

## **Agnes and the Vagaries of Dr. Google**

Agnes wasn't terribly technology-savvy, and therein laid her problem. She had noticed that she was beginning to have trouble remembering things, like which evenings she volunteered on, and sometimes felt inexplicably confused. Her daughter Christine had also raised these concerns. Agnes had set up an appointment with her doctor, but she hated to be idle in the meantime, so she began doing her own research. At first, she thought she could find the information alone – after all, how hard could it be? But so many websites popped up in her search, she didn't know where to start. She noticed that many of the websites were about Alzheimer's, and remembered that her Aunt had been diagnosed with this disease. She hadn't helped take care of her aunt, so she didn't know much about Alzheimer's, but many of the websites said it was hereditary, so she began to worry.

Agnes called Christine, thinking that her daughter's familiarity with the web would come in handy. No such luck; Christine was just as confused by the wealth of information available. As they read through website after website, they both began to panic. What information could they trust? Who could they talk to? How would they find local supports and resources when the time came, if they couldn't even get a straight answer from Doctor Google?

As a last resort, Agnes called Health Link, and they knew immediately where to send her. The Dementia Advice nurse began by clearing up some of the biggest myths Agnes believed to be true and describing the symptoms, stages, and prognosis of dementia and Alzheimer's, while stressing that Agnes shouldn't jump to conclusions about her symptoms. The nurse also suggested some reliable websites to visit for more information, such as the Alzheimer Society's website, and gave a brief explanation of Alberta's Continuing Care system.

Agnes felt much better; not only did she have solid information about dementia and Alzheimer's; she now knew where to look for more. Continuing Care had always been a bit of a mystery to her, and knowing how it worked felt like a solid win.