

News from Your Patient Library

Winter 2021

Patient Story

By Charles Cook

You Are Not Alone

I have been a patient at TGH for over a decade. In that time I have undergone several surgeries including 2 organ transplants: a heart transplant in the Spring of 2016, and a kidney transplant in the Fall of 2017.

Before I had my heart transplant surgery, I required 2 LVAD (Left Ventricular Assist Device) surgeries in order to keep me alive long enough to find a heart. Due to complications that arose in the first LVAD surgery I spent 100 days in the hospital. 3 weeks after I was discharged I was asked to return to TGH for further testing and observation. The doctors were concerned about a steady increase of LDH (lactate dehydrogenase) in my blood. Tests showed my LVAD surgery caused the rise in my LDH levels. The solution was to have a second surgery to replace the original LVAD. My second LVAD surgery went very well and I remained stable until the time of my heart transplant 9 months later.

My first LVAD surgery had caused a few problems, including major blood loss which caused my kidneys to stop working. I didn't even know that my kidneys would be at risk during a surgery on my heart. I thought that might have been a pretty valuable piece of information to have had prior to surgery.

I had gone to sleep for my surgery concerned about my heart and I woke up attached to a

dialysis machine. That was a pretty tough way to start my time on dialysis but I guess everyone starts somewhere. I remained on hemodialysis from the day of my surgery until I received my kidney transplant over 2 and a half years later.

I spoke with other patients about my experiences and listened to theirs. I was surprised by how many others had complications along their own journeys. The knowledge that other patients had experienced situations where things had not always gone exactly according to plan gave me a strange sense of comfort.

I began sharing my experiences with anyone who would sit still long enough to listen. I hoped that I could provide a little comfort to other patients by letting them know that they were not alone in the effort to achieve the best health outcome possible despite the problems they may face. Most importantly I have always told others that if I could do it, then they could do it too.

I have shared my story for years in an attempt to help anyone that I can and will continue to do so! My latest opportunity to share my experiences has come through my participation in the creation of the ACB (African Caribbean Black) YouTube Channel. The purpose of the channel is to provide information to the members of the ACB community about organ transplants, living donations and barriers in access to

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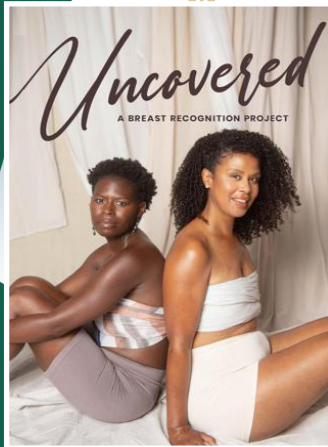


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healthcare. The ACB committee welcome ideas for channel content. Please complete this survey <https://bit.ly/ACBOHtalk> or email your suggestions to acborganhealth@gmail.com. To find out more about the dynamic team of ACB patients, providers and creatives behind the channel, go to www.uhn.ca and search "ACB Organ Health".

UHN and Community News:

- Uncovered
- Lung Cancer Screening
- Food Drive



Uncovered: A Breast Recognition Project

This resource is focused on the breast cancer experiences of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. Through imagery and storytelling, it shines a light on the physical and emotional scars of breast cancer, cultural barriers and health equity.

Read their stories at the link below

<https://rethinkbreastcancer.com/uncovered/>

Lessons I learned as a Patient

- You are not alone when you face setbacks
- Others have overcome similar obstacles and you can do it too
- Just because you have been discharged from the hospital that does not mean that you are done healing. Take it slow.



If you are **55 to 74 years old** and have smoked cigarettes for **20 years or more**, you may qualify for lung cancer screening.

Call **416-340-4154** or talk to your doctor.

Visit: bit.ly/OLSP-UHN

My suggestion to Doctors

- Please try to cover the major and most common risks very thoroughly before a patient's surgery
- Remember that patients are individual human beings who just happen to be dressed in funny gowns in your workplace.



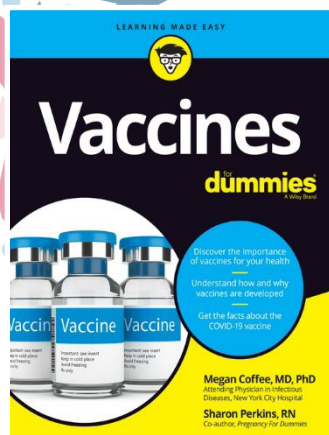
The Fort York Food Bank accepts donations of non-perishable food, baby and adult diapers, and sanitary products **every Sunday from 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm.**

They are also looking for volunteers on Sundays from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon.

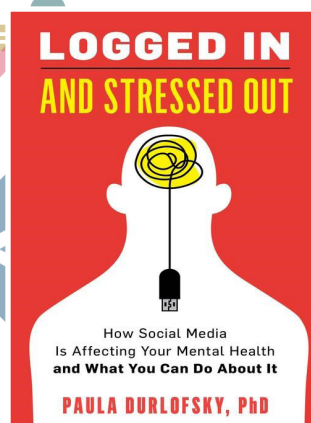
For more information, please go to: <https://fyfb.com/donate/> or call **416-203-3011.**

New E-books:

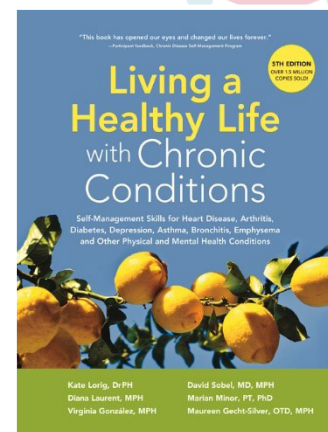
The Patient & Family Learning Centres have new e-books! Get instant access to the books at <https://uhnpatient.overdrive.com/> using the campaign code **uhnwinter21** (til December 31st) or **uhnspring22** (from January 1st to March 31st).



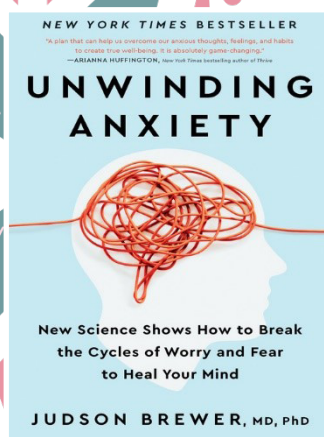
Vaccines for Dummies
By Megan Coffee, S. Perkins



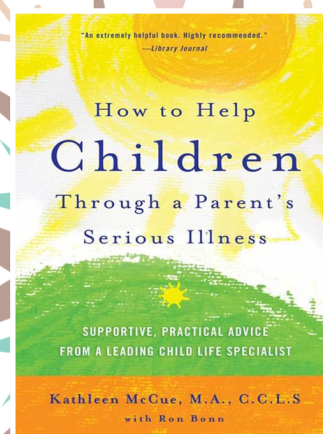
Logged In and Stressed Out
By Paula Durlofsky



Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions
By Kate Lorig, D. Laurent



Unwinding Anxiety
By Judson Brewer



How to Help Children through a Parent's Serious Illness
By Kathleen McCue, R. Bonn

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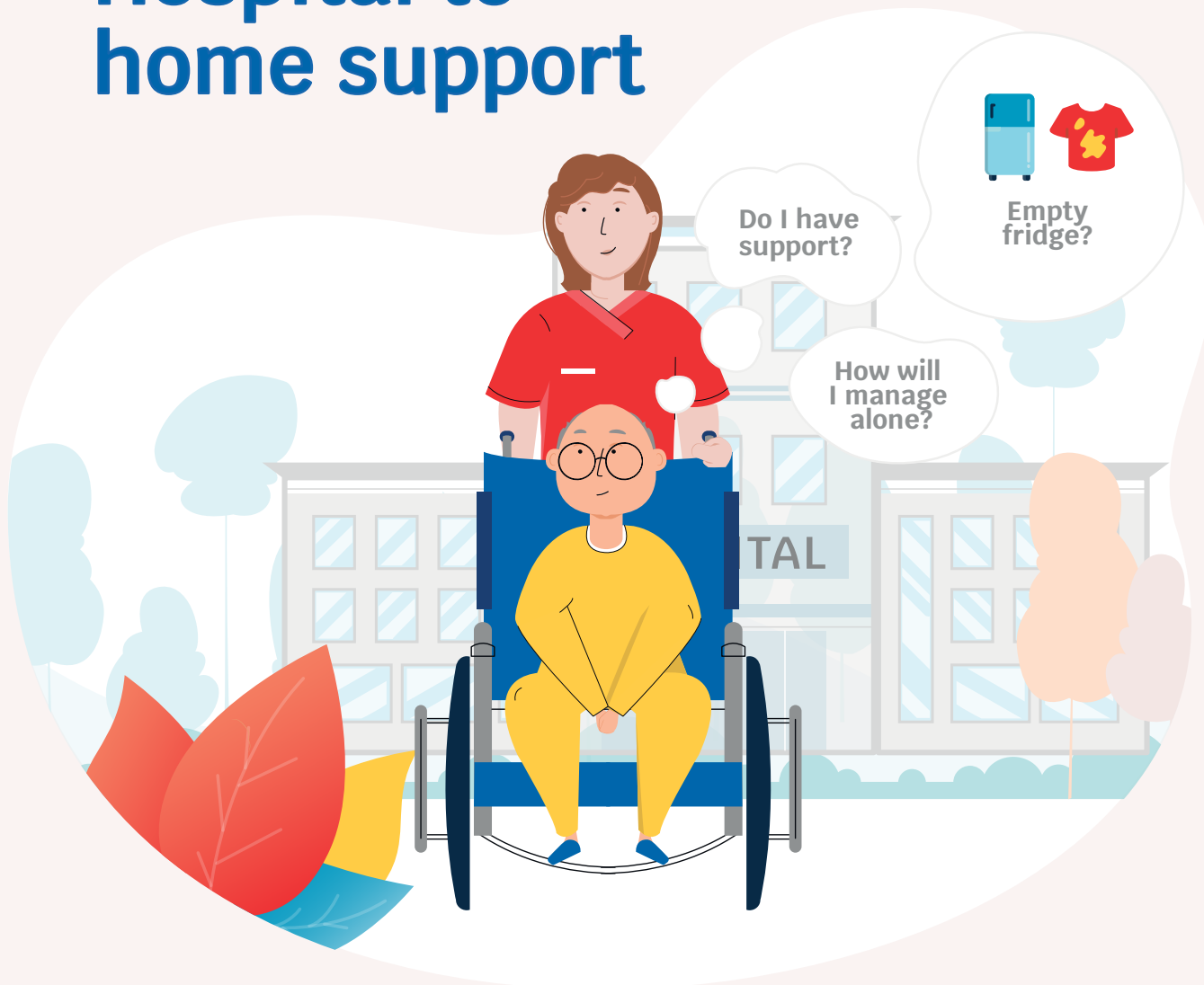
Learning Centres/Library Holiday hours:

December 27 to 31: Closed

January 4, 2022: Open



Hospital to home support



Recovering from a hospital visit can be overwhelming for a patient and their family members. Our caregivers and registered nurses are here to help patients feel safe and supported on their journey from hospital to home.

HOSPITAL

- Admittance support
- Bedside companion
- Respite care
- Transportation home

HOME

- Visiting nurses
- Home & personal support
- Overnight assistance
- Live-in caregiver

COMMUNITY

- Grocery shopping
- Driver for errands
- Escort for medical appointments



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