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## Introduction

Welcome to another special December edition of the twice-yearly Ethical Homecare Newsletter.

This month we'll be looking at Christmas of course, but also the effects of loneliness and social isolation – something we should all be mindful of at this time of year. In our March issue we announced our own research and so now we can present some conclusions and hopefully helpful advice.

**The I in illness is isolation, and the crucial letters in wellness are we.**  
(Anonymous)

izquotes.com

In our Healthy Eating section we explore sociable foods – food to share. Often freshly baked or cooked goods can be a great ice-breaker with someone you know who could do with a visit. No matter how grumpy, it is hard to turn down food from the heart. But it's important to think healthily too – we don't want our neighbours to have a sugar over-dose.

It is also that time of year when we say a big thank you to all of our hard working staff, another year of love and support lavished onto our clients. We always appreciate your hard work but sometimes like to make sure that we make a formal recognition of that.

## Healthy Eating

### Ingredient

#### Curried Fish

Ingredients 3 tablespoons canola oil  
2 tablespoons curry powder  
1 onion, finely chopped  
1 green bell pepper, diced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 teaspoon minced Scotch bonnet Chile pepper (see Tip), or to taste  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme or 1/4 teaspoon dried  
1 14-ounce can "lite" coconut milk  
2 pounds mahi-mahi fillets (see Note), skinned, cut into 1-inch pieces  
3 scallions, thinly sliced  
1 teaspoon salt

### Method

Though curried goat, chicken and shrimp are more popular in Jamaica than fish, food journalist Jacqui Sinclair's curry with mild mahi-mahi is a delicious and light alternative. Serve over rice.



### ISOLATION

**Although some do not consider themselves lonely, the effects of being isolated from family and friends poses a higher risk of emotional distress and poor health, in some cases premature death. Cuts to services are not helping with this problem, says Age UK. Those expressing feelings of loneliness and isolation also carry a wider range of illnesses such as depression, and are more likely to be female.**

A study by the University College London, said “Social connection can provide emotional support and warmth which is important but they also provide things like advice, making sure people take their medication and provide support in helping them to do things.”

There has been an increase of 50%, over the last 15 years, of those living alone between the ages of 55 to 64 years old. Whilst day care centres are closing nationwide due to funding cuts, we should all be aware of the effects that this has on older people – leaving them vulnerable and struggling to cope alone in isolation.

Care homes themselves do not cure isolation as many tens of thousands of elderly in care homes still endure social isolation. Local authorities are in a position to create ‘befriending’ schemes to recruit volunteers to visit care home residents; care homes themselves can also, for best practice, personalise their care and support to help transform people’s lives.



In our own research project, which we announced in our March issue this year, we conducted feedback through questionnaire’s and interviews with clients and social services. At Ethical Homecare we pride ourselves in providing the best of care and exploring some of the issues that are raised by government cuts is one such strategy to help us.

Of course the internet is more and more a point of contact for people to stay in touch with friends and family. Whilst useful to some, others are less able to engage with the internet; some may benefit from available training targeted at the elderly, but for others it is not at all practical.

Isolation can also increase social anxiety, yet at the same time joining social groups for many brings its own anxieties of being in public and surrounded by unfamiliar settings and people. Many may feel self-conscious and that people are looking at them negatively. Advice from a GP or health professional may assist in addressing this issue, but it must be considered that turfing someone out of their comfort zone may not be an ideal strategy to isolation.

Volunteering, for those who can, can make the world of difference to those suffering isolation. Encouraging sufferers to join local services may introduce them to new people and activities. The Samaritans and other charities have a wealth of experience and you don’t have to commit too much of your time.

## Success Stories

We want to take this time to thank all of our staff for their dedication, hard work, commitment and compassion to their clients and our company. The staff team enjoyed a really great Christmas night out after everyone was tucked safely into bed. A chance to let their hair down and enjoy a bit of me time. From all of the office staff, Managers and Partners Merry Christmas team and thank you again.



If you have any enquires or would like to feature in future newsletter editions then please do not hesitate to contact us

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