

winter 2008/2009

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Advice for getting well and staying well from your local PCN\*

# well!

## Warm up to Winter

inside

### WHEN IT HURTS

Help at hand for anxiety, stress and depression

### HIS AND HERS RECIPES

Simple soups for winter warmth

### STEP IT UP!

A few (more) steps a day keeps illness at bay

### \*WHAT'S A PCN?

PCN stands for Primary Care Network, a team of health professionals who coordinate your care. **LEARN MORE INSIDE...**

PrimaryCare  
Network

## EAT MORE—VEGGIES . . . . . 04

If your mother ever told you to eat your vegetables, it's time to listen.

## CONNECT MORE . . . . . 08

Connecting with people you like and love brings surprising health benefits.

## MOVE MORE . . . . . 11

Trade the spare tire around your waist for a stroll around the park.

## FOCUS ON DIABETES . . . . . 12

A look at a serious disease that now targets our young.

## PCN PROFILE—SOUTH CALGARY HEALTH MANAGEMENT CLINIC . . . 16

A new type of clinic that gives patients knowledge and a plan of action to manage chronic conditions.

### \*WHAT'S A PCN?

PCN stands for Primary Care Network, a team of family doctors and other health professionals, sometimes in one facility, more often spread across the community. This team better coordinates your care and works to build a coordinated approach to community health issues. PCNs recognize that communities are as individual as the people living within them. And with the support of Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Medical Association and Alberta Health Services, PCNs ensure teams of health professionals are tailored to specific community needs. A community of young families, for instance, may need more support for prenatal and pediatric care. A community with greater numbers of seniors may need more support with chronic care. Communities facing poverty issues may require more support for addictions or mental health.



In the Calgary region, there are six PCNs comprised of more than 500 health professionals:

1. Foothills PCN
2. Calgary West PCN
3. South Calgary PCN
4. Calgary Rural PCN
5. Highland PCN
6. Mosaic PCN

*The Calgary Herald says, "These 'unattached' clinics are quietly, but innovatively, working under the radar in Calgary, reforming the way family doctors offer medicine." (Nov. 6, 2008, Paula Arab)*

*The Herald also says, "The name makes most people's eyes glaze over." They have a point. That's why when you see PCN, we hope you'll know it stands for **Your Health. Your Team.***

**Well!** *Is produced quarterly for patients in Primary Care Networks. To comment on Well! go to [well@albertapci.ca](mailto:well@albertapci.ca) or call toll free at 1-866-714-5724*

# Warm up to winter



While winter may bring out the urge to hibernate, embracing winter can bring the roses back into your cheeks and into your life. We all know *what* we should do to get well and stay well. But *how* do we do it with everything we need to fit into our busy lives?

Your local PCN\* brings you **Well!** to share some of what we know about the small steps you can take that will mean big gains in your health and wellness.

We hope you enjoy this edition of **Well!** and that it helps you and your family enjoy a wonderful, healthy winter.

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## THE PRIMARY CARE INITIATIVE (PCI)

The Primary Care Initiative (PCI) supports PCNs in improving access to family physicians and other frontline health-care providers. PCI was established in 2003 by Alberta Health and Wellness, the Alberta Medical Association and Alberta's Regional Health Authorities.

PCI works to develop new PCNs, support existing networks in meeting the needs of their communities, and ensure great ideas developed in one PCN can be adopted province-wide.

More than 60 per cent of Alberta family physicians now work within 30 PCNs. Seven more PCNs are in development and the goal is to have 80 per cent of family physicians working within a PCN by 2011.



**ERIN WILE**  
dietitian

# Eat More—Veggies!

**Erin Wile**, dietitian at the Foothills Primary Care Network, believes the simple guidelines in Canada's Food Guide are the best way to ensure a balanced diet. ([www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)) "The biggest mistake I see in patients, though, is that they really restrict themselves. They set themselves up for failure."

Wile recommends an 80:20 rule. Eat a well balanced diet 80 per cent of the time and savour a guilt-free meal out with friends, or an extra treat 20 per cent of the time.

Wile says a big challenge in Canadian winters is that many vegetables aren't in season. That doesn't mean we need to miss our veggies though. "We need to explore, experiment and just have fun trying out different and unique foods. There are some wonderful winter squashes out there."

*"Vegetables are a must on a diet. I suggest carrot cake, zucchini bread, and pumpkin pie."*

Jim Davis

"Remember, you don't need to buy just fresh food—frozen and canned can be just as good. When you're making a casserole or stew you can't tell the difference when canned vegetables are used."



## Personal practice

In terms of her own nutrition, Wile does some basic things. "I'm a huge fan of breakfast and in all my meals I try to make sure I have the three food groups. So for breakfast, I might have cereal, milk and fruit or yogurt, toast and peanut butter. For snacks, I try to have at least two food groups—crackers and cheese or fruit and yogurt."

**Fruits and vegetables**

7 to 10 servings a day

**Grain products**

6 to 7 servings a day

**Milk and alternatives**

2 servings a day

**Meat and alternatives**

2 to 3 servings a day

## Food guide recommendations

In winter, we start to crave carbohydrates and those large portions of meat. But Canada's Food Guide says fruits and vegetables should make up the largest portion of our diet. We should eat three times more servings of fruits and vegetables than meat and alternatives and more fruits and vegetables than grains.

\*Adult recommendations shown.

## CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE TIPS

Look for foods with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.

### FRUITS AND VEGGIES

Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day (build a rainbow of colour on your plate).

Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.

### GRAINS

Make at least half of your grain products whole wheat (Wile says high fibre foods help you feel full for longer.)

### MILK AND ALTERNATIVES

Choose skim or 1% milk.

Choose lower fat alternatives when choosing yogurt, cheeses etc.

### MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES

Choose meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.

Choose fish at least twice a week.

Choose lean meats and alternatives (remember, a portion of meat is about the size of your palm, or a deck of cards).

## FIGHTING WINTER CRAVINGS

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### SPICE UP YOUR LIFE

"When it gets dark outside, your serotonin levels (the feel good chemical in your brain) decrease and this may result in cravings," says Wile. Fight those cravings with flavour, she says. "A lot of people feel that the best flavour comes from foods high in fat, sugar, or salt, but that doesn't have to be the case. Experiment with fresh herbs such as ginger, garlic and basil to add spice to your favourite dishes."

2

### HYDRATE

"Many people mistake thirst for hunger," says Wile. "If you find you're feeling hungry more often, drink a glass of water and see if that helps." Wile says it's especially important to stay hydrated in the cold and dry of a Calgary winter.

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### SNACK

It may seem counter intuitive, but many people find that eating three small meals plus nutritious snacks daily helps minimize cravings by providing the body with a constant source of fuel.



## Erin Wile's his and hers winter soups

"The vegetable barley is for my less adventurous family members," says Wile. Her husband has grown to love the ginger carrot soup, but still leans towards the heartier vegetable barley.

### Hers

#### CARROT GINGER SOUP

- 2-3 tsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp minced garlic (2-3 cloves)
- 12 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1-1.5 litres low fat, low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 tbsp minced ginger
- pepper to taste

Heat olive oil in large pot over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook until onion is slightly browned. Add carrots and chicken broth and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat and let simmer until carrots are tender, approximately 30 minutes. Using a small hand held mixer, blender, or food processor, puree the soup. Add the orange juice and ginger and heat thoroughly.

### His

#### VEGETABLE BARLEY SOUP

- 2-3 tsps olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp minced garlic (approx 2-3 cloves)
- ½ cup chopped carrot
- ½ cup chopped celery
- 1 28 oz ( 796 ml) can diced tomatoes
- ½ cup barley, rinsed well
- 1.5 litres low fat, low-sodium chicken broth

Note: feel free to add other fresh, frozen or canned vegetables.

Heat olive oil in large pot over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook until onion is slightly browned. Add carrots, celery, diced tomatoes, other vegetables, barley and chicken broth. Bring to a boil. Turn down the heat and let simmer until vegetables are tender and barley is cooked through—approximately 30 minutes. Season with pepper and serve.

# Connect MORE

**Rodney Keddy**, a psychologist at Calgary’s West Central Primary Care Network, knows first hand what it’s like to be far removed from family and friends. Keddy is part of the large group of Albertans who said “farewell to Nova Scotia” for the promise of Alberta.

The holidays are particularly stressful for those separated from family, says Keddy. “Lots of people in Calgary and Alberta overall are displaced—from somewhere else,” he says. “People can spend so much money on rent and other things that they don’t have the funds to be with family during important holiday periods.”

Keddy recommends taking up something interesting and fun. Volunteering makes quick connections and taking the time to reach out to others in your circle of acquaintances can help build healthy connections.



## Personal practice

Before becoming a mental health therapist, Rodney Keddy was a personal trainer. “I understand the value of regular exercise in maintaining good mental health,” says Keddy. He walks every morning before work. “It’s where I come up with my ‘neat ideas,’” he says. Four or five days a week he also hits the gym after work for weight training and cardio. And of course, there are the soccer and hockey games, which are just pure fun and a great way to connect with others, he says.

## Keddy’s tips for connecting more

- 1. Be a joiner.** Keddy joined a soccer league in summer and a hockey team in winter, instant social connections. A bridge club, hiking group or bowling league can all bring social benefits.
- 2. Volunteer.** Lots of people need help, especially during the holidays. Join a team in wrapping gifts for needy families, or help out in a soup kitchen.
- 3. Reach out.** If you’re feeling lonely you need to know you’re not the only one. Be aware of those around you. You may make someone’s day and help yourself by simply extending an invitation for coffee.



**RODNEY KEDDY**  
psychologist

## ➤ BENEFITS OF SOCIAL CONTACT

Research increasingly shows the value of social connections. Various studies have linked social connectedness with lower susceptibility to cold and flu, lower stress levels, lower blood pressure and even longevity.

■ **PARENTS** with a supportive social network find it easier to care for children and lower their risk for child abuse and neglect.

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■ For **TEENS**, strong social connections are associated with lower levels of emotional distress and risk-taking behaviour.

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■ For **SENIORS**, those with strong social connections have been found to have lower blood pressure and a 2006 study published in Lancet, found seniors with strong social networks fared better on 21 brain-function tests.

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## When it hurts

In Rodney Keddy's practice he deals mostly with people experiencing stress, anxiety or depression. "Everyone needs help from time to time," says Keddy. "It's important to ask for it. We have tools that can help you feel better." Keddy says that often just talking with someone who can help you pinpoint the stressors in your life and your reactions to them can bring relief.

- Calgary's **Eastside Family Centre** offers free walk-in counseling. The 50-minute sessions with a qualified mental health professional are first come, first served and will refer to other community resources.
- **Healthlink Alberta** is a 24-hour a day, seven day a week service. Registered nurses provide advice and information about any health symptom. Health Link nurses and referral specialists can also help you find community health services. Call **403-943-LINK (5465)** or toll free **1-866-408-LINK (5465)**.
- The **Calgary Distress Line**, **403-266-1605**, is an important resource for crisis and addiction support, information and referrals. [www.distresscentre.com](http://www.distresscentre.com).
- Keddy recommends [www.anxietybc.com](http://www.anxietybc.com) for people looking for support with anxiety or depression.
- He also recommends David Burns' book, *Feeling Good*.

## Soothing stress

### Rodney Keddy's simple tools for stress relief

#### Candle meditation

- Light a candle and sit comfortably
- Gaze softly at the flame
- Notice your thoughts, but let them go
- With each thought you notice, gently bring your attention back to the flame

The goal is to increase the amount of time your attention is on the flame. When you focus on the flame, you let go of the thoughts that keep you busily reliving the past or anticipating the future. You are, at last, living in the present.

#### Diaphragmatic breathing

- Sit comfortably in an upright position, shoulders back
- Place your hand on your belly
- Breathe deeply, moving the breath down to your belly until your hand rises

This can be done anywhere and anytime. When you catch yourself tensing or becoming anxious, bring your attention to your breath. Calmness travels with your breath.

Some PCNs have Behavioural Health Consultants (BHC) available. These health professionals (psychologists, social workers, nurses) consult with patients and physicians on a variety of concerns from managing and making lifestyle changes to coping with the diagnosis of a chronic disease. Ask your physician if there is a BHC in your PCN.

# Move more!

## Doctor's orders

Dr. Les Cunning of the Calgary Rural Primary Care Network says he's been privileged to practice family medicine since graduation in 1974. What's he love about his job? "The people, absolutely. They're what anchor me, the fun part."



DR. LES CUNNING  
family physician

And after more than 30 years of connecting with patients, he has one 'doctor's order' that would improve the health of every patient he sees. In fact, he considers it the single most important prescription: "Get moving!"

"We need more cardiovascular fitness, about 45 minutes a day of continuous moving through space—walking, biking—something that gets the blood sugars down."

*"Unfortunately, we live in a society that doesn't encourage and support regular exercise as part of a person's day. Most of us drive wherever we need to go and in many cases we drive for long periods to get to work."*

### QUICK FACT

Boys take roughly  
1,200 more steps  
per day than girls.

Lack of sleep diminishes motivation as well, says Cunning. "And then we get older and our knees and backs start to go, especially if we haven't been active in our younger years. People hide out in smaller groups and homes. Social time isn't spent on exercise activities," he says. "It's the culture of the automobile. We don't live in close harmony with the environment where we want to walk and move about."

## QUICK FACT

Teenagers 15 to 19 take 2,500 fewer steps per day than they did when they were ages five to 10.

## Personal practice

Dr. Les Cunning says he included the simple pleasure of walking at a recent professional conference in London, England. "Every morning, my colleagues and I would walk for 30 minutes to the conference. It was lovely. You'd go through gardens... It never felt like a chore."

Dr. Cunning says you don't need an English garden to get you going. "Calgary is a beautiful city with mountain vistas, wide-open skies. We need to get back to loving our outdoor home."

## Focus on diabetes

Dr. Les Cunning says one of the saddest things in his practice is declining physical activity among his patients and an increase in type 2 diabetes, now being seen in teens as young as 14.

Type 1 diabetes is caused by diminished production of insulin, a hormone needed to transport glucose from your bloodstream to your cells. In type 2

diabetes, the cells resist or ignore the insulin. Glucose is fuel for your body and when the cells don't get enough, your cells become starved of energy.

*"Above all, do not lose your desire to walk. Every day I walk myself into a state of wellbeing and walk away from every illness. I have walked myself into my best thoughts, and I know of no thought so burdensome that one cannot walk away from it."*

Soren Kierkegaard

## YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE

To find walkers near you who are happy to have you join them, see

All walkers: [www.walkers.meetup.com/cities/ca/ab/calgary](http://www.walkers.meetup.com/cities/ca/ab/calgary)

Women only: [www.fitnesson5th.com/calgary/index.html](http://www.fitnesson5th.com/calgary/index.html)

Hiking clubs: [www.calgaryplus.ca/feature/hiking\\_guide/7460/clubs.jsp](http://www.calgaryplus.ca/feature/hiking_guide/7460/clubs.jsp)

**SENIORS: Check local malls for walking clubs or if you're feeling more adventurous, try**

*The Second Sixties Outdoor Club*, phone: 403-284-3954

*Evergreen Seniors Outdoor Club*, phone: 403-239-0240

More than 40 Albertans are diagnosed with diabetes every day. Some risk factors for type 2 diabetes are unavoidable. Aboriginals and Albertans from Asia, Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa are at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. A family history of type 2 diabetes also increases your risk.

But other risks are avoidable. Increases in type 2 diabetes across Canada are closely linked to the growing numbers of overweight and physically inactive Canadians. Abdominal fat is especially implicated in interfering with the work of insulin.

Staying active and maintaining a normal weight can keep you from developing type 2 diabetes or significantly delay its onset. Increasing activity, decreasing carbohydrate intake and losing weight are often the first line of treatment.

With complications that can include blindness, heart disease, kidney problems and nerve damage, the more type 2 diabetes can be kept at bay, the better.

## STEP IT UP!

An inexpensive pedometer can help you determine if you're moving enough.

<b>For adults:</b> Under 5,000 steps a day	Sedentary
5,000-7,499.....	Low active
7,500-9,999.....	Somewhat active
10,000.....	Active
12,000 or more.....	Highly active

These numbers are just guidelines. Children may need more steps per day and seniors who have been sedentary should not start as high as 10,000. The best rule is to start where you already are and add half an hour of walking per day, roughly 2,000 to 3,000 more steps. Increase steps gradually. A Harvard study found as few as 6,000 steps a day are correlated with lower death rates.

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### Following in your footsteps

“Children of parents who consider themselves to be substantially less active than other adults take roughly 1,400 fewer steps per day than children whose parents consider themselves just as active or more active than other parents.”

## EXTRA INCENTIVE

***This just in!...*** Alberta MLAs recently approved a private member's bill which will provide partial tax relief up to \$500 per person on annual fees for physical activities. Details are still being worked out. In the meantime, keep receipts you think may apply.

## LIFE BEFORE CARS

A study of Old Order Amish in Ontario found

- The average Amish man takes 18,425 steps a day compared to 7,192 for the average American male.
- The average Amish woman takes 14,196 steps a day compared to 5,210 for the average American woman.
- Four per cent of the Amish were obese compared to 28 per cent for Alberta males and 23 per cent for Alberta females (2004 Canadian Community Health Survey, Stats Can)



## TIPS TO GET YOU MOVING

Park further from work or shopping if you live too far away to walk.

If you work in an office, take the stairs at least part of the way. Gradually increase the number of stairs you do.

Plan a winter hike and picnic for family and friends, perhaps to see your favourite summer spot in a whole new light. Don't forget the hot chocolate!

If you really can't stand the outdoors, or don't want to risk falling, try mall walking.

## Good for ADHD, good for us all

A number of studies show the positive benefits to overall wellbeing that we experience when we're in touch with nature. A recent study from the University of Illinois found the benefits extend to children with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). In the study, children diagnosed with ADHD were able to minimize their symptoms and maximize their attention capacity after spending time outdoors in nature.

# Dress for winter

One of the reasons we tend to dash from car to shelter in winter is that too few Albertans dress warmly enough for the weather. Always wear proper footwear, gloves and a hat. Even teens, sometimes especially resistant to bundling up, can wear woolen hiking socks in their runners and sneak silk long underwear beneath a pair of jeans.



## DRESSING FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS

### Dress in layers:

1. A tight-fitting base layer to keep you warm and dry. Avoid cotton because it stays wet. (A layer of silk long underwear can even be worn under business wear. So you can look good and stay warm while you walk those extra blocks from your car.)
2. A looser mid-layer for insulation. Down, polyester, fleece and wool are good choices.
3. An outer layer to block the wind. Gore-Tex or similar materials provide wind and water resistance.

### Wear proper shoes or boots

1. Make sure shoes have a sole with a significant grip.
2. For walking on ice or snow, get additional traction with slip on cleats available in sporting goods stores.
3. Consider using ski poles or trekking poles for stability while walking.

### Cover your head, hands and feet!

1. Wear a hat. This is no time for worrying about “toque hair.” If you’re too warm, it’s easy to take off your hat and gloves.
2. Wear gloves or mitts. If you suffer from cold hands, sporting goods stores sell mitts with built-in warmers!
3. Invest in some good woolen hiking socks. You can also buy liner socks. Your feet will thank you.

# A PLAN OF ATTACK FOR DISEASES THAT SNEAK UP ON MIDDLE AGE

*Shelly Storozuk, RN, team leader for the Health Management Clinic, South Calgary PCN*

Albertans in their 40s and 50s are often at the peak of their careers, busier than ever with work and family. Too often, however, the hectic pace that keeps it all going begins to take a toll on our bodies.

**Shelly Storozuk** is the Team Leader for the Health Management Clinic offered by the South Calgary PCN. "We start to see large numbers of people developing problems between 40 and 50," says Storozuk. These are successful people in so many ways, but they've been neglecting their most important asset, their health. "They're not exercising enough and they are eating fast food on the run far too often." Patients referred to the Health Management Clinic have diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity.

Storozuk's team includes Kinesiologists, a dietitian and behavioural health consultants (one social worker and one psychologist). Patients meet with the team leader first, who connects them with the

team members they need. "Our aim is to educate the patient, help them establish goals, and support them with a plan of action," says Storozuk.

The clinic now sees close to 500 patients and is heartened by the results. "Simple things make the difference," says Storozuk. "We help them read labels and track the food they eat so they can be more aware of the choices they're making."

What surprises patients most, says Storozuk, is that when they take better care of themselves, they are better able to meet the other demands in their lives. Their energy returns, they enjoy life more, they even look younger, says Storozuk.



**SHELLY STOROZUK**  
RN - team leader