

Mission: To facilitate healthy aging by providing leadership and encouraging collaboration in creating age-friendly places (communities) that optimize the ability of all older Manitobans to do the things they feel are important.



## Age Friendly Communities Are Better

### Celebrate October As Seniors' Month With Commitment To Age Friendly Initiative

There are some places in the world where people live extraordinarily long lives. They've come to be known as "Blue Zones" and one of the most important aspects of these places is how they treat their elderly. Sadly, none of them exist in Manitoba.

Blue Zones are in the news these days because of a Netflix documentary series (Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones) examining what makes them different. It begs the question: why do people who live in these places have such higher life expectancies?

Many of the principles that have made Blue Zones so remarkable are very similar to many of the commitments behind the Age Friendly Manitoba initiative. More than 90 Manitoba municipalities have already committed to becoming Age Friendly, and we're here to challenge them to do more to improve this score.

Age Friendly communities are simply better places to live. They offer environments where physical, economic and social barriers are removed and policies, systems, services products and technologies are implemented to create better places to grow old.

It means promoting healthy, active lifestyles and diets. It means building active transportation paths. It means promoting better food and nutrition. It means not putting our elderly out to pasture, but to embrace them and ensure they remain a vital part of our society.

Today we still have too many people who seem to prefer institutionalizing older adults instead of giving them ways to age in place, surrounded by friends, family and familiar activities. These practices have been shown to limit people's life expectancies.

## Calling All Manitoba Municipalities

October 1 is recognized by the United Nations as the International Day of Older Persons, and the Province of Manitoba has declared October to be Seniors' Month. We think it's the perfect time for Manitoba municipalities to stand up and recommit to becoming Age Friendly.

Has there ever been a clearer core purpose for local governments than for them to foster places where we can all grow as old as possible; where we can lead healthier, happier, more fulfilling lives together.

There are so many benefits that come from being an Age Friendly community. Aside from the most obvious benefit of living longer, it also means living in a friendly, supportive community. That leads to fewer hospital stays, less chronic illness and much lower healthcare costs.

Let's do this. Call your Mayor, Reeve and Councillors and ask them to recommit your community to being a more Age Friendly one. And maybe, just maybe, we can one day boast of all of Manitoba being a Blue Zone of longevity.



# HEALTHY, ACTIVE AGING

As we Celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Active Aging Week – Oct 2 – 8, 2023, it is never too late to get active!

The WHO (World Health Organization) states that the greatest health risk for older adults is being physically inactive.

It is important to engage in an active lifestyle at any age. Choosing appropriate physical activity can provide opportunities to stay connected and improve one's health status. Consider the following benefits of regular physical activity:

- Reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, including the risk of stroke,
- Help to reduce blood pressure.
- Help prevent osteoporosis.
- Reduce the risk of developing and help to manage Type II Diabetes.
- Regular activity can help manage Parkinson's disease and arthritis.
- Leading an active lifestyle can also help reduce the risk of developing several cancers including breast and colon cancer.
- Improve mobility and balance which will help to prevent falls.
- Leading an active lifestyle can provide opportunities to stay connected, improve competence and confidence and gain a sense of belonging.
- Help maintain one's independence and the ability to stay in one's home as they age. Leading a sedentary lifestyle may take away the option of controlling where one lives as they age.
- Stay socially connected and engaged by participating in a group physical activity.



- Improve cognition and brain health. Going for a walk outdoors boosts our mental wellness as we take in the various sights, and smells of our surroundings.
- Help to reduce stress. Going for a walk for an example has been shown to help reduce stress.

**Sit Less – Move More!** Sitting for long periods of time is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes per day! The recommendations are to get up and move at least once per hour.

\*Anyone who has been sedentary or experiencing recent change in their health status should consult with their health care provider before starting out on any physical activity program

Physical Activity that is age appropriate can include walking, Tai Chi, Yoga, exercise classes, hiking, cycling, gardening, snowshoeing, golf, curling, etc.

## How much do I need to move to gain the health benefits?

- The Canadian Guidelines, ages 65+, recommend 150 mins. of activity per week or 30 mins. over 5 days.
- Weekly activity should include strength training 2 – 3 times per week.
- Activity should include flexibility, and balance exercises.

Check out the Active Aging in Manitoba website. [www.activeagingmb.ca](http://www.activeagingmb.ca) for a Guide to planning activities for Active Aging Week! Get Engaged and Celebrate the older adults in your community and all they have contributed and how they continue to contribute!

*Submitted by Linda Brown, ED, Active Aging in MB*



## Our consultants are ready to work with you!

Connect with Connie Newman at (204) 792-5838 or [info@manitobaseniorcommunities.ca](mailto:info@manitobaseniorcommunities.ca) and [hello@agefriendlymanitoba.com](mailto:hello@agefriendlymanitoba.com) or visit our website: [www.agefriendlymanitoba.com](http://www.agefriendlymanitoba.com)



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