

# FROM THE HEART

April Edition

- Self-care tips
- Keeping active
- In the kitchen
- Gardening tips
- Quiz time

Chest  
Heart &  
Stroke

WE'RE  
ON YOUR  
SIDE



## HELLO EVERYONE,

I hope this edition finds you well. Little did we think this time last year that we'd still be living with the impact of the pandemic!

It's lovely though, to see the signs of Spring and feel the weather turning a little warmer.

We've been connecting with people all across NI through our online services, our telephone and postal support. The feedback from that has been so positive and we really appreciate the support you have given to the charity and our staff at this time.

Although it may be a while yet before we return to face-to-face services, it's really important to us that you don't feel alone or isolated and I hope our Newsletter with the range of information, activities and stories helps you to feel connected.

Look after yourselves, keep safe and well and enjoy this Spring edition from the Care staff in Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke.

**Catherine Murnin**

*Catherine Murnin*

**Head of Care**

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE

Self-care encourages you to maintain a healthy relationship with yourself, so that you can transmit the good feelings to others.

You can't give to others what you don't have yourself, while some misconstrue self-care as a selfish thing, it is far from that.

Engaging in a self-care routine has been proven to reduce or eliminate anxiety and depression, reduce stress, improve concentration, minimise frustration and anger, increase happiness and more.

Below we have some tips, suggestions and ideas for you to consider on self-care:

- **Be kind to yourself.**
- **Eat healthily.**
- **Drink water first thing in the morning.**
- **Develop a regular sleep routine.**
- **Occasionally treat yourself.**
- **Set aside "me time" to relax or read.**
- **Call a friend for a catch-up.**
- **Ask for help from family or friends.**
- **Keep a balance between treating yourself and others.**
- **Express gratitude - make a list of priorities.**
- **Write down five things that make you happy.**
- **Do simple armchair exercises.**



# CONNECT

With text messages and emails available too readily to everyone these days, (and dare I even mention Zoom!), the art of letter-writing seems to be a thing of the past. But we all know that on those rare occasions when we do receive a hand-written letter, we are often uplifted. You may not have realised, but the act of writing a letter can also improve your own mental wellbeing.

## **Worried you have nothing interesting to say?**

Having to fill an entire card can feel a little overwhelming, especially when so many of us rely on quick texts and phone calls to stay connected. But, no matter how simple your letter, the act alone will give you a boost.

## **What should I include?**

- Ask questions (How are you? What have you been doing?)
- Tell them why you wrote to them (tell them you miss them/ or thank them). Reminisce over positive shared experiences
- End with a friendly closing line like; "I can't wait to see you!"





# KEEPING ACTIVE DURING LOCKDOWN



**Name:** Erica Gioka

**Location:** Newcastle

**Date of stroke/TIA:**  
May 2020

## **Tell us how you like to keep fit and busy during lockdown?**

Well, I was always a very busy person before lockdown, I used to go swimming and attend different groups. Now I have to say the NICHS sessions (Activity group and the Choir) have kept me alive during the lockdown. They are very special to me and I look forward to Wednesdays Activity group and the Tuesday choir every week, I even put my earrings on for them!

I suffer from bad arthritis in my lower back which makes it difficult to walk very far, but I walk in the garden and around the house to keep active.

## **Erica, have you any tips for the rest of us to keep as fresh looking as you at 86.5 years of age?**

Well, I thank God every day and I also put it down to good genes as my brother is 96!



**Name:** John McCrea

**Location:** Belfast

**Date of stroke/TIA:**  
August 2011

## **How do you keep fit and busy during the lockdown?**

I use a rollator for my walking aid. I try to walk the avenue, beside our home at least twice a week, I like to make it to the spot where the wall lowers and I can sit down and rest before I start the walk home again. It's just so nice to get out in the air and people-watch as well.

I also have an exercise bike in the house to use if the weather is bad to keep my legs active.

I joined the Belfast Stroke Activity Group in 2012 and have made many good friends who have all experienced a stroke, I'm so glad I did as I enjoy meeting up with them every week and doing different activities and we always have a laugh!



**Name:** Dwyer Finnegan

**Location:** Lurgan

## **How do you keep fit and busy during the lockdown?**

I have survived two strokes, a triple heart bypass and I am also an insulin dependent type 1 diabetic. My glass is more than half full and I don't let these things stop me. In fact, over the latest lockdown, I have been building my fitness, stamina and mental health by walking three miles a day, reading, playing board games, looking after my grandchildren and rekindling my passion for table-tennis with my beautiful wife Ann. I'm always ready for what life throws at me.

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# IN THE KITCHEN RECIPES



## Vegetable Platter

**SERVES  
4-6**

- 1 red onion (chopped)
- 1 red and yellow pepper (sliced into strips)
- 100g/ 4oz mushroom (sliced)
- 1 large egg
- 50g/ 2oz grated strong cheddar cheese
- 375g pack ready-rolled lighter puff pastry
- Beaten egg for egg wash

Preheat the oven to 180C/  
Gas 6

Roast the onions and peppers in a baking tray for about 10 minutes in a tsp oil, then add the sliced mushroom and cook for a further 10 minutes. Leave to cool.

Unroll the puff pastry out into a greased baking sheet, cut a 2cm strip the whole way around the edge of the pastry, set aside the pastry strip. Egg wash around the pastry rectangle and press the pastry strip around the edge to make a rim. Scatter the roasted vegetables on the pastry sheet. Mix together the egg and the grated cheese, season, and drizzle over the top of the vegetables.

Bake for 25 minutes.





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# RECIPES CONTINUED



## Sweetcorn and Chicken Soup / Chowder

SERVES  
4-5

- 15g/ 1oz butter
- ½ tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion
- 2 large potatoes
- 400g tinned sweetcorn
- 700ml chicken stock
- 3 bay leaves
- Bunch of parsley 30g (chopped)
- 2 cooked chicken breasts (cut into bite-sized pieces)
- 5 tbsp double cream

Melt the butter and oil in a large saucepan.

Finely chop the onion and soften over a low heat, stirring regularly. You don't want the onion to brown.

Drain the sweetcorn and chop the potatoes into 2cm sized pieces. Add the potatoes, sweetcorn, bay leaves and stock to the saucepan and bring to the boil, reduce to a simmer, cover and cook for 10 minutes until the potatoes are soft but not mushy. Remove the bay leaves. Add the chopped parsley to the soup.

Remove 4 ladles of soup from the saucepan, use a hand blender to blend the remaining soup in the saucepan. You want it to thicken, then return the 4 ladles of soup to the saucepan.

Add the cream and chicken and heat the soup gently, until the chicken is warmed through. Do not boil.

### Note:

Tinned sweetcorn is as good as fresh sweet corn. There is a little cream in this recipe, I usually freeze what I do not use and then I have it for the next time I make this soup.

## Cranberry, Oat and Seed Bars

These are easy to make and great to share.

- 110g/ 4oz porridge oats
- 50g/ 2oz wholemeal flour
- 40g/ 3oz dried cranberries
- 25g/ 1oz pumpkin seeds
- 1tbsp sesame seeds
- 1 egg lightly beaten
- 2tbsp sunflower oil
- 75g/ 3oz runny honey

Heat the oven to 180C/ Gas 4

Line a 20cm square baking tin with non-stick baking paper, allowing the paper to hang over 2 of the sides to form handles. Mix the oats, flour, cranberries, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds and beaten egg together in a large bowl.

Put the oil and honey in a small pan, set over a low heat, stir together until smooth, then simmer for 1 minute. Add the honey mixture to the oats mixture and stir until well combined. Press the mixture firmly into the prepared tin and smooth the surface with the back of a spoon.

Bake for 20 minutes or until a deep golden colour. Cool completely in the tin before cutting into bars. Store in an airtight container.



Please follow any special dietary and allergy requirements, as advised by your health professional or other.



# IN THE GARDEN



## Garden Penny Ball

50 years ago, when decimalisation was first introduced, who would have thought we could use copper pennies to help repel slugs in our gardens.



### Method

Gather together lots of old pennies (pre-1992 are better as they contain 97% copper, today's are only copper coated steel). Find a spherical object that you don't need, an old bowling or tennis ball. Glue the pennies all over the outside of the ball using super-glue. Once dry, fill in all the gaps with grout, cleaning the grout off the pennies surfaces as you go. When the grout is dry, polish the pennies and apply grout sealant. Place in the garden to glint prettily, and see off some of those unwanted visitors.

## Fresh Spring Blossoms

Nothing says spring like freshly picked flowers. Flowers are a great way to brighten up your home and they also have the power to make you feel more positive. Flowers, or as you can see from the picture, cherry blossom branches, can be displayed in anything from an old glass bottle to a teacup.



## Gardening Top Tip

If you want year-round colour in your garden, here is some advice from **Christine Walkden**, television presenter and gardener:

Make a list of the plants you have in the garden and when each plant comes into flower, note the month of the year. You should then notice from your list when your garden does not have any colour in it and you can then start to fill in the gaps with new plants.

For more information and gardening help and tips visit:  
[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

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# Gardening Quiz

- Which yellow flowering tree is poisonous?
- Where do most species of Clematis originate - Australia, China & Japan, South America or Europe?
- What popular pudding is made from the root of the Cassava plant?
- Which tree produces conkers?
- What is the name given to very small Japanese trees grown in pots?
- Name the evergreen hedge which can cause disputes between neighbours?
- Tulips were once so valuable in Holland that their bulbs were worth more than gold - True or false?
- Who is the female patron saint of gardeners, horticulture, florists, brides and brewers?
- Garden gnomes are forbidden in The Chelsea Flower Show - True or False?
- Most species of eucalyptus are native to which country?
- Which flower is also the goddess of the rainbow in Greek Mythology?
- What has varieties beefsteak, plum and cherry?

# Now for a bit of fun...

How many words of 3 letters or more can you make from the following words?

## GARDENING IN SPRING

**E.g. rings**

## Gardening Crossword

R	T	E	G	N	I	W	O	R	G	A	S	S	Y
R	D	R	C	L	A	W	N	M	O	W	E	R	T
E	L	T	O	A	W	S	P	A	D	E	E	W	D
O	T	G	N	S	T	I	E	L	W	K	I	F	W
E	N	R	T	S	T	T	E	R	C	N	P	L	E
R	O	E	A	T	R	R	E	O	D	L	L	O	E
D	K	E	I	O	E	M	R	O	S	N	A	W	D
I	N	N	N	O	L	E	W	O	R	T	N	E	S
B	E	H	E	L	L	S	S	W	B	C	T	R	T
B	E	O	R	K	I	O	E	E	G	A	I	P	N
E	L	U	S	L	S	I	T	W	G	N	N	O	E
R	E	S	L	E	L	R	I	E	G	D	G	T	P
F	R	E	W	O	R	R	A	B	L	E	E	H	W
A	T	S	O	P	M	O	C	E	O	R	E	H	W

- |            |             |           |          |
|------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| GREENHOUSE | CONTAINERS  | STOOL     | GROWING  |
| WINDOWSILL | WHEELBARROW | WEEDS     | PLANTING |
| HEDGES     | DIBBER      | LAWNMOWER | TRELLIS  |
| KNEELER    | FLOWERPOT   | TROWEL    |          |
| ROCKERY    | COMPOST     | SPADE     |          |



**Answers to gardening quiz**

1. Laburnum 2. China & Japan 3. Tapioca 4. Horse chestnut  
5. Bonsai 6. Leylandi 7. True 8. Saint Dorothy 9. True  
10. Australia 11. Iris 12. Tomatoes





# Top D<sup>ogs</sup>

## Virtual Dog Show

1st-31st May 2021



**Do you think you have the most perfect pooch?**

Enter your pup in our Virtual Dog Show to be in with the chance to win the title of Top Dog! Winner will also receive an artist portrait of their pet.

**Entries online ONLY:** Choose one of the 5 categories, submit the best photo of your dog, and make a £5 (minimum) donation to Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke.

**Show opens for entries on 1 May.** More details in the next edition of From the Heart.