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PrimaryCare
Networks
CALGARY AND AREA

Cover photo (left to right): Geriatric nurse consultant Bethan Simms, Dr. Jeremy DeBruyn and Dr. Van Nguyen were photographed by Mike Ridewood.

▶ Your Health Matters

Health Matters is published by Calgary and area Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to give you information about the programs, services and health teams available to you through your family doctor.

Research shows when people visit a family doctor regularly, they are healthier and live longer. People with chronic diseases also receive more care, make fewer emergency department visits and are hospitalized less.

More than 1,300 family doctors in 346 clinics belong to PCNs in the Calgary area. They provide care for about 1.1 million patients.

Health Matters, December 2015 Issue Publication Team:

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Home with a heart

Community clinics offer helping hand to city's most vulnerable citizens

Not everyone who needs health care can get to a doctor's office. Realizing this, health care professionals from the Calgary West Central Primary Care Network often work at two community clinics that help patients with distinct health concerns.

The Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS) and The Alex serve people who are homeless or living near or below the poverty line. Of all the things that shape health, nothing has a more powerful effect than poverty. It shortens lives, erodes quality of life and puts a tremendous demand on community services, especially health care. As a result, the patients cared for at The Alex and CUPS often have complex physical and mental health needs.

It takes a sense of community, a convenient location, access to a variety of caregivers and most of all, understanding and trust to meet these needs.

CUPS' Beltline centre includes a primary care clinic, women's health clinic, mental health program, pre- and postnatal programs, dental and vision care and outreach staff at seven shelters and detox centres.

"They know the location, they know the team," says CUPS health director Dr. Van Nguyen, of her patients. "We try our best to offer all of our supports right out of this clinic."

Nguyen is one of nine Calgary West Central PCN member doctors who work at CUPS. Five work at The Alex Community Health Centre.

"Patients like to have a home base, and when you have a home base you get more continuity," says Dr.

Dr. Randall Berlin, below, and Dr. Kerrie Treherne, right, are among five PCN doctors who offer care to patients at The Alex Community Health Centre.



Photos: Mike Ridewood

Randall Berlin, one of the physicians who works at The Alex.

The concept of a home base, also called a medical home model, shapes how The Alex cares for many vulnerable Calgarians. Over its four-decade history, the organization has expanded into three locations and includes housing programs, a seniors clinic, community and youth health centres, and a fleet of three retrofitted RVs. PCN specialists such as social worker Patricia Hinds—who is based at The Alex Community Health Centre—complement the care teams at these front-line clinics.

Hinds arranged for PCN social worker Rochelle Roach to conduct a home assessment for an elderly couple who have been going to The Alex for eight years. Although they have both physical and mental health challenges, they resisted home care and other treatments.

“There must be something about that social worker because they were accepting of her, let her come into their home and even accepted services from her,” says 19-year Alex veteran Dr. Kerrie Treherne. She adds that the woman is now enrolled in the Comprehensive Community Care (C3) program, which is designed to let patients stay in their homes for as long as possible.

Bethan Simms, a PCN geriatric nurse consultant, started working at CUPS in July. She helps treat the clinic’s older adults.

“A lot of the time they have been living with a chronic disease like diabetes and it hasn’t been

managed,” says Simms, who draws on additional PCN resources to help find subsidized housing for her patients. “But we can’t really address those concerns until they have a place to live.”

Staff from CUPS and The Alex have forged relationships with Calgarians who had nowhere else to turn. Through these community health-care hubs, the PCN can reach and help treat some of the city’s most vulnerable citizens.

“These clients are often the highest users of the system,” says Nguyen. “The ones going in and out of emergency.”

From a public health perspective, explains Nguyen, when you look after those with the highest health risks, you improve the health of everyone in the community.

— Doug Horner

Health experts pen their own prescriptions for happy new year

We asked a team of PCN professionals to reveal their personal health goals for 2016

1 THE PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Name: Jon Gabbai

Specialty: Identifying the causes of injury or barriers to inactivity

My prescription:

Combine exercise with socializing.

I've joined a soccer team with some friends. I'm more likely to stick with it as I know I will enjoy it.

Top tip: Consider the things you do in life that you enjoy and work with your therapist on making those things more challenging and active so you turn exercise into something you enjoy!

2 THE CLINICAL PHARMACIST

Name: Shelly Keller

Specialty: Diabetes education

My prescription:

Improve family meal planning.

At 4 p.m. every day I find myself thinking, "OK, so what are we going to eat tonight?" At night, I ask myself, "What am I going to pack for lunches tomorrow?" Then I look for a quick and easy meal.

Top tip: Listen to your patients because it doesn't matter what

your goals are, nothing will be accomplished until their concerns are met.

3 THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

Name: Laura Dwyer

Specialty: Seniors health

My prescription:

Increase the amount of physical activity I do.

I don't particularly enjoy going to the gym but I like being outside and I love music. I plan to incorporate these things into my exercise routine to motivate me to follow through.

Top tip: Keep your mind active, whether it is through social activity, education, brain games or any other activity that makes you think.

4 THE REGISTERED DIETITIAN

Name: Erin Sutherland

Specialty: Nutrition coaching

My prescription:

Schedule a meal planning date with myself three to four times each month.

Batch cooking a pot of hearty soup, pre-chopping vegetables

and stocking the fridge with ingredients for quick meals will make my life easier and my diet healthier.

Top tip: Michael Pollan, an American food journalist, has simple advice about eating: Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.

5 THE FAMILY DOCTOR

Name: Dr. Christine Luelo

Specialty: Primary care

My prescription:

Spend more time outside. Read, walk and just breathe fresh air to clear my mind.

Top tip: Tackle big goals in small pieces so you can celebrate successes along the way.

6 THE HEALTH MANAGEMENT NURSE

Name: Nina Tarmohamed

Specialty: Chronic conditions, including diabetes

My prescription:

Commit to regular exercise, more consistently.

Use the treadmill and free weights I bought for home.

Top tip: Focus on "non-scale victories"—lifestyle changes that help you live a healthier, happier life.



51%

Percentage of Canadians who make new year's resolutions

7 THE SOCIAL WORKER

Name: Byron Renwick

Specialty: Wellness and seniors health care

My prescription:

Find balance.

I facilitate happiness workshops and the one piece of advice I would give myself is that a person needs balance in order to feel well holistically. Doing good deeds for others helps fill up my well.

Top tip: When assessing seniors, I tend to give the advice that although giving up driving can be viewed as a loss of independence, it can be rewarding to make the decision to retire from something while things continue to be a success rather than waiting for a decline.

8 THE KINESIOLOGIST

Name: Katie Elgie

Specialty: Physical activity counselling

My prescription:

Be an active role model, which is something I tell my patients.

Spend more time in the mountains with my family.

Top tip: Having and finding balance is important in all aspects of our life.

9 THE BEHAVIOURAL HEALTH CONSULTANT

Name: Iordanka Petzanova

Specialty: Anxiety, depression, stress

My prescription:

Improve my communication and interaction with others.

I know from personal experience that in the heat of the moment, I have said things to people close to me that I have later come to regret. Taking a few deep breaths will make me feel physically calmer and give me extra time to think about what I'm going to say.

Top tip: Try colouring books for adults—they are a great way to relieve stress.

— Keith Bradford

Photo: Neil Zeller

Health professionals experience the same challenges as their patients when it comes to healthy living.



How to manage diabetes during the festive season

The festive season is upon us and with it can come calorie-rich foods, parties and travel. For people with diabetes, managing their condition during the holidays requires a little planning.

“You can make healthy food and lifestyle choices and still enjoy holiday celebrations,” says health management nurse Janice Poettcker. Here are some tips for managing diabetes during the holidays.



Illustration: Kyle Metcalf

Top tips

Plan ahead

- For your gatherings, create a menu that includes fresh fruit and veggies, whole grains and lean meat. If you are attending someone else’s event, ask what food will be served.
- Decide ahead of time how many appetizers you’ll eat at an event—even bite-sized snacks add unnecessary calories.
- Serve and drink water and unsweetened beverages. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit the amount and have it with food. Always talk with your health-care team about whether alcohol is safe for you.
- If travelling, pack twice the amount of diabetes supplies you’ll need, in case of delays. Remember that time zone changes will affect when you take your medications.

Keep routines

- Eat regularly, even if you’re going to a social event or travelling.
- Keep a food journal. Writing down what you eat helps you to be more aware of what you’re consuming.
- Stay active. If you’re travelling for the holidays, find out what physical activity you can do while you’re away.

Practise healthy habits

- Focus on the occasion, not the food.
- Prepare healthier holiday dishes for your family, with less fat, sugar and salt.
- Eat slowly to avoid second helpings and to help you recognize when you’ve had enough to eat.
- Take a walk after meals—and invite someone along for company.
- Learn to say “No, thanks.” Leave your plate and drink partially full to avoid being served more.

— Anne Georg



One-quarter of all Canadians

9,000,000

in total—are living with diabetes or pre-diabetes

Give holiday classics a healthy makeover



Photo: iStockphoto.com

Looking for holiday recipes that are lower in sugar, fat and sodium? Try these dietitian-approved tips for healthier holiday meals that are full of flavour.

Stuffing:

- Use lower fat turkey or chicken sausage instead of pork.
- Add fresh herbs such as sage, rosemary or thyme instead of salt.
- Add fresh fruit like apples, pears or cranberries.

Mashed potatoes:

- Replace half the potatoes with other vegetables such as cauliflower, rutabaga or parsnips.
- Leave the skins on your potatoes for added fibre (and less prep work!).

- Replace cream and butter with lower-fat choices such as Greek yogurt or buttermilk.
- Add roasted garlic, horseradish, vinegars or fresh chives.

Desserts

- Make fruit-based desserts most often. Try single-crust pies, galettes and crisps.
- Top desserts with icing sugar, roasted fruit or non-fat Greek yogurt sweetened with maple syrup.
- Decrease sugar by up to one-third. Add extracts, vanilla beans and fresh spices to amplify sweetness.
- Replace up to half the fat with fruit puree or low-fat yogurt.

— Erin Sutherland, Registered Dietitian

RECIPE

APPLE, CRANBERRY, SAUSAGE STUFFING

INGREDIENTS:

14 ounces french bread, cut in ½-inch cubes
2 Tbsp canola oil
1½ cups each of onion and celery, chopped
2 apples, chopped
½ cup frozen cranberries
2 chicken or turkey sausages
¼ cup fresh sage, chopped
1 Tbsp fresh thyme, chopped
3 cups low sodium chicken stock

Serves 12

PREPARATION:

1. Bake bread at 350°F for 20 minutes or until dried out.
2. Saute onion and celery in butter, until tender. Add apples and cook for 3 more minutes. Set aside in large bowl.
3. Cook sausage, crumbling with a wooden spoon, until lightly browned. Add to onion mixture.
4. Spray ovenproof pan with cooking spray.
5. Combine bread, sausage mixture, cranberries, fresh herbs and pepper to taste. Add chicken broth and stir to combine.
6. Transfer to baking dish. Bake at 375°F for 20 minutes and stir gently. Cook for another 20 minutes or until lightly browned.

NUTRITION per serving (¾ cup): 158 calories, 3 g fat (0 g sat), 17 mg cholesterol, 23 g carbs, 3 g sugar, 2 g fibre, 10 g protein, 359 mg sodium.



Erin Sutherland



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