

# AVOID FRAILTY



Canadian  
Frailty  
Network

Réseau canadien  
des soins aux  
personnes fragilisées



We are excited to have Hal Johnson and Joanne McLeod of BodyBreak help us launch our newest initiative – a public awareness campaign that revolves around using a simple acronym, which lets people know how they can **AVOID FRAILTY** and take control of their health.

## WHAT IS FRAILTY?

It is a condition of reduced function and health, which can increase your risk of severe outcomes, and even death from an injury or an illness such as the flu. Frailty makes you more vulnerable, and much less likely to “bounce back” following an illness.

Anyone who has played the game Jenga knows that a structure can continue to look solid and strong even as pieces are slowly removed, but at a certain point – when too many “health” deficits occur – the structure topples. It is a good analogy for the effects of frailty.



## FRAILTY AND COVID-19

Looking at ‘frailty’ in the context of this pandemic and the tragic outcomes in long term care, it is abundantly clear that we need to increase the resilience of people who are older and vulnerable to becoming frail.



# A

**ACTIVITY!** Activity and exercise can slow, and in some cases, reverse frailty. Keeping active is critical to staying healthy and strong as we age. Focus on strength training and balance exercises at least twice a week, and activities that gets your heart rate up daily.

# V

**VACCINATE!** There is no COVID-19 vaccine yet, but the current pandemic has highlighted the importance of vaccinations to our overall health. When it is safe to do so, ensure that you have your vaccinations and booster shots up to date. Vaccines for the flu, shingles and pneumonia can help you avoid illnesses that could lead to poor health or death.

# O

**OPTIMIZE MEDICATIONS!** Have your health care provider review your medications annually, including prescriptions, over the counter drugs and even vitamins and natural supplements to ensure that you are on the least number of medications necessary for your present health and stage of life. Some medications can interact and lead to side effects such as dizziness, poor nutrient absorption or confusion. Thanks to an increase in virtual doctors' appointments, you can likely complete this from your home.

# I

**INTERACT!** Feeling socially isolated can contribute to frailty, advance aging and may lead to high blood pressure, depression or dementia. Strong social relationships are critical to our overall health and quality of life.

# D

**DIET & NUTRITION!** Food is medicine. As we age, we need more of certain nutrients like protein found in meat, fish, eggs and vegetarian sources to keep our muscles and bones strong. Vitamin D and calcium together, also support bone and muscle strength and may help prevent frailty.



*All together, the 'AVOID Frailty' strategy can help everyone – especially older adults – “Stay fit and have fun” as Hal and Joanne would say, but also remain as healthy as possible for as long as possible.*