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Durham Family Resources

February 2022

FAMILYfocus

SO THAT ALL PEOPLE ENJOY A FULL AND MEANINGFUL LIFE
WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

Siblings, Cousins, Friends and More - Bringing Together the 'Next Generation' to Plan for the Future

Three years ago, the *Next Generation Meetup* began, bringing together those family members and friends who were looking to continue the vision and planning for their loved ones as parents age. The group brings questions, concerns, ideas, and the shared interest of becoming more involved to those who identify as the next generation. We know families are a great resource to one another, and this has held true for this upcoming cohort of family members as well!

Over the past few years, the group has found great benefit in meeting together regularly. Over many conversations, they have identified important topics which they recognized are important for anyone considering stepping up and becoming more involved in supporting a good life for their loved one with a disability. The Next Generation group has been able to create a learning series, made possible by the Capacity-Building Grants for Family Support Networks. They hope to bring together sisters, brothers, extended family and friends to learn together, and help those who are wanting to take their next steps.

February's learning will center around the nuts and bolts of legacy planning. On Thursday, February 3, a group of siblings, cousins, friends, and parents met to hear from Brendon Pooran, who spoke about wills, estates, and trusts, with a focus on recognizing capacity.



Coming up on Thursday, February 17, the evening will invite participants to think about money matters - specifically looking at safeguarding finances and strategies for financial planning and investment. The evening's presentation will be by Cathy Rulli, CPA, with support from Brendon Pooran from Pooran Law. This session will also include information about the relationship of funding sources to assets, information on the Disability Tax Credit, what the next generation need to be aware of "now," and information on tax returns and trust returns.



Money Matters: Thursday, February 17th at 6:30pm
Register Here for Your Zoom Link!

In March, the focus of the series is "You're Not in this Alone". Over three remaining sessions we'll hear stories of possibility, re-imagination, all about circles, logistics of funding, and how Durham Family Resources can be helpful well into the future.

Save the dates, and keep an eye on your email for more information!

**Thursday, March 3 2022, Thursday, March 17, 2022,
and Thursday, March 31, 2022**

Cathy Rulli, CPA, and Brandon Pooran, Pooran Law will speak at the upcoming Next Generation Learning Series session,

Wanting to Stay Up to Date with Changing COVID-19 Information? See What's New!

Keeping up with the changing COVID-19 environment can be daunting, but it is a task we've become familiar with over the past couple of years! Listening to trusted science-based sources, we've created a few helpful information sheets to guide us through this particular time. Take a look at the sheets below and feel free to read further and share.

Masking and Omicron - what's new?

This information sheet goes over the new advice around masking with the Omicron variant. Because this variant is so prevalent in Ontario, and is so highly transmissible, it is now considered best practice to use a high filtration mask such as an N95 or KN95 mask where possible.

We have added some new information on cleaning these types of masks - allowing most household users to prolong the lifespan of these more expensive and less available masks. Placing these types of masks in the microwave can effectively prolong their lifespan for household users. Use 60 ml (2 oz.) of distilled water in a glass jar, cover the container with mesh (like a fruit bag), and microwave for 3 minutes.

Why Get a Booster Shot?

This information sheet goes over the benefits of being vaccinated and boosted in terms of illness severity and rates of hospitalization. The graph uses local Ontario data which illustrates the positive impact of vaccination on this current wave. If you know someone who would appreciate more information about vaccines, or you're curious yourself, this sheet is for you.

We've added an updated link to a [fantastic 20-minute podcast which looks at the complicated comparison of the Moderna vs Pfizer vaccine](#), making it easier to

Using Rapid Tests Effectively

Curious about how to best use this scarce resource? Learn how Omicron impacts these tests and why test timing and other considerations should impact decisions around whether someone may or may not be infectious. We've included an updated flow chart of instructions if you have had a potential exposure with someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19, or has exhibited symptoms.

Treating COVID-19 Symptoms at Home

What to do if you, or someone in your household, begins to feel unwell? This information sheet lets you know which symptoms are indications of COVID-19, and what you can now to be prepared to treat them

at home. There is also new information about the new COVID-19 Therapeutic Clinic is located at the Ajax Pickering Hospital site at 580 Harwood Avenue South which provides specialized treatment that will help eligible adults with mild to moderate COVID-19 who are at risk of progressing to serious illness.

COVID-19 Information
Masking and Omicron - what's new?

While scientists are still determining all of the reasons why Omicron is more transmissible and infectious than previous variants, a recent preliminary study proposes that it is more efficient at infecting cells in the upper respiratory tract - which includes your throat and nasal passages. Lots of virus in the upper respiratory tract means we want to be extra cautious as to what can exit and enter our own mouths and noses while we are around others!

Experts are now recommending you pay particular attention to the fit and filter level of your masks. High filtration masks are the goal for protecting against infection - so it's time to look for N95, KN95, and KF94 respirators - which are made with material that contain an electrostatic charge, actually pulling particles in to prevent them from being inhaled! Surgical masks can be helpful, but it is recommended to wear a cloth mask on top of the surgical mask to ensure a tighter fit!

Layering Risk Prevention

Vaccination
Masks
DISTANCED INTERACTIONS
VENTILATED AREAS
HEALTHY SLEEP/DIET

Layering Risk

See How do masks work?

High filtration respirators, such as N95 masks will often provide storage and usage tips - this way you can get the most use out of these in-demand masks. It is often recommended to store these masks in a clean, dry environment when not in use. They may have a recommended disposal time listed - though experts agree that, as long as the mask is in good shape, they have a life of around 40 hours! A recent study has developed a method to safely clean these types of masks in the microwave - use 60 ml (2 oz.) of distilled water in a glass jar, cover the container with mesh (like a fruit bag), and microwave for 3 minutes.

Be aware that there are many counterfeit N95 and KN95 masks on the market right now - watch for spelling mistakes, sellers making claims of having unlimited stock during global shortages, and very low prices!

Read How to Use Your Safety Mask in More Detail
See: Performing a Seal Check When Donning an N95 Mask

See How do masks work?

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COVID-19 Information
Why Get a Booster Shot?

Cases of COVID-19 are increasing both globally as well as here in Ontario. With the rise of the Omicron variant, we need to be diligent to protect ourselves, our family members, and the community around us. Getting a third dose (or first or second for that matter) is one of the most proactive measures for staying safe this winter.

As with many vaccines, over time there is a decrease in antibody levels and effectiveness against infection. A booster shot increases the levels of immune response, increasing the quantity and quality of antibodies that are produced, protecting against infection, transmission, symptoms, and risk of hospitalization or death. As of December 26th, 2021, all Ontarians 18 years of age or older are eligible for a third dose. [Click here to book, call 1-888-444-0000, or use your local pharmacy.](#)

Curious about getting Moderna vs Pfizer, or vice-versa, as your booster? [Listen to this up-to-date chat about the benefits of each and which to choose if you have the option.](#)

[See: Frequently Asked Questions about boosters.](#)

[Homebound adults in Durham Region can access vaccinations through a mobile clinic.](#)

Vaccines Work!

Even though vaccinated people are testing positive with Omicron, having two or more doses means you are 4.5 times less likely to need to be hospitalized, and over 11 times less likely to need the ICU (see bar charts with data from Ontario below). We know that Omicron is spreading differently than previous variants - and although it can be milder to some, it can also be very severe for others! Because it is infecting so many more people, and because many of those people still need some amount of hospital care, there is still concern of overwhelming our hospital system!

[Read: Omicron has created a whole new booster logic.](#)

Current COVID-19 Risk in Ontario by Vaccination Status

Ontario Dashboard - Ontario Science Table
Understand the science behind a vaccine booster - The Harvard Gazette
Omicron is not mild, that narrative that it is "milder" is dangerous - Dr. Maria Van Kesteren
How Omicron affects hospital patients - National Post

Convert the documents for information purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice from your primary healthcare provider. Current vaccine research and information is constantly evolving and we have made great efforts to ensure accuracy as of publication date (January 19, 2022).

COVID-19 Information
Using Rapid Tests Effectively

Cases of fast-spreading Omicron continue to rise across Ontario, and along with it the demand and need for accurate testing. With recent changes limiting who can access PCR tests in Ontario, and a demanding supply and efficacy limitations of rapid antigen tests, there is understandable confusion on how to proceed in this current wave.

While at-home rapid tests have proven to be a powerful tool in our defense against COVID-19, we have to consider them in the right context. They have always been less sensitive than molecular PCR tests, but with Omicron, there are even more sensitivity parameters to be aware of. These tests don't work as well in the early part of an infection with Omicron because with this variant it takes a few more days for the virus to reach the detectable threshold for a rapid test (compared with Delta and previous variants).

TEST TIMING

Watch: Rapid tests tell you if you definitely should not bother, but that you can still catch COVID-19.
See: Consistency between rapid and PCR tests.

There is growing consensus that people should use a positive rapid test result as a "red flag" and should isolate. A positive rapid test means you have enough virus to be infectious to other people because virus protein is present in large quantities in your sample.

But, the same is not true for a negative test result. People shouldn't use a negative result as a "green light" to go ahead with activity that is potentially risky. A rapid test can change within hours - so a person testing negative can go on to test positive a few hours later.

Considering rapid tests are in such short supply - most people aren't or liberty to take multiple times a day over several days, so what's the best way to use a limited supply?

If you are feeling any COVID-19 symptoms, you should isolate and if it's a good idea to take a test if you have one.

If you have had a potential exposure, but are not feeling any symptoms, it is best to isolate as much as possible, and wait a few days before taking the test, all the while, continuing to monitor for symptoms. This will allow enough time to develop, if present, to show up on a rapid test. If you continue to test negative, you can be more certain that you did not contract COVID-19.

Read: Ask Ontario's Science Table, staying safe given the 11th wave of Omicron.
See: Outcomes rapid antigen testing since we have closed our testing.

Click to view larger

1. What to do if you've been exposed to COVID-19 - Government of Ontario
2. Rapid antigen tests for voluntary screening - Ontario Science Table
3. Two ways to know about rapid antigen tests before the holidays - Samantha Yarmine, PhD

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COVID-19 Information
Treating COVID-19 Symptoms at Home

Information, tips, and guidance around the Omicron variant of COVID-19 are changing rapidly - what can we do to stay safe at home if we have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID?

Rapid tests are hard to come by, and [guidance to make accurate PCR testing](#) has narrowed, so it is now recommended that if you are experiencing a symptom of COVID-19, you should assume that you have it.

The symptoms include:

- Fever and/or chills
- Two or more of:
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sore throat
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Gastrointestinal symptoms (i.e. vomiting or diarrhea)

Anyone with a COVID-19 symptom, or a positive test result (PCR or rapid antigen test), needs to isolate - the isolation period for fully vaccinated people is now five days! The five days begins the day after your first experience symptoms, or the day after you tested positive. Your symptoms should be gone or greatly improved for at least 24 hours before you end your isolation, and it is recommended you still wear a mask at all times around other people for an additional five days! If you have been in contact with anyone else, they are required to self-monitor for ten days!

People who are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, or immunocompromised are required to isolate for ten days.

If someone else in your house has symptoms, or has tested positive, the isolation and masking extends to everyone in the household, because if one person has COVID-19, everyone else has been exposed.

Listen: What should you do if you think you have Omicron?

Be prepared, should you or someone at home get sick or you are told you need to isolate because you have had close contact with someone who has tested positive.

Health Canada recommends having supplies at home before anyone gets sick, including:

- a thermometer
- over-the-counter medication like ibuprofen or acetaminophen to reduce fever
- tissues, disposable paper towels, and cleaning supplies such as alcohol wipes for commonly touched surfaces
- fluids to prevent dehydration

Obtain rapid antigen tests if they are available.

Think about and make a plan, write it down if that helps:

- What would you do if one person needed to isolate in your home?
- Who could you contact if you needed someone to get supplies / walk the dog?
- Do you have the telephone number to hand, or other useful contacts?

COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance Omicron Surge, Ontario Ministry of Health
1. Think you may have Omicron? Here are things you can do: CBC Radio
2. Ontario's Urging Public Health Measures and Guidance in Response to Omicron, Government of Ontario

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Shifting Neighbourhood Mindsets and Attitudes - Strategies and Ideas Discussed at February's Imagining Home Meeting

This month at Imagining Home we'll pick up on an idea from last month's discussion around what we wished existed or could see more of in our neighbourhoods. Last month, we spoke about wanting family members with disabilities in neighbourhoods and communities to be seen in a more positive light – in terms of their contributions rather than disabilities, for example. This month, we want to pick up from there and talk about ways to ensure that people with disabilities are seen and valued in their neighbourhoods. What are the campaigns, demonstrations, and actions that really shift how people are seen? And what is our place as family members and allies in this action? We'll explore what families are doing - or can do - to put new ideas into the minds of neighbours. Come join the conversation! Long time and new families alike, everyone has something to gain and something to offer.

Each month at Imagining Home, we engage with anything “housing, home and community” and enjoy critical discussion, sharing stories, learning and often having a good laugh among respectful and supportive people! Families bring a wealth of experience and knowledge and are ready to share and support others along their journey. All are welcome to attend and participate in Imagining Home when we meet on the second Wednesday of each month. If you are new to the group and would like to attend Imagining Home for the first time, we'd ask that you first contact Erin at (905) 436-2500 ext. 2511 or eoreilly@dafrs.com to arrange an introductory call.

IMAGINING HOME MEETING • WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2022 • 6:30PM

ONLINE, VIA ZOOM!

CONTACT ERIN FOR DETAILS ([EOREILLY@DAFRS.COM](mailto:eoreilly@dafrs.com))



Being a Good Neighbour All Winter-Through!

What a Winter we are having! Lots of snow and lots of cold weather days might leave us wondering whether we should just hibernate until Spring, but treat this season as an opportunity to help your neighbourhood out of its winter-blues by leading by example and being a great winter neighbour. Consider some of these activities to contribute to your neighbourhood and spread some cold weather cheer!

❄️ Have lots energy and want a good workout? Consider shoveling, or using an environmentally friendly ice treatment on the sidewalks of those who haven't made it out yet!

❄️ Make and drop off [hot chocolate packages](#) as a special treat. Or, see if your favourite soup recipe can be turned into a [“soup in a jar”](#) and share a meal.

❄️ Plate sharing - send something to your neighbour on a plate, with a request to return the plate with something they like in return! Or, pass the plate along to a different neighbour and start a new winter tradition!

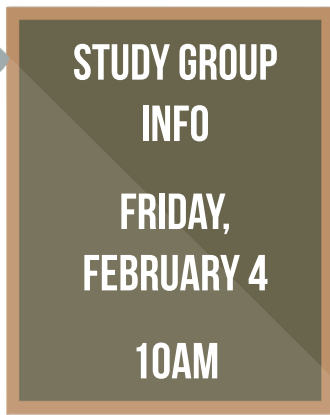
❄️ [Turn some pine cones into bird feeders](#) and hang them along your boulevard trees to bring some friendly chirps to your street.

❄️ [Scout out your closest little libraries](#) - see what might be missing and put a call out to your neighbours letting them know you are collecting to restock

❄️ If you know of local events, online or otherwise, consider making a small flyer or newsletter and passing it out to your neighbours (including a small introduction to your family!)



Food that Nourishes our Minds and Body the Focus of February's Biomedical Approaches Study Group!




February is the month of Valentine's and Love, so at our Biomedical Approaches Study Group this month, we are going to talk about how we show ourselves and others our love through food. Now, we are not only going to be talking about food that tastes yummy going down, but also how we show our enduring love for our own bodies with food that also nourishes and pleases the body. Bring along your chicken soup recipes, smoothie secret ingredients, top hacks for adding in more veggies into your everyday, your efforts to reduce meat or sugar consumption, or your successes at reducing various foods that need to be avoided.

We are especially interested in the foods and recipes you have found and LOVE that are enjoyable going down and that others also LOVE!

Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the Bio-Medical Approaches Study Group when we meet on the second Friday morning of each month. Regulars, those who drop in when they can, occasional drop in for various topics, and curious on-lookers all join for morning discussion, learning, sharing and a good laugh that accompanies fellow learners who respect each other!

We usually engage with anything "Bio - Medical" and so families talk about all of the approaches, alternatives, strategies that we have found, are being pushed into, have discovered online and more! We have a wide circle of families who are ready to share their vast experience and together we sometimes are able to help each member make better sense of the options and choices that surround them.

The group meets monthly and is open and welcoming to new and past participants! We usually meet by Zoom invite on the second Friday of each month at 10am for about an hour to an hour and a half. Reach out to Janet  if you'd like to get a Zoom link to the next meeting!

Having Successful School Breaks - Planning for Opportunity

It's never too early to start thinking about March break or even summer break! We're getting together this month to begin planning! There are a variety of opportunities over the holidays. We'll discuss how to choose from many options and explore funding opportunities for those pursuits.

We invite families to join us to discuss and plan together, but we will also take some time to reflect on current realities and the other things that are top of mind. Throughout these times, we continue to keep in mind children are resilient. They are always learning and growing. We know with the right supports in place- children thrive!

JOIN US! For our February 'Thinking it Through' session - an upcoming chat with other parents about March and summer break planning, but importantly to come together and share our stories of mutual interest.

Join together with families on **Thursday, February 24th 2022** from 6:30 - 7:30pm to "think it through TOGETHER"

Register Here to Receive the Zoom Link Details!

Have You Attended Making the Most Family Series? Come Together to Discuss and Continue Learning!

The Making the Most Study Group is a fantastic opportunity for those who have completed the series to continue their learning and take some next steps in developing valued roles and relationships with a loved one.

Each month graduates of past Making the Most learning series are invited to come together and think more deeply about crafting and sharing a vision, designing and planning days full of contributions and possibilities, focusing on roles rather than activities, seeking and developing good support, making positive introductions, and finding strength, comfort, energy and hope through building circles of support.

This month we plan to talk more about circles, and in particular hesitations and resistance. What's holding you back? Let's talk through some ideas with others who are feeling the same or have been there before.

The meeting is open to anyone who has attended a MTM series before and wishes to join the conversation. Contact Laura (lpowell@dafrs.com) for more information.

The next meeting is **Monday, February 28th** from 6.30-7.30pm via Zoom. Members are sent a link to join shortly before.



**MAKING THE MOST
STUDY GROUP**

FEBRUARY 28, 2022
6:30PM TO 7:30PM

respiteservices.com

CHAP
COMMUNITY HELPERS
FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

RespiteServices.com continues connecting families to supporters! Contact Sandy for details!

Respiteservices.com is continuing to operate remotely to connect families and support workers. We know people continue to need good support during this time and are working diligently to continue to provide this service to residents of Durham Region.

To be matched with support workers, you must be registered with respiteservices.com/durham. Contact Sandy at (905)436-3404 or sciarlariello@dafrs.com. New supporters are continuing to be added. Contact Sandy for more information!

Important Dates At-A-Glance!

Bio Medical Study Group

Feb 11@10am

Imagining Home

Feb 9@6:30pm

Thinking it Through

Feb 24 @6:30pm

MTM Study Group

Feb 28 @6:30pm

Next Gen Learning Series

Feb 17@6:30pm

Mar 3@6:30pm

Mar 17@6:30pm

Mar 31@6:30pm

For more
information on our
organization or any
of our events, please
visit our website at
www.dafrs.com

For more information, please visit our website, www.dafrs.com,
and see the "Upcoming Events" tab.

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