



# Aged To Perfection

...sharing the latest on caring for seniors

## HAPPY FAMILY DAY!

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February is no longer just the month for lovers—it is now the month for families! With Ontario’s newest stat holiday, we have Family Day in February to break up the monotony of Canadian winter. This year will be the eighth official Family Day holiday in Ontario. Have you created any family traditions yet for this day off work and school?

Family Day is an opportunity to spend time with the people who mean the most to you. Because it is such a new holiday, there are no traditions that reach back for decades, so you’re welcome to create your own traditions that are as unique as families are. There is no pressure to keep up with the way relatives did something in the past.

One of the wonderful things about Family Day is that it has not been commercialized—the stores are not full of merchandise and the holiday is not associated with overspending, overeating, and overstressing! It is a holiday with no strings attached.

Just a chance to pause and enjoy the people who matter most. Enjoy this holiday as a day to keep things simple and low-key. Pause and



notice the beauty of a quiet winter day, watch for birds in the trees, photograph the dripping icicles, cook a homemade meal together, bake a favourite recipe, share favourite memories, sip hot chocolate and watch a classic movie. Whatever you do, remember to say “I love you” and let your family know just how much you appreciate them. Family is certainly not just restricted to blood relatives either. Anyone who is close to you can be considered as family—friends, neighbours, acquaintances from church, social clubs, etc. If someone is meaningful to you, then consider them as family!

From everyone at Warm Embrace Elder Care, we wish you a wonderful Family Day!





## SPEEDING UP SPRING!



Are you experiencing a case of cabin fever? We were pretty lucky to have a mild January with temperatures that almost felt like spring. We know better than to think we're off the hook though—this is Canada and winter isn't over in February! No doubt there is more snow on the way and many more cold temperature days head. Don't be discouraged and let the cabin fever get to you—instead, speed up spring!

One of the best ways to bring spring to you is to start your gardening early—indoors! Rather than waiting on mother-nature to cooperate for a display of spring colours, get things started yourself by forcing bulbs.

Indoor gardening is a very accessible way to garden. There is no need to bend over or kneel on the hard ground. Bulbs require very little maintenance or effort. Indoor gardening is a great way to connect with an elderly loved one's passion and hobby without being overwhelming or too physically demanding. It can also be a great intergenerational activity, drawing children and grandparents—



or even great-grandparents—together over a common task. Forcing bulbs indoors mimics the outdoor environment that causes a bulb to grow and bloom. Unlike large,

potted houseplants, bulbs do not need big pots. A small, shallow dish is sufficient. Many bulbs are easily forced

using only water and pebbles, rather than soil, resulting in much easier clean up when gardening indoors. It is also more fun to watch the roots develop and see the bulb change as it grows. New growth development is exciting to see—at any age!

Using your shallow container, fill it half full of pebbles or marbles, then place the bulbs on top of the pebble layer. Gently fill the rest of the container with pebbles or marbles to secure the bulbs in place, but do not completely bury the bulbs. Put enough water in the dish so that the water touches the bottom of the bulb, but do not submerge the bulb in water or it will begin to rot.

The step that is most often overlooked when forcing bulbs is the chilling step. Your freshly “planted” bulbs need to be chilled in a cellar or in the fridge to mimic the winter season. Some bulbs only need a few days of chilling, and others





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need a much more extended chilling period of several weeks. Be sure to check the specifications on the bulbs that you purchase.

When roots begin to show you will know that your bulbs are ready to begin their growth cycle and it is time to remove them from

**NOTE:** Please do NOT store bulbs in an elderly person's fridge. If that person has dementia or mild cognitive impairment, the bulbs (or pebbles) could be mistaken for other produce. Likewise, if your loved one has impaired vision, the bulbs could appear similar to onions. Senses such as taste and smell become dulled for many people as they age; the smell or bitter taste that might alert you to a food being harmful may not alert an elderly loved one.

the chilling stage. With roots now showing, your bulbs are ready to be moved into warmth and sun-



light. You need to introduce them to sunlight slowly, just the way that the spring sunlight is soft at first and then gradually gets warmer. Place your bulbs in a cooler area of your home, away from direct sunlight. When your plants begin to grow and the stems take on a healthy green colour, then it is time to move them to a sunny windowsill to watch the beauty unfold!

In theory, any bulb can be forced to grow indoors, but some varieties are easier to force than others. Paper white narcissus grow well indoors and do not require a very long chilling period. They grow well in water and pebbles, and are quite fragrant. Amaryllis are very easy to force and the blooms are giant and colourful.

They grow so quickly that you can see growth daily. The warmer the



environment, the faster the amaryllis will grow. Once it blooms, it is best to move the plant to a cooler, shaded area for the blooms to last longer, as they can remain for up to a month.

Hyacinth and crocus can also be forced and take eight to ten weeks to grow. Although tulips are a favourite spring bloom, they are probably best enjoyed out in the garden as they can be trickier to force and require a long chilling period of sixteen weeks.

Enjoy your head start on spring by forcing your favourite bulbs indoors, and use this easy, timeless, and ageless activity to connect various members of your family. You will have spring beauty unfolding in your own living room—no matter how much snow remains on the ground outside!





*...a mother & her daughters  
providing meaningful  
assistance to seniors*

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Warm Embrace Elder Care is owned and operated by a mother-daughter team, Brenda Hamilton and her daughters, Chloe and Avery Hamilton. Their goal is to assist seniors to remain independent for as long as possible through offering various services such as homecare, memory therapy, and one-on-one home exercise for seniors. Inspired by personal experience with family caregiving for Brenda's mother, this mother-daughter team understands firsthand the benefits of enlisting help while caring for a loved one. Warm Embrace believes that independence does not mean that you can do everything by yourself, but rather that you get to choose how everything is done—we grant our seniors the respect and dignity they deserve by helping them to live as they desire.

## HEART HEALTH: MYTHS VS. FACTS

In honour of February being heart month, St. Mary's General Hospital is hosting



a heart health event. With a cardiologist and nurse practitioner on hand to answer all your questions, you'll learn more about:

- Tips on how to decrease risk of heart disease
- Information on the symptoms of a potential heart condition

- Tips to help improve your heart health

**Date:** Thursday, February 23, 2017

**Time:** 6:30pm registration ; 7:00pm—8:30pm presentations

**Location:** Delta Waterloo (110 Erb St. W. Waterloo)

**Cost:** FREE! Registration is required due to limited space

**Registration:** 519 749 6536 or online:

[www.supportstmarys.ca/2017-heart-month-event](http://www.supportstmarys.ca/2017-heart-month-event)

## JOIN OUR WONDERFUL TEAM!

Warm Embrace is still growing! We are excited that we've had many new and wonderful caregivers join us in this new year—and we have room for a few more wonderful caregivers as well! We're still hiring!

Do you know someone who has a huge heart for the elderly and who wants to make a difference in someone's life? Perhaps you know someone who is partially retired and would like a position that is meaningful and provides intrinsic rewards.

If so, we would love to meet them!

Please direct them to Warm Embrace because



being a caregiver to the elderly might be a perfect fit. For more information about the position and to apply directly online, please visit our website:

[www.WarmEmbrace.ca/employment](http://www.WarmEmbrace.ca/employment)