’s difficult to recognise stress overload in ourselves but usually other people can tell. Ask your doctor to be your stress ‘watch dog’ and to gently let you know.

## How can I manage stress?

**‘Look behind the outburst and deal with the trigger that caused it. Try to keep your sense of humour.’**

It is very important to control your stress and not let it control you. Take note of how you feel when you are relaxed and compare that to how you feel when not coping well. List the events that caused these different reactions. Keeping a ‘feelings’ and events diary might assist you to recognise what is a ‘good stress’ level for you. The usual health tips of exercise and relaxation methods are good for de-stressing too. Work out what helps you to relax and assists you to optimise your energy levels.

# HANDY HINTS

- Try not to do everything in the one day as this only increases stress
- Don't 'raise the bar' too high—you are doing the best you can!
- If it helps, speak with people in similar situations who can understand and relate to your problems
- Assess the whole situation and make changes where possible
- Focus on positives and actively develop a positive thinking approach
- Make the most of any rest period
- Learn how to relax in your own way—put on your favourite CD, bake a cake, have a massage, have your morning cuppa outside
- Listen to the Carer Relaxation audiotape available from Carers Victoria
- If you feel unable to manage your stress levels, talk to your general practitioner or seek counselling from Carers Victoria, a psychologist, social worker or your clergy
- It may not be safe to drive when you are very stressed. An occupational therapist can assess driving competence
- Try some of the ideas for gentle exercise in 'Healthy body'. Try learning yoga or meditation
- Hug someone—if touch is important to you. A teddy bear will do!
- Get a low maintenance pet like a gold fish or put a bird bath and feeder outside and enjoy bird watching



## YOUR NOTES

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## Where to find help

### Local telephone numbers

Occupational Therapists/Psychologists/Social Workers—See Community Health Centres, page 38

Your general practitioner \_\_\_\_\_

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre  
1800 059 059

Carers Victoria 1800 242 636

### Website

[www.carersvic.org.au](http://www.carersvic.org.au)



## Everyone is different

‘It all depends on the individual that you are caring for and also your needs. There is no one solution for all.’

We are all individuals and have different personalities, shaped by our family backgrounds and our own life experiences. How we behave and the way we cope develop throughout our lives. Some people cope well and become stronger through the hardships they have had to face. This personal strength is called resilience and it can be learnt by many. Carers are generally very resilient people, because they have to be.

## Coping well

‘At times—wipe the tears, wash the face, have a cuppa and get going again. Be happy about things you can do.’

Everyone copes differently at different times. There is never only one way to do things. Becoming well informed about available community support services and developing your own support network will enhance your sense of coping and personal strength. Your own support network might include your family and friends plus your general practitioner, allied health professionals, church, carer agencies or support groups. Recognise your limitations and seek help. You may not be able to do it all on your own.

## Dealing with other people

‘A lot of people feel uncomfortable and don’t know how to deal with your situation. You have to make the effort if you want them to understand.’

Be clear to others about how they can help you and what your preferences are for their involvement in your caring role.

Sometimes it helps to look at other people’s lives and view things from another perspective. Most people have problems and being open to listen to their stories can sometimes help you see your own situation in another light.





# HANDY HINTS

- Look after your own needs
- Say no at times
- Keep a sense of balance about your situation—what can and cannot be done
- Congratulate yourself on a job well done and reward yourself regularly
- Develop your own support network
- Write up a list of helpful people and their phone numbers
- Ask other trusted people what they would do in your situation
- Seek professional help earlier rather than later
- Consider personal counselling if you feel overwhelmed or want to learn other ways of coping

## YOUR NOTES

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## Where to find help

### Local telephone numbers

Psychologists/Social Workers—See  
Community Health Centres, page 38

Your general practitioner \_\_\_\_\_

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Carers Victoria 1800 242 636

Relationships Australia 1300 364 277

### Websites

[www.carersvic.org.au](http://www.carersvic.org.au)

[www.relationships.com.au](http://www.relationships.com.au)



## Social contact

‘Loneliness and isolation are your worst enemies. Get out with happy people.’

It is very important for many carers to have some social contact to avoid the risk of becoming too isolated. Social contact provides carers with friendship and opportunities to mix with people outside the caring role and do activities other than caring. Make the most of any opportunity to get out and mingle. Even shopping can be quite social if you regard every contact with people as a social event.

## Support groups

‘The carers’ support group meetings are a great help to me. Talking and listening to other carers makes my role easier to handle.’

For some carers, a support group is a very helpful way of learning more about the illness or disability that they are involved with. Support groups offer a ‘safe’ environment where members can talk about their experiences and express their feelings, both positive and negative. Support groups have rules of confidentiality, so that everything said in the group stays in the group. *Carers Victoria* can put you in touch with the support groups in your region. Formal support groups are not for everyone and that’s OK too.

## When you can’t get out

‘Take up a hobby at home. I took up a craft, which I’m still doing today and I’ve even won prizes at the Show.’

If you are housebound because of your caring role or your own ill-health, develop ways of keeping active at home and staying in touch with other people from home. The telephone can be a vital link to keep in contact with friends, family and community support services. There are even telephone support groups available. *Vision Australia* runs *Telecontact* and *Telelink* phone support services for people with vision impairment. Try email. See ‘Using the Internet’ on page 34.

# HANDY HINTS

- If you like group activities, join a support group or social club like the Senior Citizens Centre. Community Centres and Neighbourhood Houses have lots of activities and groups. Look them up in the Yellow Pages or call Commonwealth Carelink Centre.
- Become a volunteer for a local organisation if you like this kind of involvement
- Community Friends of Red Cross offers emotional support to carers
- Keep in contact with your friends
- Visit a nursery or a museum where there are always other people about
- Take the person you care for with you when you can or arrange respite so you can go out alone
- If you can't get out then enjoy activities at home like gardening, crafts, knitting, woodwork, reading, watching TV, jigsaw puzzles and crosswords
- Do what you enjoy, that doesn't cost too much. Do nothing! It's all right sometimes
- Find a haven at home where you have your own space
- Get a cat or dog if you can manage them



## YOUR NOTES

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## Where to find help



### Local telephone numbers

Community Centres and Senior Citizens  
Centres in the Yellow Pages

Community Friends of Red Cross 5229 1564

Vision Australia 5221 4100

Volunteer Resource Centre 5221 1377

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Commonwealth Carelink Centre 1800 052 222

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre 1800 059 059

Carers Victoria 1800 242 636

### Websites

[www.carersvic.org.au](http://www.carersvic.org.au)

[www.geelongvolunteer.org.au](http://www.geelongvolunteer.org.au)

[www.yellowpages.com.au](http://www.yellowpages.com.au)

## Future planning

‘We all worry about what happens to the one we care for if we get ill or die.’

Planning well for the future can bring peace of mind to the present.

It is important for everyone to sort out financial and legal affairs and for carers to consider future plans for the person they care for.

## Powers of Attorney and Wills

‘Having Enduring Powers of Attorney for yourself and the person you care for is the most important thing to do.’

A ‘Financial Enduring Power of Attorney’ is a legal document that allows another trusted person to make financial and legal decisions. A ‘Medical Enduring Power of Attorney’ allows another person to make medical decisions when you are no longer able to do so. An ‘Enduring Guardian’ is someone who has the legal right to make personal or lifestyle decisions on your behalf.

A ‘Last Will and Testament’ specifies your wishes for after your death. The person you care for can only give you permission to become their Power of Attorney if they have ‘legal capacity’. If they do not, because of a cognitive impairment, you may apply to become their administrator through the *VCAT Guardianship List*. Privacy laws in Victoria now require proof of authority to act on another person’s behalf for all legal and financial matters. You may be required to provide written evidence of your authority to act for them. This makes it even more essential that you do make Powers of Attorney arrangements as soon as possible. The *Office of the Public Advocate* has information on how to set these up. Call them for a copy of *Take Control—A Guide to Powers of Attorney and Guardianship* or download it from their website. You should seek advice or assistance from a lawyer if there are legal questions you want clarified.

## Peaceful death

‘Accept that you will mourn in your way.’

Death and dying can be very difficult subjects to talk about. But by clearly detailing your wishes about palliative care and funeral arrangements you may gain further peace of mind. You can plan and pay for funerals in advance. The grieving process is very personal. There is no right or wrong way to grieve when the person you care for dies. You may feel there is a gap in your life or a sense of relief. Talk to other people about your feelings and seek counselling support if needed. Remembering is a way of honouring their life.

# HANDY HINTS

- Tie up loose ends and deal with the issues facing you
- Specify your wishes regarding future plans for the person you care for in your Will and to your Enduring Guardian
- Have your Will properly drawn up and notify the executors where the original Will is kept
- Seek professional help for the legal and financial matters you cannot manage yourself
- Give copies of all your important information to each of your children or other key contact
- Attend a Centrelink Financial Information Service seminar on Estate Planning and Wills
- Go to Centrelink for a copy of the booklet 'What to do when someone dies.'
- Discuss your end of life wishes with your family or significant others, including palliative care
- Don't expect to recover quickly when someone close to you dies
- Keep going to your support group for as long as you feel you need to
- Plan a particular goal for yourself after your loved one dies and do it
- Celebrate life every day!



## Where to find help



### Local telephone numbers

Funeral Directors in the Yellow Pages  
Geelong Community Legal Service 5221 4744  
Victoria Legal Aid 5229 2211

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Australian Funeral Directors Association  
9859 9571  
Centrelink 132 717  
Centrelink Seminar Bookings 136 357  
Federation of Community Legal Centres 9602 4949  
Office of the Public Advocate 1800 136 829  
Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)  
Guardianship List 1800 133 055  
Victorian Legal Aid 1800 677 402

### Websites

[www.afda.org.au](http://www.afda.org.au)  
[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)  
[www.legalaid.vic.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au)  
[www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au)  
[www.vcat.vic.gov.au](http://www.vcat.vic.gov.au)

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## Emergency plans

Many carers worry about what will happen to the person they care for if they suddenly get sick themselves or if there is a crisis. Emergencies do happen, so it makes sense to 'be prepared'. *Carers Victoria* has an excellent 'Emergency Care Plan' for carers. Call them for a copy. Having emergency plans in place will give you some peace of mind.

## In a crisis

*'In an emergency, the Carer Respite Centre organised help to take care of my husband within an hour.'*

Call the *Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre* 24-hour emergency number if you suddenly become ill or are injured and need to go to hospital. If the worst happens, and there is no one who can come immediately to look after the person you care for, take them with you in the ambulance. Staff at the hospital *Emergency Department* will be able to organise emergency respite care.

## Feeling safe

*'I wear my personal alarm all the time. It gives me a great sense of security.'*

If you are frail, elderly, have a disability or live alone, a personal alarm system may be worth considering. These systems consist of an electronic pendant, worn at all times, that is linked through the telephone to a 24-hour security monitoring service. Contact the *Department of Human Services* for a copy of their 'Personal Alert' booklet and *Safety Link* for local service information.

## Safety at home

Carers, and the person they care for, need to be safety conscious around the house. Consider having a free home safety assessment done by *Archicentre Home Services*. *Local Government* has Home Maintenance Services for minor repairs to ensure safety. Eligible clients are people over 65 and those in receipt of a disability payment. The *Aged Care Assessment Service* does assessments for home modifications. *Veterans' Affairs* have services including Home Maintenance Helpline, Home Front falls prevention advice and Back-to-Basics for back care.



# HANDY HINTS

- Complete an 'Emergency Care Plan' or write up your own emergency contact names and phone numbers
- Include details of the needs of both the carer and the person being cared for in this emergency plan
- Place this information in a clearly marked envelope near the telephone
- Give your family, or significant others, copies of your plan and the Carer Respite Centre phone number
- Carry a copy of your emergency plan and emergency contacts with you
- Carry a little bag with you with a mobile phone, medication, health information and warnings such as allergies you may have
- Wear a 'Medi-alert' bracelet if you have a known medical condition. These are available from chemists
- Contact Neighbourhood Watch for an added sense of security at home
- If you are house-bound apply to lodge a postal vote
- Get a cordless phone and carry it with you so you don't have to rush to answer it
- Contact the Home Renovation Service about home safety plans and financial assistance



## Where to find help

### Local telephone numbers

Aged Care Assessment Service  
5279 2246

Hospitals—See page 39

Local Government—See page 40

Neighbourhood Watch 5225 3260

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Ambulance, Fire or Police 000

Archicentre Home Services 9815 1900

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre  
1800 059 059

Carers Victoria 1800 242 636

Department of Human Services 9616 7777

Home Renovation Service 1300 136 513

Safety Link 1800 813 617

Veterans' Affairs 1800 555 254

### Websites

[www.carersvic.org.au](http://www.carersvic.org.au)

[www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)

[www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare)

[www.safetylink.net.au](http://www.safetylink.net.au)

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## Help for carers

**‘Seek help before you run out of steam.’**

Accessing useful information and support can be difficult, and the stress of caring and the usual health issues associated with ageing can make this harder. Make use of the help available for carers.

**‘There is so much information I don’t know where to start.’**

Start with this *Wellness Guide* for information that is relevant to your situation and then contact the support services you need. Most support services staff are very well informed and can point you in the right direction. The key carer support services that can assist with information, support and referral to other agencies are *Carers Victoria*, *Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre* and *Commonwealth Carelink Centre*. Other great resources are the *Community Help*, *Age Page* and *Government Section* pages at the front of the Yellow Pages.

## Additional support services

**‘Professionals are sometimes more objective than family.’**

The *Department of Veterans’ Affairs* produces a *Carers’ Booklet* for eligible carers from the veterans’ community. The Geelong Community Council *Migrant Resource Centre* provides services for people from ‘Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities’ (people from ‘non- English speaking backgrounds’). Telephone interpreting services are available from *Translating and Interpreting Service*. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders can contact the *Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative* for information about their services.

## Financial assistance

Information about Pensions, Carer Allowance, Carer Payment, Mobility Allowance and Concession Cards is available from *Centrelink*. The Carer Allowance is the only service not means-tested. *Centrelink* also provide a free *Financial Information Service*. Contact *Aged Care Assessment Service* to check your eligibility for a *Community Aged Care Package* that provides some funding for in-home services.

## Transport and equipment

Disabled car parking permits are available through your local government office. Half-price taxi information is available through the *Taxi Directorate*. Contact *Disability Information Victoria* about subsidised aids, equipment and home modifications.



# HANDY HINTS

- Don't be too scared to ask for all the help you need
- Keep in touch with one agency that knows you well and with which you can develop a relationship of trust
- Write down the name and phone number of the person you are speaking to for future reference
- Try to be assertive with health professionals and be clear about your situation and needs
- Getting the help you need can take time and be frustrating, but keep going and keep asking questions
- Take someone with you to appointments if you need extra moral support
- Talk to other people in a similar situation about where they have found help
- If you need to transport a person in a wheelchair, book a maxi taxi.  
Phone early to ensure availability



## YOUR NOTES

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## Where to find help ?

### Local telephone numbers

- Aged Care Assessment Service 5279 2246
- Department of Aboriginal Health 5226 7669
- Geelong Ethnic Communities Council,  
Migrant Resource Centre 5221 6044
- Local Government—See page 40
- Taxis in the Yellow Pages
- Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative 5277 0044

### Freecall/statewide numbers

- Commonwealth Carelink Centres 1800 052 222
- Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre 1800 059 059
- Carers Victoria 1800 242 636
- Centrelink 132 717
- Centrelink Information in languages other  
than English 131 202
- Disability Information Victoria 1300 650 865
- Financial Information Service 132 300
- Taxi Directorate 1800 638 802
- TIS—Translating and Interpreting Service 131 450
- Veterans' Affairs 1800 555 254

### Websites

- [www.carersvic.org.au](http://www.carersvic.org.au)
- [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)
- [www.commcarelink.health.gov.au](http://www.commcarelink.health.gov.au)
- [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)
- [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability)

## What is respite?

‘Don’t think you can cope alone. The strain can undermine your own health.’

Respite is a rest, break or time out from your caring role. Caring is recognised as being tiring and stressful for many carers. Respite is an important part of looking after yourself so that you can keep looking after the person you care for. Respite is available—short term, long term, in-home, day programs, holiday, emergency and residential. Ideally the respite will be flexible enough to meet your needs.

## How do I organise respite?

The *Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre* can explain what your options are and the costs involved. Usually an individual assessment of your circumstances is required. For all residential respite in a Commonwealth Funded Aged Care Home, you need to have current *Aged Care Assessment Service* approval to determine the level of care required. This needs to be updated every twelve months, or more often if the person you care for, or your circumstances, change.

## How to get respite when they don’t want to go

‘It was very stressful. He wouldn’t accept the fact that I needed a break, so my doctor had to tell him.’

Sometimes it is very difficult to convince the person you care for that you do need time out. Ask a family member or friend to talk to them on your behalf. Again, the *Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre* can discuss this with you.

## Residential care

‘Don’t feel guilty if they need residential care.’

At some point it may no longer be possible for you to continue to provide full-time care at home. There are two levels of government-funded Residential Care: low level or hostel care for people who need some personal assistance with dressing and showering, and high level or nursing home care for people who need continuous nursing care. Privately-owned residential support services provide accommodation and personal services for a fee. The *Aged Care Assessment Service* can provide information on the appropriate residential care level and the assessment process.

# HANDY HINTS

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- Make sure you get time off regularly from your caring role
- Plan long- and short-term regular respite well ahead of time and use it
- Be aware that planning may not work—you can only try
- Ask your doctor to discuss respite with the person you care for
- You must have an annual assessment by the Aged Care Assessment Service for residential respite and for permanent residential care
- You may be eligible for up to 63 residential respite days per year so make use of it
- Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre has a 24-hour emergency respite phone service
- Read the 'DPS Publishing Guide to Aged Care' for a comprehensive explanation of all residential services. This is available on the Internet or at your local respite centre
- Contact Department of Human Services for a copy of their booklet 'The How, When, What and Where of Residential Care' or download it from their website
- Call the Aged and Community Care Information Line for a copy of '5 Steps to Entry into Residential Aged Care'

## Where to find help



### Local telephone numbers

Aged Care Assessment Service  
5279 2246

Your general practitioner \_\_\_\_\_

### Freecall/statewide numbers

Aged and Community Care Information Line  
1800 500 853

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre  
1800 059 059

Carers Victoria 1800 242 636

Department of Human Services Aged Care  
Branch 9616 7727

### Websites

[www.carersvic.org.au](http://www.carersvic.org.au)

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/agedcare](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/agedcare)

[www.dpspublishing.com.au](http://www.dpspublishing.com.au)

[www.health.gov.au/acc/](http://www.health.gov.au/acc/)



## What is the Internet?

‘My kids and grandkids all use it, and tell me to.’

The Internet is a world wide collection of interconnected computers and computer networks. A network is a collection of individual computers linked to each other. To use the Internet you need a personal computer that is connected to a phone. The Internet provides access to a vast range of information resources from around the world. Much of the information on the Internet is organised onto ‘web pages’ which you can read on your own computer by connecting or ‘logging on’ to the address or ‘website’.

## What is email?

‘Email is a great way of keeping in touch from home.’

Email is electronic mail, which is a way of sending a message to someone else on the Internet.

## How do I start?

There are courses available to teach you how to use the Internet to access information. *Geelong Science and Technology Centre (GSAT)*, local community centres and *University of the Third Age (U3A)* all offer Internet training. *U3A* provides adult education for people over 50 years of age. *Seniors Access to Information (SATIN)* offers free Internet training to people over 50 to encourage them to use the Internet and email at public access sites such as regional libraries.

## Why bother?

‘It’s the way of the future.’

The Internet is a way of keeping up-to-date with current information about health and wellbeing and carer issues. The *Wellness Guide* is available on the Internet. Most support services have websites which are listed throughout the *Wellness Guide*. You can also keep in touch or ‘chat’ with people around the world through the Internet.

## Be careful

There is a large amount of information available on the Internet from reputable sources. But there are also some websites that are not reputable or accurate so be discerning about your Internet use and check the accuracy of the information.

# HANDY HINTS

- Go to your local library to use computers and to log onto the Internet for free
- Ask your children, grandchildren or any computer-literate person to show you how to use the Internet
- Enrol in a free Internet class through *Seniors Access to Information (SATIN)* and be trained one-on-one, at your own pace, by another trained senior
- Better Health Channel has online health information
- Register for the Carers Victoria Newsletter 'e-bulletin' online
- The Barwon Primary Care Forum has a Service Seeker website that lists local health and welfare services, or look up Infoxchange
- Look up this Wellness Guide on the Deakin University and Department of Human Services website
- The Health Translations Directory provides online access to health information in languages other than English
- Be selective about the information you receive from the Internet and check its accuracy before following any advice



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## Where to find help



### Local telephone numbers

- Barwon Primary Care Forum 5260 3610
- Community Centres in the Yellow Pages
- Geelong Science and Technology Centre  
5227 8022
- Libraries in the Yellow Pages
- University of the Third Age 5225 5940

### Freecall/statewide numbers

- Carers Victoria 1800 242 636
- SATIN 1800 136 381

### Websites

- [www.barwonpcp.org.au/health\\_information.shtml](http://www.barwonpcp.org.au/health_information.shtml)
- [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)
- [www.carersvic.org.au](http://www.carersvic.org.au)
- [www.cotavic.org.au](http://www.cotavic.org.au)
- [www.deakin.edu.au/dhs/wellness\\_guide](http://www.deakin.edu.au/dhs/wellness_guide)
- [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/agedcare](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/agedcare)
- [www.gate.vic.edu.au](http://www.gate.vic.edu.au)
- [www.gsat.edu.au](http://www.gsat.edu.au)
- [www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au](http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au)
- [www.infoxchange.net.au](http://www.infoxchange.net.au)
- [www.togetherwedobetter.vic.gov.au](http://www.togetherwedobetter.vic.gov.au)

Each agency referred to in the ‘Where to find help’ section is listed again here in alphabetical order along with some extra agencies that may be helpful to you.

**Tip for seeking information:** If you don’t get the right answer, keep asking more questions and keep asking ‘Who else should I talk to about this?’ until you have found out what you need to know.

| Agency                                     | Description   | Telephone   | Web address  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>A</b> boriginal Cooperative             | Services for Aboriginals  | 5277 0044   |  |
| Active for Life Infoline                   | Information on activities   | 1800 638 594  | <a href="http://www.vicfit.com.au">www.vicfit.com.au</a>   |
| Aged Care Assessment Service               | Assessment of care required at home or in a residential facility                    | 5279 2246   |  |
| Aged and Community Care Information Line   | General information on Aged and Community Care                                      | 1800 500 853  |  |
| Aged Psychiatry Team                       | Mental Health services for people over 65   | 5226 7044   |  |
| Alzheimer’s Australia                      | Information and support for people with dementia                                    | 1800 639 331  | <a href="http://www.alzheimers.org.au">www.alzheimers.org.au</a>   |
| Ambulance                                  | Emergency Service   | 000   |  |
| Archicentre Home Services                  | Home assessment service   | 9815 1900   |  |
| Australian Department of Health and Ageing | General information on Health and Ageing  | 1800 020 103  | <a href="http://www.health.gov.au/acc/">www.health.gov.au/acc/</a>   |
| Australian Drug Foundation                 | Information on alcohol and drug problems prevention                                 | 1800 069 700  | <a href="http://www.adf.org.au">www.adf.org.au</a>   |
| Australian Hearing                         | Information on hearing services   | 131 797   | <a href="http://www.health.gov.au/hear">www.health.gov.au/hear</a>   |
| Autism Victoria                            | Information on Autism services  | 9885 0533   |  |
| <b>B</b> arwon Disability Resource Council | Advocacy and information for people with a disability                               | 5221 8011   | <a href="http://www.bdrc.org.au">www.bdrc.org.au</a>   |
| Barwon Health                              | General and specialist hospital, rehabilitation, residential and community services | Each service has a phone number. Look at Barwon Health in White pages | <a href="http://www.barwonhealth.org.au">www.barwonhealth.org.au</a><br><a href="http://www.whitepages.com.au">www.whitepages.com.au</a> |
| Barwon Primary Care Forum                  | Barwon Region alliance of community and health services                             | 5260 3610   | <a href="http://www.barwonpcp.org.au">www.barwonpcp.org.au</a>   |

| Agency  | Description  | Telephone    | Web address  |
|---|--|--------------|--|
| Barwon Older Adults Recreation Network                          | Promotes recreation for people over 50   | 5222 1263    |  |
| Bethany Family Support  | Family counselling   | 5278 8122    |  |
| Better Health Channel   | Health information website   |              | <a href="http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au">www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au</a>       |
| Better Hearing Australia  | Services for people with hearing loss  | 5221 1042    |  |
| Beyond Blue   | Depression support website   |              | <a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a>                   |
| Brain Foundation Victoria                                       | Information on stroke and acquired brain injury  | 1800 677 579 |  |
| <b>Cancer Helpline</b>  | Telephone counselling service for people affected by cancer                                      | 131 120      | <a href="http://www.cancervic.org.au">www.cancervic.org.au</a>                     |
| Carers Victoria<br><i>(Commonwealth Carers Resource Centre)</i> | Information, education, counselling, support and advocacy for carers                             | 1800 242 636 | <a href="http://www.carersvic.org.au">www.carersvic.org.au</a>                     |
| Carer Support Groups<br>Carers Victoria                         | Information on groups in local areas   | 1800 242 636 | <a href="http://www.carersvic.org.au">www.carersvic.org.au</a>                     |
| Centrelink  | Financial assistance, pensions and carer payments  | 132 717      | <a href="http://www.centrelink.gov.au">www.centrelink.gov.au</a>                   |
| Centrelink Information in languages other than English          | Information on financial assistance, pensions and carer payments in languages other than English | 131 202      |  |
| Centrelink Seminar Bookings                                     | Booking a financial information seminar  | 136 357      |  |
| City of Greater Geelong   | Aged care and disability services  | 5227 0710    | <a href="http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au">www.geelongaustralia.com.au</a>       |
| Cognitive Dementia and Memory Service                           | Assessment of causes of memory loss  | 5279 2438    |  |
| Commonwealth Carelink Centres                                   | General information on aged care services  | 1800 052 222 | <a href="http://www.commcarelink.health.gov.au">www.commcarelink.health.gov.au</a> |
| Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre                               | Information and assistance with organising respite   | 1800 059 059 |  |
| Commonwealth Carers Resource Centre<br><i>(Carers Victoria)</i> | Information on carer issues and resources  | 1800 242 636 | <a href="http://www.carersvic.org.au">www.carersvic.org.au</a>                     |
| Community Centres in the Yellow Pages                           | Locally based community services   |              | <a href="http://www.yellowpages.com.au">www.yellowpages.com.au</a>                 |
| Community Friends of Red Cross                                  | Volunteer visitors to carers for emotional support   | 5229 1564    |  |

| Agency  | Description   | Telephone  | Web address  |
|---|---|--|--|
| Community Health Centres—Services can include Dental, Dietitians, District Nursing, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Podiatry, Psychology and Social Work | Apollo Bay<br>Anglesea<br>Bellarine<br>Belmont<br>Colac<br>Corio<br>Lorne<br>Newcomb<br>Torquay<br>Winchelsea | 5237 8500<br>5263 1952<br>5258 0888<br>5260 3333<br>5230 0100<br>5273 2200<br>5289 4300<br>5260 3333<br>5261 3001<br>5267 2202 |  |
| Contenance Advisor  | Contenance information  | 5260 3333  |  |
| Contenance Helpline   | Contenance information and Public Toilet map  | 1800 330 066   | <a href="http://www.contfound.org.au">www.contfound.org.au</a><br><a href="http://www.toiletmap.gov.au">www.toiletmap.gov.au</a> |
| Council of the Ageing   | Association for people over 50  | 1800 136 381   | <a href="http://www.cotavic.org.au">www.cotavic.org.au</a>   |
| Deaf Society  | Services for people with hearing loss and deafness  | 5221 4100  | <a href="http://www.vicdeaf.com.au">www.vicdeaf.com.au</a>   |
| Department of Aboriginal Health   | Health services for aboriginals   | 5226 7669  |  |
| Department of Health and Ageing   | Information on Health and Ageing and contact number for 'Eat Well for Life' booklet                           | 1800 020 103<br>(extension 8654)   | <a href="http://www.health.gov.au">www.health.gov.au</a>   |
| Department of Human Services  | Victorian Government Department that oversees aged care disability services                                   | 5226 4540  | <a href="http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au">www.dhs.vic.gov.au</a>   |
| Department of Human Services Aged Care Branch   | Victorian Government Department that oversees aged care disability services                                   | 9616 7727  | <a href="http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/agedcare">www.dhs.vic.gov.au/agedcare</a>   |
| Dementia Helpline   | Information and support for people with dementia  | 1800 639 331   | <a href="http://www.alzheimers.org.au">www.alzheimers.org.au</a>   |
| Diabetes Australia  | Information and support for people with diabetes  | 1800 640 862   |  |
| Dietitians in the Yellow Pages  | Nutrition and healthy diet advisors   |  | <a href="http://www.yellowpages.com.au">www.yellowpages.com.au</a>   |
| Disability Information Victoria   | Information on disability aids and equipment  | 1300 650 865   | <a href="http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability">www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability</a>   |
| Disability Rights and Advocacy Service  | Assistance for people with a disability who need someone else to stand up for their rights                    | 5221 8033  |  |
| Down's Syndrome Association   | Services for people with Down's Syndrome  | 9486 2377  |  |
| DPS Publishing  | Residential care information  |  | <a href="http://www.dpspublishing.com.au">www.dpspublishing.com.au</a>   |



| Agency  | Description  | Telephone   | Web address                       |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Epilepsy Foundation   | Services for people with epilepsy  | 1300 852 853  |                                   |
| Financial Information Service                                   | Centrelink information about financial matters                             | 132 300   |                                   |
| Fire  | Emergency Service  | 000   |                                   |
| Funeral Directors in the Yellow Pages                           | Arrange funerals and can offer grief counselling                           |   | www.yellowpages.com.au            |
| Funeral Directors Association                                   | Referral to local Funeral Directors  | 9859 9571   |                                   |
| Gateways  | Services for people with a disability                                      | 5221 2984   |                                   |
| Geelong Adult Training and Education                            | Adult and community education provider                                     | 5223 3614   | www.gate.vic.edu.au               |
| Geelong Ethnic Communities Council<br>(Migrant Resource Centre) | Services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities | 5221 6044   | www.geelongmrc.org                |
| Geelong Science and Technology Centre                           | Computer and Internet training   | 5227 8022   | www.gsat.edu.au                   |
| Grace McKellar  | Rehabilitation and residential care  | 5279 2222   |                                   |
| Grief Line ( <i>not a phone counselling service</i> )           | Referral to local accredited grief counsellors                             | 1800 100 023  | www.nalagvic.org.au               |
| Health and Ageing   | Information on health and ageing   |   | www.health.gov.au                 |
| Health Translations Directory                                   | Health information in other languages                                      |   | www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au |
| Heartline   | Information and support for people with heart disease                      | 1300 362 787  | www.heartfoundation.com.au        |
| Headway   | Advocacy and information for people with acquired brain injury             | 9642 2411   |                                   |
| Home Renovation Service   | Information about home safety  | 1300 136 513  | www.dhs.vic.gov.au/housing        |
| Hospitals—Acute and emergency care                              | Apollo Bay<br>Colac<br>Geelong<br>Lorne<br>Winchelsea                      | 5237 8500<br>5230 0100<br>5226 7111<br>5289 4300<br>5267 2202 |                                   |
| Info exchange   | Electronic services directory  |   | www.infoexchange.net.au           |
| Karingal  | Services for people with a disability                                      | 5229 3488   |                                   |
| Legal Aid   | Assistance with legal representation                                       |   | www.legalaid.vic.gov.au           |
| Libraries in the Yellow Pages                                   | Lending of book and audio visual resources                                 |   | www.yellowpages.com.au            |
| Lifeline  | Crisis telephone counselling service                                       | 131 114   |                                   |

| Agency   | Description   | Telephone  | Web address  |
|--|---|--|--|
| Local Government—<br>Aged Care,<br>Disability, Home and<br>Community Care,<br>Home Maintenance,<br>Meals on Wheels | City of Greater Geelong   | 5227 0270  | <a href="http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au">www.geelongaustralia.com.au</a>         |
|  | Colac Otway Shire   | 5232 9400  | <a href="http://www.colacotway.vic.gov.au">www.colacotway.vic.gov.au</a>             |
|  | Golden Plains Shire   | 5220 7111  | <a href="http://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au">www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au</a>         |
|  | Queenscliffe Borough  | 5258 1377  | <a href="http://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au">www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au</a>         |
|  | Surf Coast Shire  | 5261 0600  | <a href="http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au">www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au</a>               |
| <b>M</b> ental Health Department   | Mental health publications ordering contact number  | 1800 066 247   | <a href="http://www.health.gov.au/hsdd/mentalhe">www.health.gov.au/hsdd/mentalhe</a> |
| Mental Illness Fellowship of Victoria  | Support services for people with a mental illness   | 5229 8827  | <a href="http://www.mifellowship.org">www.mifellowship.org</a>                       |
| Mental Health Services<br><br>Community Mental Health Teams  | Aged Psychiatry<br>Swanston Centre<br>24 Hour Crisis Line<br>Bellarine<br>Colac<br>Corio<br>Geelong West<br>Surfcoast | 5226 7044<br>5226 7410<br>5226 7410<br>5226 7481<br>5232 1550<br>5273 2255<br>5260 3700<br>5261 1128 |  |
| Migrant Resource Centre ( <i>Geelong Ethnic Communities Council</i> )  | Services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities  | 5221 6044  |  |
| Mood Disorders Group   | Services for people with a mental illness   | 5222 5999  |  |
| Multiple Sclerosis Society   | Services for people with multiple sclerosis   | 1800 287 367   | <a href="http://www.msaustralia.org.au">www.msaustralia.org.au</a>                   |
| Muscular Dystrophy Association   | Services for people with muscular dystrophy   | 9370 0477  |  |
| <b>N</b> eighbourhood Watch  | Police home safety program  | 5225 3260  |  |
| <b>O</b> ffice of Hearing  | Information about hearing aids  | 1800 500 726   | <a href="http://www.hearing.com.au">www.hearing.com.au</a>                           |
| Office of Hearing Services   | Information about hearing aids via teletext   | 1800 500 496<br>TTY  |  |
| Office of the Public Advocate  | Information about Powers of Attorney and guardianship   | 1800 136 829   | <a href="http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au">www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au</a>     |
| Optometrists Association   | Victorian association of optometrists   | 9486 1700  | <a href="http://www.vicoptom.asn.au">www.vicoptom.asn.au</a>                         |
| Optometrists in the Yellow Pages   | Eye testing for vision problems and prescription of glasses   |  | <a href="http://www.yellowpages.com.au">www.yellowpages.com.au</a>                   |
| <b>P</b> araQuad Victoria  | Services for paraplegics and quadraplegics  | 9415 1200  |  |

| <b>Agency</b>  | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Telephone</b>          | <b>Web address</b>   |
|--|---|---------------------------|--|
| Parkinson's Victoria                                   | Services for people with Parkinson's  | 1800 644 189              | <a href="http://www.parkinsons-vic.org.au">www.parkinsons-vic.org.au</a>                   |
| Pathways   | Support for people with a mental illness                                      | 5229 8295                 |  |
| Police   | Emergency service   | 000                       |  |
| <b>Quitline</b>  | Assistance with quitting smoking  | 131 848                   | <a href="http://www.quit.org.au">www.quit.org.au</a>                                       |
| <b>Relationships Australia</b>                         | Counselling service   | 1300 364 277              | <a href="http://www.relationships.com.au">www.relationships.com.au</a>                     |
| <b>Safe and Independent Living</b>                     | Falls risk assessment and prevention  | 5260 3608<br>0409 141 135 |  |
| Safety Link  | Personal alarm system   | 1800 813 617              | <a href="http://www.safetylink.net.au">www.safetylink.net.au</a>                           |
| Scope—Formerly Spastic Society of Victoria             | Services for people with cerebral palsy                                       | 5221 5444                 | <a href="http://www.scopevic.org.au">www.scopevic.org.au</a>                               |
| Senior Citizens Centres                                | Social clubs for senior citizens  |                           | <a href="http://www.yellowpages.com.au">www.yellowpages.com.au</a>                         |
| Seniors Access to Information (SATIN)                  | Internet training for people over 50  | 1800 136 381              | <a href="http://www.cotavic.org.au/info/satin.html">www.cotavic.org.au/info/satin.html</a> |
| Seniors Card Hotline                                   | Discount card for people 60+  | 9616 8241                 |  |
| Seniors Information Victoria                           | General information for seniors   | 1300 135 090              | <a href="http://www.seniors.vic.gov.au">www.seniors.vic.gov.au</a>                         |
| Social Work Department Geelong Hospital Grace McKellar | Information, support and referral for patients in hospital and rehabilitation | 5226 7525<br>5279 2222    |  |
| Stroke Association                                     | Information for people affected by stroke                                     | 9670 1000                 |  |
| St Laurence Disability Services                        | Services for people with a disability   | 5275 2665                 |  |
| <b>Transport Accident Commission (TAC)</b>             | Financial assistance after transport accident                                 | 1800 332 556              | <a href="http://www.tac.vic.gov.au">www.tac.vic.gov.au</a>                                 |
| Taxi Directorate                                       | Half-price taxi information   | 1800 638 802              |  |
| TIS—Translating and Interpreting Service               | Telephone interpreter service   | 131 450                   |  |
| Together We Do Better                                  | Vic Health website promoting social connections                               |                           | <a href="http://www.togetherwedo.better.vic.gov.au">www.togetherwedo.better.vic.gov.au</a> |
| <b>University of The Third Age (U3A)</b>               | Adult education for people over 50  | 5225 5940                 |  |
| <b>Veterans' Affairs</b>                               | Services the veteran community  | 1800 555 254              | <a href="http://www.dva.gov.au">www.dva.gov.au</a>   |

| Agency   | Description  | Telephone    | Web address  |
|--|--|--------------|--|
| Vic Health   | Health promotion agency  | 9667 1333    | <a href="http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au">www.vichealth.vic.gov.au</a>       |
| Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) | Guardianship information   | 1800 133 055 | <a href="http://www.vcat.vic.gov.au">www.vcat.vic.gov.au</a>                 |
| Villamanta Legal Service                           | Free statewide community legal centre for people with disabilities | 1800 014 111 | <a href="http://www.villamanta.org.au">www.villamanta.org.au</a>             |
| Vision Australia Foundation                        | Services for people with vision impairment                         | 5221 4100    | <a href="http://www.visionaustralia.org.au">www.visionaustralia.org.au</a>   |
| VitalCall  | Personal alarm system  | 1300 360 808 |  |
| Volunteer Resource Centre                          | Trains and places volunteers for community work                    | 5221 1377    | <a href="http://www.geelongvolunteer.org.au">www.geelongvolunteer.org.au</a> |
| <b>W</b> authaurong Aboriginal Cooperative         | Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Geelong     | 5277 0044    |  |
| White Pages  | Phone directory  |              | <a href="http://www.whitepages.com.au">www.whitepages.com.au</a>             |
| <b>Y</b> ellow Pages                               | Phone directory  |              | <a href="http://www.yellowpages.com.au">www.yellowpages.com.au</a>           |

# Print and audio visual resources >

| Title   | What it's about  | Where to get it  |
|---|--|--|
| A Guide to Services for Senior Victorians         | Information about services and opportunities for people over 50                | Seniors Information Victoria<br>1300 135 090<br><a href="http://www.seniors.vic.gov.au">www.seniors.vic.gov.au</a>   |
| DPS Publishing Guide to Aged Care                 | Information about specific residential facilities in Victoria                  | Carers Victoria 1800 242 636 or<br><a href="http://www.dpspublishing.com.au">www.dpspublishing.com.au</a>  |
| Carers Booklet<br>Department of Veterans' Affairs | Information about services for carers who are members of the veteran community | Department of Veterans' Affairs<br>1800 555 254  |
| Eat Well for Life                                 | A practical guide to dietary guidelines for older adults                       | Department of Health and Ageing and the Heart Foundation.<br>1800 020 103 extension 8654   |
| Emergency Care Plan<br>Carer Support Kit          | Emergency plan and carer resources   | Carers Victoria<br>1800 242 636  |
| 5 Steps to Entry into Residential Aged Care       | Information about the process of moving into residential care                  | Aged and Community Care Information Line 1800 500 853  |
| Good Food and Health Advice for Older People      | Information about good food for older people                                   | Seniors Information Victoria<br>1300 135 090<br>Department of Human Services<br><a href="http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/agedcare">www.dhs.vic.gov.au/agedcare</a> |
| Personal Alert Victoria                           | Explains personal alarm systems  | Department of Human Services<br>9616 7777<br><a href="http://www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare">www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare</a>                              |
| Residential Care                                  | A guide for families and carers considering residential care                   | Department of Human Services<br>9616 7727<br><a href="http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/agedcare">www.dhs.vic.gov.au/agedcare</a>                                    |
| Take Control                                      | A Guide to Powers of Attorney and Guardianship                                 | Office of the Public Advocate<br>1800 136 829  |
| The Carer Experience                              | A guide for carers of people with dementia                                     | Alzheimer's Australia<br>1800 639 331  |
| What to do when someone dies                      | A guide to assist in coping with and preparing for bereavement                 | Centrelink 132 717   |
| Audio Visual Resources                            |  |  |
| Carers Relaxation                                 | An audio tape of guided relaxation exercises                                   | Carers Victoria<br>1800 242 636  |
| The Carer   | A video about being a carer  | Carers Victoria<br>1800 242 636  |

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The Wellness Guide is full of helpful information based on the real experience of carers.

‘Reading this is like having  
a friend in a book!’

