

Dear Santa: All I want for Christmas is ...

By Cindie Smith, Caregiver Support Coordinator, Northern and Eastern Mainland Region

It's time for the question many of us dread ... "What would you like for Christmas?" Some of us have received odd gifts, perhaps items we didn't really like, need or want. But yet we continue to respond, "Oh, nothing!" or "Anything would be fine." It is not in our caregiving nature to state our wishes or needs, but we ought to recognize that to a great degree we can be in the driver's seat with gift suggestions.

Let's take a practical approach because you will probably be asked by someone, "What would you like for the holidays?" Put the list below (or make up one of your own) in an envelope marked **WISH LIST** on the fridge and share it with anyone who asks you. You deserve a real gift!

----- CUT ON DOTTED LINE -----

If you are reading this, you have asked what I would like as a Christmas gift. Please consider a gift from the list below which has been suggested by *Caregivers Nova Scotia*, or use it as inspiration for a different gift. Thanks for being so thoughtful!

Free or low cost gifts

1. A mixed CD of some of my favourite music for a home-made concert
2. Shoveling snow from the step and walkway for a month or for the whole winter
3. Running errands for a week or month - groceries, pharmacy, etc.
4. Write a list of the things I do well as a caregiver for days when I need encouragement
5. Call to see how I am doing once a week
6. Make frozen meals – make a little extra as you cook for your family and freeze some for us
7. Baked treats – again, make a little extra and freeze
8. An overnight stay while I am home – your ears listen so mine can sleep
9. Make a list of local library books about caregiving and my loved one's health condition
10. Write down your favourite memories of my loved one
11. Read about my loved one's health condition so you understand our situation
12. On the really hard days, listen without judgment even if I say ridiculous things
13. Visit with my loved one so they will have company, even when I am home
14. Other _____
15. Other _____

Gifts for purchase

1. Two hours of maid service
2. An in-home foot care service
3. An inspirational book
4. A few hours of respite care
5. An emergency crank radio/flashlight
6. Fancy, flavoured tea or coffee for a treat without leaving home
7. A donation to a non-profit organization that is important to me
8. Other _____
9. Other _____

