

# CaregiverStress.com®

Care for yourself while caring for an aging loved one.



Natalina and husband, Armando

When his wife developed Parkinson's disease and the memory confusion that goes with it, Armando dusted off his résumé.

It was time to update. Since taking on the role of family caregiver, he now has experience in an entirely new work set: nurse, housekeeper and cook. The new skills haven't come easy. "These are things I've never done before. It's been hard on me," said the retired businessman.

What's more, Armando sometimes needs to leave the house to take care of business – like banking and shopping. But his wife just can't be alone.

It's no laughing matter, for sure. And yet, caregivers like Armando are getting much-needed rest and relief from, of all places, the comedy world – Hilarity for Charity® to be exact.

## Hilarity for a Cause

Comedian Seth Rogen and his wife, Lauren Miller Rogen, established Hilarity for Charity in 2011, at the Alzheimer's Association, to benefit those with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. As it is to Armando, dementia is personal to the Rogens. Lauren's mother suffers from early onset Alzheimer's disease.

It's those firsthand caregiving experiences that prompted Hilarity for Charity to partner with Home Instead Senior Care® to establish the Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Relief Grant Program. The program awards grants for free Alzheimer's care relief services to families providing care to a loved one living with dementia.

## Not Just for Laughs

Grant program – funded by comedy – provides relief to Alzheimer's caregivers

### Professional Services

Services for the Alzheimer's Care Relief Grant Program are provided in the U.S. and Canada by CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup>

from the Home Instead Senior Care network's vast franchise system, who are trained to work with the special challenges that seniors with a dementia may face.

Home Instead® CAREGivers can help seniors cope with the symptoms often associated with Alzheimer's while enabling them to continue doing what they can do on their own in the comfort of their own homes. The Alzheimer's Care Relief Grant Program also provides a much-needed break to family caregivers.

And that's good news for family members like Armando. "I come home more relaxed and able to be a better person."

"Not many are willing to give time and money to help other people. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!"

**To be considered for a Care Relief Grant, go to [HelpforAlzheimersFamilies.com](http://HelpforAlzheimersFamilies.com) in the U.S. or [HelpforAlzheimersFamilies.ca](http://HelpforAlzheimersFamilies.ca) in Canada to fill out a grant application.**

## INSIDE

ALSO:

- **Boot Camp for Brains**
- **Living with the Grandkids**
- **How to Keep Seniors Healthy (and out of the hospital)!**



CAREGiver and Natalina



# 10% OF Grandparents Live with GRANDKIDS

Of the 65 million grandparents in the United States, 7 million, or 10%, lived with at least one grandchild, according to Coresident Grandparents and Their Grandchildren: 2012, a report from the U.S. Census Bureau. The percentage of children who lived with a grandparent in 2012 was also 10%, rising from 7% in 1992.

About 4.2 million U.S. households, or 3% of all households, contained both grandchildren under 18 and their grandparents.

The trend also exists in Canada, where over the past two decades, increasing numbers of Canadian grandparents are raising their grandchildren, either with the parents or by themselves. In 2001, 57,000 grandparents were raising their grandchildren on their own – a significant increase over the previous decade, according to Statistics Canada.

“Recent trends in increased life expectancy, single-parent families and female employment increase the potential for grandparents to play an important role in the lives of their grandchildren,” said Renee Ellis, a demographer in the Census Bureau’s Fertility and Family Statistics Branch.

“Increases in grandparents living with grandchildren are one way that the grandparent role has changed,” Ellis said.



## Trial-and-Error: BEST BOOT CAMP FOR BRAINS

Making memory mistakes isn’t necessarily a bad sign. In fact, just trying for the right answer, and getting close, is a good boot camp for the brain, according to research from Baycrest Health Sciences.

This latest research provides evidence that trial-and-error learning can benefit memory in both young and old when errors are meaningfully related to the right answer.

“Making random guesses does not appear to benefit later memory for the right answer, but near-miss guesses act as stepping stones for retrieval of the correct information – and this benefit is seen in younger and older adults,” says lead investigator Andrée-Ann Cyr, a graduate student with Baycrest’s Rotman Research Institute and the department of psychology at the University of Toronto.

The research sheds light on how our memories organize information. For example, when you think of the word pear, your mind is more likely to jump to another fruit, such as apple, than to a word that looks similar, such as peer. Wrong guesses only add value when they have something meaningful in common with right answers.

By guessing first as opposed to just reading the answer, one is thinking harder about the information and making useful connections that can help memory. Participants were more likely to remember the answer if they also remembered their wrong guesses, suggesting that these acted as stepping stones.

“These results turn traditional views of best practices in memory rehabilitation for healthy seniors on their head by demonstrating that making the right kind of errors can be beneficial. They also provide great hope for lifelong learning and guidance for how seniors should study,” says Dr. Nicole Anderson, senior scientist with Baycrest’s Rotman Research Institute and senior author on the study.

### Struggling with caring for a loved one?

Visit [CaregiverStress.com](http://CaregiverStress.com)® for 24-hour support and resources.

- Tips on Caring for Yourself While Caring for a Loved One
- Educational Information
- Supporting Videos
- Alzheimer's and Dementia Support
- Ask our Caregiving Experts Questions
- Engage with Other Family Caregivers

# Prevent Senior Hospitalizations

## *It's All in the Attitude*

According to research conducted by Home Instead, Inc., franchisor of the Home Instead Senior Care® network, delaying or avoiding medical care is the most common action by seniors that puts them at risk of needing hospitalization. The good news is, helping a senior with a little attitude adjustment can help them stay out of the hospital.

In fact, three of the top reasons seniors don't comply with doctor's orders – unwillingness to change their ways, denial of health issues and apathy – are attitudinal, according to the survey of 400 U.S. and Canadian nurses who specialize in senior care.\*

So what's the key to convincing older loved ones to take care of themselves? It's family! Nearly 100% of the nurses surveyed agree that the family's role in keeping seniors healthy and out of the hospital is as important as that of the medical community.

Sadly, research shows that less than half of seniors (48.6%) have a medical advocate. If you know an older adult who needs someone to serve as a second set of eyes and ears at doctor's appointments, or needs help at home with medication reminders and assistance preparing nutritious meals, contact a local Home Instead Senior Care office. To find an office near you, go to [HomeInstead.com](http://HomeInstead.com) in the U.S. or [HomeInstead.ca](http://HomeInstead.ca) in Canada.

*\* Survey results found at [PreventSeniorHospitalizations.com](http://PreventSeniorHospitalizations.com) in the U.S. and [PreventSeniorHospitalizations.ca](http://PreventSeniorHospitalizations.ca) in Canada.*

*“Family caregivers should work with their senior's family physician to discuss appropriateness of care, to monitor the home environment (modify their home to prevent falls), to review medications and to keep track of the function of their loved ones. Promoting community-based care and providing families access to resources help prevent or delay admission to the hospital. The hospital is not always the answer. The family needs to be proactive in providing care.”*

**Norma Mamaril RN, BScN, GNC(c)**  
Windsor, Ontario



## **SWAT:**

### **Tools and Tactics**

**Strategic action:** That's what it takes to keep older adults out of the hospital. Tools and tactics are the name of the game.

The Prevent Senior Hospitalizations<sup>SM</sup> program has a number of resources to help family caregivers and senior care professionals including:

#### **Five Ways to Prevent Senior Hospitalizations Guide**

This downloadable guide features the five actions to help keep seniors safe at home and out of the hospital.

#### **Hospitalization Risk Meter**

This online and interactive tool can help family caregivers better understand how certain risk factors can put seniors in jeopardy of hospitalization.

#### **Assessment and Balance Video**

Falls are one of the many risks that could put an older adult in the hospital. This how-to video could help a family caregiver assess a senior loved one's risk of falls and offer simple exercises designed to improve balance.

For these and other resources, go to [PreventSeniorHospitalizations.com](http://PreventSeniorHospitalizations.com) in the U.S. or [PreventSeniorHospitalizations.ca](http://PreventSeniorHospitalizations.ca) in Canada. For additional tips, visit [ReturningHome.com](http://ReturningHome.com).

# Preventing Hospital Stays a Team Effort

With Dr. Carolyn Clevenger,  
Emory University

Changing the Face of Aging®

**Q. How can a caregiver help seniors prevent hospitalization?**

**A.** Many times seniors may be resistant to outside assistance. But they should realize support could, in turn, help them avoid a higher level of care. One local hospital partnered with a home health agency to look at readmissions. They found that if a senior wasn't feeling well and canceled a visit one day, she likely was in the emergency room the next day. Someone checking in, paying a visit, sharing a meal . . . building those habits into the senior's day-to-day schedule could help prevent senior hospitalizations. It's also important for seniors to have someone to watch for red flags, advocate for them and give them a support system.

**Q. How much do lifestyle factors (such as inactivity, living alone, lack of transportation, etc.) come into play?**

**A.** Research has shown that people who remain active over a lifetime decline for a shorter span of time. The more of that lifespan seniors can be active and doing the things they consider functional means the shorter decline at the end of life. Seniors who live alone should be intentional about social interaction, because when you go out you tend to be more active. When you eat with others your appetite is better and emotional well-being is improved.

**Q. How can family caregivers help advocate for senior loved ones who do go into the hospital?**

**A.** When someone is sick, they're not focused on individual symptoms and they're in no mood to talk about their medical history. If your senior loved one goes to the emergency room, medical professionals are looking to you as part of a patient's support system. In fact, that has a lot to do with whether they discharge someone to go home. ER providers need to make decisions quickly. Having the family member there helps determine what exists in the home, what's been going on and long-term history, which is so helpful.

## Dr. Carolyn Clevenger, Emory University

*Dr. Carolyn Clevenger RN, DNP, GNP-BC, is associate professor and assistant dean for MSN Education at Emory University in Atlanta, Ga. Dr. Clevenger is a recognized expert in gerontology and healthy aging, and serves as president-elect of the Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA).*

