

Senior Savvy

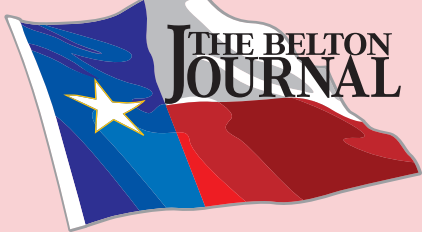


Happy Mother's Day



May 2026

A FREE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF



Celebrating Mother's Day when your loved one is in a care facility

By Gretchen Hook,

LPC Owner/Operator Little Elm Residential Care Home

Mother's Day is a special time dedicated to honoring the women who have shaped our lives. For families whose mothers or grandmothers reside in a senior care facility, the holiday may bring mixed emotions of love and gratitude, but also the challenges of celebrating apart. Yet, with a little creativity and thoughtfulness, Mother's Day can still be meaningful and joyful for everyone involved.

Plan a Thoughtful Visit

If your facility allows in-person visits, consider planning a special day together. Bring favorite flowers, a cherished book, or photos from home to create a comforting atmosphere. If able, take Mom out to brunch or dinner. Sometimes churches will honor Mothers with a fun event. Even a short visit can brighten her day and remind her of the love surrounding her.

Connect Virtually

When in-person visits aren't possible, technology can bridge the gap. Schedule a video call with family members or record heartfelt messages for her to watch. Sharing stories, laughter, and familiar faces—even through a screen—can make her feel remembered and cherished.

Create Personalized Surprises

Send a care package filled with her favorite treats, handmade crafts from grandchildren, or a letter sharing fond memories. Many facilities welcome decorations or cards that can be displayed in her room, making the environment festive and filled with warmth.

Work with the Facility Staff

Reach out to the staff to coordinate a small celebration. They may help organize a group activity, deliver a special treat, or assist with a call. Expressing gratitude to caregivers can also enhance the day for everyone involved.

Honor Traditions—Old and New

Consider ways to honor longstanding family traditions or create new ones that fit your current circumstances. Whether it's listening to her favorite music, sharing a remote meal, or reading a poem together, these moments foster connection and comfort.

Take Care of Yourself

It's natural to feel a range of emotions on Mother's Day. Give yourself permission to reflect, seek support from others, and focus on the love you continue to share. Your efforts to celebrate—even at a distance—truly matter.

While celebrating Mother's Day with a loved one in a facility may look different, the heart of the holiday remains unchanged: expressing gratitude, love, and appreciation. With thoughtful gestures and a little planning, you can create a day filled with connection, joy, and beautiful memories to cherish for years to come.



Seniors can emphasize balance when caregiving

Spending time with grandchildren can make seniors feel young and valued. Grandparents are often asked to step in as caregivers to the youngsters they love. The U.S. Department of Labor reports 2.74 million children in the United States were being raised by a grandparent in 2021, the most recent year for data. Census data from 2021 also shows one in five Canadian grandparents regularly helps with grandchild care.

Chasing around a toddler or school-aged child can affect seniors differently than it affects parents in

their 20s or 30s. Effectively and safely managing the physical and emotional toll of caring for grandchildren may come down to emphasizing balance.

- **Protect your body.** Grandparents should rely on strollers, high chairs and step stools to minimize heavy lifting. When a child wants to be held, a senior can sit on the couch or a chair and have the child climb up to them.

- **Incorporate downtime.** Seniors should schedule quiet time so they can get a physical and mental break.



Continued on Page 4

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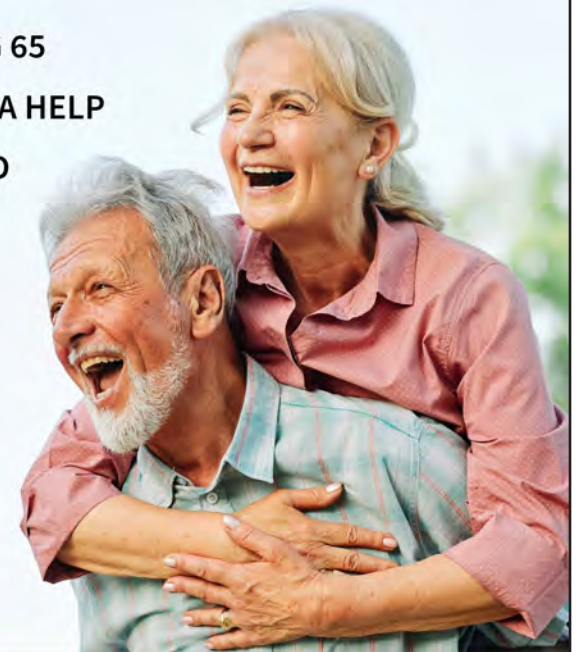
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Whether this time involves reading books or engaging in easy crafts, ensuring there are blocks of time for rest is essential.

- Conduct a safety check. It's important for a home to be safe for kids and seniors alike. Removing breakable items and covering up sharp edges on furniture and other hard surfaces can protect grandparents and grandkids.

- Establish some boundaries. Grandparents should establish clear communication with their own children regarding their expectations. It's important to define a schedule that works for the senior, and he or she should be honest about how much they can manage.

- Know the rules. Grandparents

should discuss what parents expect regarding screen time, naps, food, and more. A united front from parents and grandparents can reduce the need to negotiate with headstrong children.

- Make a backup plan. Seniors should emphasize to their children that they need to have a backup caregiver available for when they are not able to watch the grandchildren. Seniors deserve days off.

Grandparents frequently are called upon to pitch in and help their children with caregiving needs. Bonding with grandchildren can be rewarding, but seniors must balance their own needs with the needs of their children and grandchildren.





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How to recognize mental fatigue

Everyone feels tired at some point. The signs of physical fatigue are often easily recognizable. Slower movements, heavy eyes, achy muscles, and even frequent yawning are some telltale signs that a body is tired. But what about mental fatigue?

WebMD notes that mental fatigue affects the mind instead of the muscles. That can make mental fatigue difficult to spot. But identifying the presence of mental fatigue is important, as untreated mental fatigue can affect decision-making and performance at work and in the classroom. Anyone can develop mental fatigue, but those who find themselves frequently overwhelmed by work, school or personal obligations may be particularly vulnerable. Recognition of the following signs of mental fatigue may compel those dealing with such exhaustion to take a break and seek help.

- **Mood changes:** People suffering from mental fatigue may experience mood changes that would otherwise be considered out of character. Increased irritability, a shortened temper, a lack of patience for others, and increased instances of snapping at people are some mood changes that indicate the presence of mental fatigue.

- **Loss of productivity:** A noticeable dip in productivity is another sign of mental fatigue. WebMD notes that a loss of productivity induced by mental fatigue occurs because the feeling of tiredness compromises a person's ability to concentrate. Mental fatigue also can drain a person's motivation. Distractions become harder to ignore when suffering from mental fatigue, which in

turn diminishes productivity.

- **Instances of zoning out:** Mental fatigue can get in the way of a person's ability to focus on what he or she is doing. This sense of zoning out can be particularly dangerous, as it can strike even when driving a vehicle. In fact, WebMD notes a link between mental fatigue and car accidents.

- **Inability to sleep:** It may seem counterintuitive that mental fatigue would make it difficult to sleep, but it can. People with mental fatigue may struggle to wind down and stop thinking about work- or school-related tasks come bedtime. That can trigger insomnia. One of the dangers associated with this side effect

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of mental fatigue is that lack of sleep can worsen feelings of exhaustion.

- **Increased anxiety:** WebMD notes that mental fatigue triggers the sympathetic nervous system, which can lead to feelings of anxiety and panic. These feelings may be ever-present.

- **Physical side effects:** Some people find it harder to exercise when their minds are fatigued. A 2017 study published in the journal Sports Medicine found that the duration and intensity of a physical task are important variables when considering the potential effects of mental fatigue on physical performance. Researchers identified a decreased time to physical exhaustion, and a resulting decline in endurance performance, as a side effect of mental fatigue.

Mental fatigue can take a serious toll. Anyone who suspects they are suffering from mental fatigue is urged to contact a health care provider.



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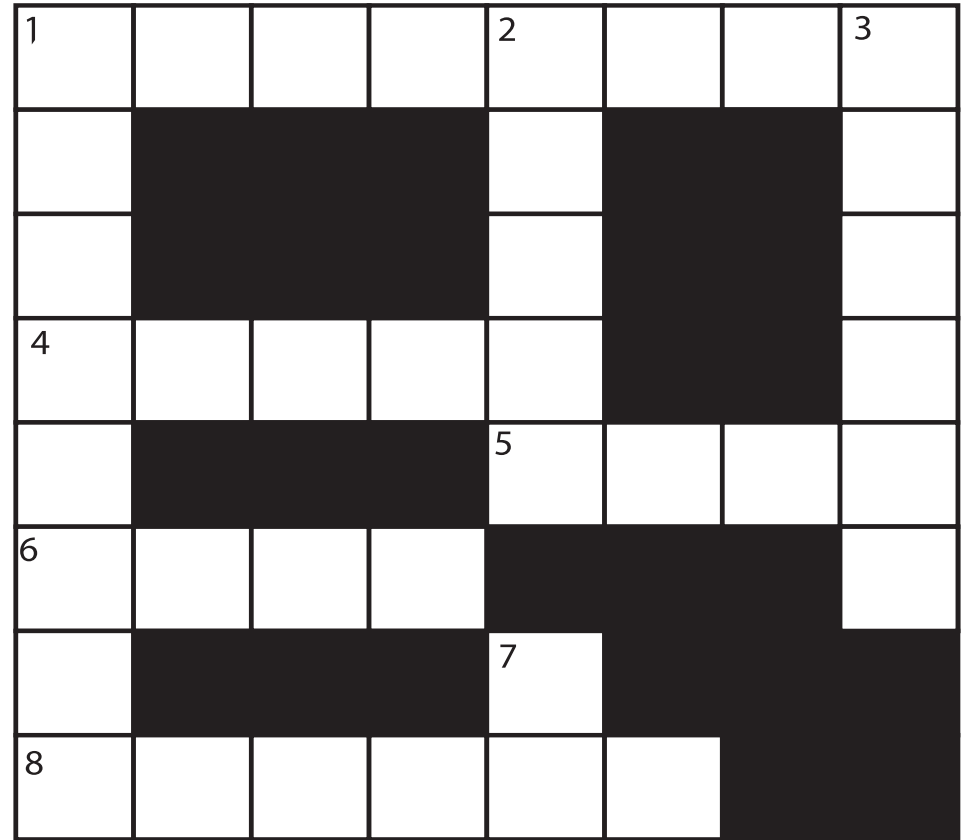
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Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- Rear of a home
- Sandy area
- Rising and falling of the sea
- Place to pitch a tent
- Has a good time

DOWN

- Style of slow-cooked food
- Luxury ship
- Evening meal
- The Empire State (abbr.)

Answers:
 Across
 1. Backyard 4. Beach 5. Tide 6. Camp 8. Enjoys
 Down
 1. Barbecue 2. Yacht 3. Dinner 7. NY



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Daily dietary habits that can benefit seniors over the long haul

Food fuels the body throughout the day, ideally providing the energy people need to make the most of each day. But the foods people eat are more than just fuel. Indeed, a delicious meal is hard to forget, and that underscores how significant a variable flavor can be when people choose the foods they eat.

Flavor is certainly important when choosing and preparing meals, but it cannot be the only variable that determines what people eat. That's true for everyone, and especially notable for seniors. Age-related changes to the body should affect seniors' approach to diet. The National Council on Aging notes that metabolism slows as bodies grow older, which means seniors require fewer calories to fuel their daily activities than they needed when they were younger. That's just one of the many notable things seniors should consider when designing their daily diets.

- **Plan a well-rounded diet.** School children learn the basic food groups as youngsters, and it's good for seniors to keep those long-ago lessons in mind when planning their daily diets. The American Heart Association notes the importance of incorporating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy, and proteins into daily diets. In regard to dairy, the AHA advises consuming the equivalent of three cups of low-fat (1 percent) or fat-free dairy each day. When picking a protein source, the AHA identifies eggs, fish, lean meat, legumes, nuts, and poultry as healthy and protein-rich foods. Even polyunsaturated and monounsaturated oils like olive oil and peanut oil can be healthy.

- **Resolve to read more labels.** Aging adults need not study nutrition to identi-

fy what they're putting into their bodies each time they take a bite. The NCOA notes that food labels are useful sources of information that can indicate how much fat, sodium and added sugars are in a given item. Seniors should be especially vigilant when trying to avoid foods that contain a lot of added sugars, which can contribute to weight gain. That's notable given seniors' naturally slower metabolisms.

- **Practice portion control.** It's not necessarily the foods seniors eat but how much they eat that can derail their efforts to maintain their overall health. Seniors' recommended daily calorie intake varies by both gender and activity levels. Guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services notes women 61 and over who are moderately physically ac-

tive should consume roughly 1,800 calories per day, while those living an active lifestyle are advised to eat around 2,000 calories per day. Moderately active men age 66 and older are advised to eat 2,400 calories per day, while active men between the ages of 61 and 75 should aim for 2,600 calories per day. When reading food labels, pay attention to calories per serving, as that can act as a useful guide to control portions. The National Institute on Aging recognizes it can be hard to control portion sizes when dining out, and recommends seniors share an entrée or order from the appetizers menu when picking their main course.

The right daily dietary habits can help seniors live longer, healthier and happier lives, and picking the right foods does not require sacrificing flavor.



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 9 Exercise 10 Improver Line D 12 Bridge 12 Dominos 42	2
3	4 9 Exercise 9 Woodcarvers 10 Improver Line D 12 Dominos 42	5 8 Mex.Train Doms. 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9 Quilting/12 Canasta 6 Zumba Class	6 9 Exercise 10:30 Bible Study 12 Bingo 1 Arts & Crafts	7 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9 Quilting 12 Canasta Dance 6:30	8 9 Exercise 10 Improver Line D 12 Bridge 12 Dominos 42	9 Dance is Thurs., May 7 at 6:30 with Good Ol' Boys Band.
10	11 9 Exercise 9 Woodcarvers 10 Improver Line D 12 Dominos 42	12 8 Mex.Train Doms. 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9 Quilting/12 Canasta 6 Zumba Class	13 9 Exercise 10:30 Bible Study 12 Bingo 1 Art Painting	14 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9 Quilting 6 Zumba Class	15 9 Exercise 10 Improver Line D 12 Bridge 12 Dominos 42	16
17 The annual Senior Appreciation Dinner is Mon., May 18 at 5:30 at Harris Community Center.	18 9 Exercise 9 Woodcarvers 10 Improver Line D 12 Dominos 42 5:30 Sr. App. Dinner	19 8 Mex.Train Doms. 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9 Quilting/12 Canasta 6 Zumba Class	20 9 Exercise 10:30 Bible Study 12 Bingo 1 Art Painting	21 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9 Quilting 12 Canasta Dance 6:30	22 9 Exercise 10 Improver Line D 12 Bridge 12 Dominos 42	23 Dance is Thurs., May 21 at 6:30 with Dan Whitacre Band.
24 Sign up for the catered Dinner at the Center. Entertainment is the Jerry Haisler Trio.	25 Center closed Memorial Day 	26 8 Mex.Train Doms. 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9 Quilting/12 Canasta 6 Zumba Class	27 9 Exercise 10:30 Bible Study 12 Bingo 1 Art Painting	28 8/9 Beg. Line Dance 10 Improver Line D. 9 Quilting 12 Canasta 6 Zumba Class	29 9 Exercise 10 Improver Line D 12 Bridge 12 Dominos 42	30
31			Upcoming Events: 1. The Center is partnering with the City of Belton on offering a Zumba class on Tues. and Thurs. from 6-7 p.m., except for 1st and 3rd Thursdays when we have our regular dances. Cost is \$5 per class. 2. Dances - Thurs., May 7., with Good Ol' Boys; and Thurs, May 21, with Dan Whitacre. 3. The Senior Appreciation Dinner is Monday, May 18 at 5:30 at the Harris Community Center. It will be catered by Corona's. Sign up at the Center front desk. The Jerry Haisler Trio will be the entertainment. 4. We are in need of quilters who would be availalbe on Tues. and Thurs. mornings 9-12, or work from home! Call Judy at 254-770-7958 if interested.			

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