

Oral Health for Healthy Aging

M eet Bob. Bob has always been an outgoing senior, active in his seniors' residence, and chatty with other residents and staff. However, Bob hasn't been himself recently. He is quiet, rarely leaves his room, and no longer socializes with other residents. One of the care aides notices he isn't eating his meals, he has lost weight, and is irritable when she tells jokes to encourage him to smile. What is the reason for Bob's sudden withdrawal? His oral health.

Bob's arthritis had been getting progressively worse, making it impossible for him to brush his own teeth. He became embarrassed to smile and socialize because of the appearance of his teeth, and he feared his bad breath could be detected by others. The medications he was on were causing his mouth to become extremely dry, which made communicating even more challenging. Eventually, the lack of daily oral care led to tooth pain. Eating meals became uncomfortable, even unbearable at times. Bob quickly became weak and frail.



Finding a solution

We all know Bob. Many of us have experienced aspects of his story, either with our parents or with other older adults for whom we care. Research has shown that many seniors suffer from gum disease and tooth decay caused by plaque — consisting of food debris and bacteria — which accumulates in the mouth. Fortunately, most oral diseases and infections can be prevented through daily and professional oral health care.

Dental hygienists are oral health care providers who deliver preventive and therapeutic oral care in a variety of settings, including mobile practices that allow them to provide services to seniors in their own homes or in long-term care facilities. After a comprehensive assessment, the dental hygienist will work with seniors and their caregivers to develop an individualized oral care plan. Seniors like Bob deserve the preventive oral health care that dental hygienists provide. Let's make it happen. ◻

Donna Scott, Registered Dental Hygienist



Tips to Boost Your Brain Health

Our brains have the ability to reorganize and adapt themselves to form new neural connections throughout our lifetime. Scientists have shown brains to be malleable enough to be rewired — so that one area can assume the function of another. Here are five easy ways to stimulate your brain.

- 1 Exercise your brain by playing an instrument, reading a novel, learning a new language, or taking on a new hobby.
- 2 Practise positivity and action-oriented thinking. Keep a gratitude journal to help drive positive thinking and be optimistic.
- 3 Consume superfoods like omega-3 fatty acids, which positively affect mood, memory, and brain performance.
- 4 Sleep well to reboot your brain. A good sleep flushes out accumulated toxins and cements new learning and memories through neuroplasticity.
- 5 Increase your social network and interactions, as they have been shown to boost brain function as much as intellectual stimulation.

Source: Dr. Jennifer Pearman

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

Retiring Soon? What You Should Know

When you mention retirement, most peoples' thoughts probably turn to whether their savings are adequate so that they can comfortably make the move away from their regular paying jobs. But, when it comes to making the transition into retirement, it's about much more than money.

When you're just a few months away from retirement, there are many other aspects of your life you need to consider, and you'll have many more questions you need answered. The good news is there's a new web-based resource that can help bring you up to speed on what you need to know and provide reassurance that you've covered all the bases.

Developed by the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association (CLHIA), *Retiring Soon?* is a one-stop resource that gathers information on all aspects of your life in retirement — not only the money, but also health benefits, lifestyle considerations, organizing important documents, and much more.

Retiring Soon? has you covered for the following:

- How to apply for government benefits such as CPP and QPP.
- How to convert workplace pension and personal RRSPs into retirement income.
- How to organize family and financial documents.
- The role of financial advisors.
- How to avoid fraud.

And, after you've made your way through its three main sections, *Retiring Soon?* offers a handy summary to make sure you haven't missed any steps. This one-of-a-kind web-based tool is accessible on computers, tablets, and smartphones.

Moving from the workplace into retirement can be a daunting process, but it doesn't need to be if you are confident that you're ready to take the next step. *Retiring Soon?* can give you that much-needed confidence. ◻

Supporting Partner



HEALTHY AGING

PERSONALHEALTHNEWS.CA

AGING GRACEFULLY WITH HOWIE MANDEL

By Bronwen Keyes-Bevan

We all face challenges as we age: our health declines, friends and family pass away, our children move on. But, for people living with a mental health condition, these changes and the instabilities they bring can be particularly challenging. Howie Mandel believes the key to aging well is to be proactive in nurturing our mental health and breaking down stigma.

In Canada, an estimated 20 percent of adults over the age of 65 suffer with mental health issues that range from depression and anxiety disorders to dementia and Alzheimer's disease. An aging population means a heavier burden on Canada's health care system: by 2041, rates of mental illness for Canadian adults between the ages of 70 to 89 are projected to be higher than for any other age group.

Howie Mandel's relationship with mental health issues is personal and long-lived. The comedian has endured obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) for his entire life. Now aged 60 and facing the next chapter of his life, Mandel is championing the benefits of adopting an open, proactive dialogue around mental health.

"Your mental health is an organ. It is a sin that mental health is not part of our everyday curriculum," says the *America's Got Talent* judge. "It's so much more important than anything else, we should all be proactive and cognisant."

Being proactive with your mental health means adopting healthy habits and tending to your diet, sleep, and exercise. Keep an agile mind doing activities that require mental and physical dexterity, such as painting and

reading. Social interactions through personal relationships are key to maintaining your wellbeing. Foster new relationships by taking up hobbies, enrolling in classes, or volunteering in your community.

Tackling mental health issues head on

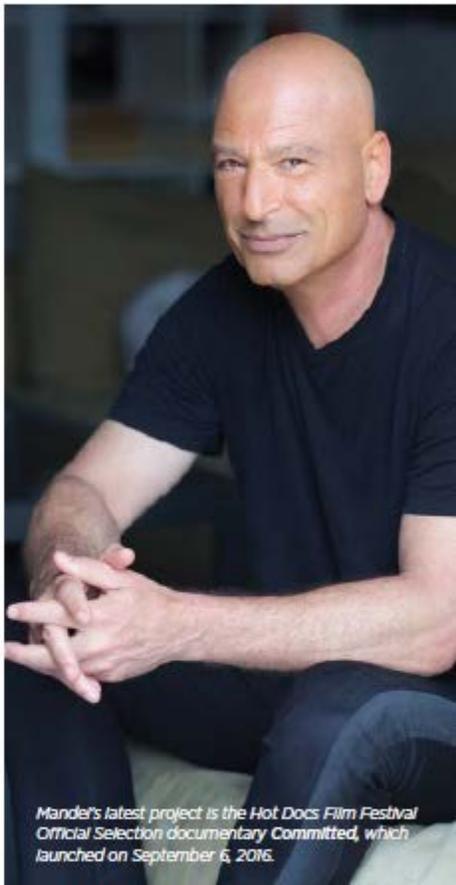
Mandel's struggle with OCD took its toll on his family's life. Terry, his wife of 36 years, eventually gave him an ultimatum: get help or leave. Mandel will never be cured of OCD or ADHD, but he's learned to manage them. Mandel is in therapy and on medication, but he believes caring for one's mental health goes well beyond.

"We should all, from day one, learn to tend to our mental health," he says. "You should be open, you should talk. If you can afford it, there should always be a counsellor in your life to give you coping skills." Learning coping skills for change and developing healthy habits early on will give you a better chance of fending off mental health issues later on in life.

What's really needed is a shift in how we perceive our mental health. As Mandel says, "We take care of our dental health but we don't take care of our mental health."

The key to healthy aging is to dispel any remaining stigma attached to mental health, and for everyone — diagnosed with a condition or not — to make tending to it a part of everyday life so as to develop coping mechanisms for the challenges that life will inevitably offer.

The most important thing for people experiencing mental health issues is to reach out to someone, speak to your doctor or a loved one — chances are you're not alone in your experiences. ○



Mandel's latest project is the *Hot Docs Film Festival Official Selection* documentary *Committed*, which launched on September 6, 2016.

Publisher: Jessica Papp Business Developer: Samantha Blandford Managing Director: Martin Kocandrie Production Director: Carlo Ammendola Lead Designer: Matthew Souza Account Managers: Joyce McCaffrey, Melissa MacDonald Cover photo: Joey Carman Photo credits: All images are from Getty Images unless otherwise credited. Send all inquiries to ca.editorial@mediaplanet.com. This section was created by Mediaplanet and did not involve Maclean's Magazine or its editorial departments.



DENTAL HYGIENE FOR LIFE

Whether you have natural teeth or wear dentures, your oral health matters!
Your dental hygienist can recommend the oral care routine that's right for you.

ORAL HEALTH FOR OVERALL HEALTH

Visit www.dentalhygienecanada.ca for more

