Teladoc HEALTH



Staying healthy takes more than exercise

Taking care of your health involves more than staying physically active. Movement, rest, hydration, and managing stress can all play a role in supporting your overall wellbeing.

Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines recommend at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity each week, plus muscle-strengthening activities twice a week.[1] But movement looks different for everyone, and even small amounts can offer health benefits, including:[2]

- A lower risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure.
- Better bone health and balance, with less risk of injury from falls.
- Better sleep, including improvements in insomnia and sleep apnea.
- Fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Improved cognition, including memory, attention, and processing speed.
- A greater sense of wellbeing and overall quality of life.
- Prevent obesity and related chronic health conditions.

Here are other actions that can improve your health:



Exposure to sunlight

Natural daylight helps regulate your body's sleep-wake cycle. Even during Canada's shorter winter days, spending time outdoors when you can may help support more consistent sleep patterns.[3] Remember to protect your skin and eyes from UV rays, particularly on bright, snowy days.

Rest for your gut

Sleep plays an important role in your overall health, including digestion. Research suggests that disrupted sleep may affect the balance and diversity of bacteria in your gut.[4] Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines recommend seven to nine hours of good-quality sleep for adults.[1] Keeping a consistent sleep schedule and limiting screen time before bed can help support better rest.



Avoid drinking alcohol before bed

While alcohol may initially make you feel sleepy, it can disrupt your natural sleep cycle and cause you to wake more often during the night.[5] It can also increase sleep disorder symptoms like snoring or sleep apnea by relaxing your tongue and throat muscles.[4] Follow similar rules for avoiding caffeine, exercise and eating, and don't drink alcohol within three to four hours before bedtime to improve sleep.

Sweating it out

Your body naturally loses water throughout the day, including through sweating. Perspiration is a natural process to regulate your body's temperature.[6] Sweat contains amino acids that act as humectants, hydrating your skin. Sweat also contains antimicrobial peptides that work with your immune system to protect your skin from bacteria invasion or viruses. Staying hydrated helps support your body's everyday functions. Try keeping a glass nearby, drinking water with meals, or adding fruit and herbs for a little flavour.

Deep breaths

Conscious, deep breathing is one of the fastest ways to relax and soothe yourself. It can decrease your heart rate, lower blood pressure, and reduce muscle tension in one sitting by activating your body's natural relaxation response. The regular practice of deep breathing can reduce stress, increase a feeling of calm and improve health over time.

Your body is a miraculous machine. By making little changes, it can be operating at its full potential before you know it.

Before starting any new exercise routine, talk to your healthcare provider to make sure it's safe.

[1]https://csepguidelines.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/24HMovementGuidelines-Adults-18-64-ENG.pdf
[2]https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/being-active/physical-activity-your-health.html
[3]https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/sun-safety/sun-safety-basics.html
[4]https://cdhf.ca/en/10-ways-to-strengthen-your-microbiome/
[5]https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/alcohol
[6]https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/4-breathing-techniques-for-better-health



Finish the year strong by prioritizing your health

At this time of the year, there's always so much going on. Between activities that require your presence and expectations from family and friends, it's easy to put your needs on the back burner.

When you're busy, it's important to take moments for yourself. Stick with your regular routines as much as possible. This includes eating the foods that work for you, getting enough rest, keeping up with regular exercise, or simply taking a moment to recharge. And remember to take a few moments each day to check in with yourself. In other words, give yourself the gift of wellness.

With the closing of the calendar year, many use this time to take stock of accomplishments. But it's also a good opportunity to check in on your health and consider whether there are any appointments or preventive screenings you may be due for.

Make the most of your health benefits.
If you have an extended health benefits plan, the end of the year is a good time to review your coverage. Some benefits have annual limits or renewal dates, which may vary depending on your plan.

Check what's available to you and consider scheduling any recommended appointments or services you've been meaning to arrange.

Your health needs maintenance, too

Like a car needs an oil change or tune-up, your body requires regular preventive maintenance, or at least a check-in to see all is running properly. Depending on your age, health history, and individual needs, here are a few appointments and screenings to keep in mind.

Primary care checkup

Your healthcare provider can help you address health concerns, review medications and vaccinations, and discuss recommended health screenings. Not everyone needs an annual checkup, so talk to your provider about what's right for you.[1]

Dental exam and cleaning

Regular dental visits help keep your teeth and gums healthy and can detect problems early. While many people visit every six months, your dentist can recommend a schedule based on your needs.[2]

Eye exam

Adults should get regular eye exams and disease screenings, even if you don't have vision problems. In Canada, adults aged 20 to 64 should generally have an eye exam every two years. Adults aged 65 and older should have one every year. Some people may need exams more often.[3]

Breast and cervical cancer screening

Screening tests can help find some cancers early, even before symptoms appear. The tests you need depend on your age, health history, and other factors. Ask your healthcare provider which tests are right for you.[4]

Skin exam

Keep an eye on your skin for new or changing moles, spots, or other unusual changes. If you notice anything concerning, speak with your healthcare provider. People at higher risk of skin cancer may benefit from regular skin exams.[5]

As the year comes to a close, remember that taking care of yourself can look different for everyone. Whether it's making an appointment, finding time to rest, or checking in with yourself, small steps can help support your wellbeing.

[1]https://www.cdc.gov/chronic-disease/prevention/preventive-care.html
[2]https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11169959/
[3]https://opto.ca/geteyewise
[4]https://cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/find-cancer-early/get-screened-for-cervical-cancer/when-should-i-be-screened-for-cervical-cancer
[5]https://cancer.ca/en/treatments/tests-and-procedures/skin-exam

Holiday meals: alternative side dishes for food sensitivities



Holiday meals are a time to come together, share favourite dishes, and enjoy good company. These days, it seems like everyone has limits on what they can or can't eat. When guests have food allergies, intolerances, or dietary preferences, a little thoughtful planning can help everyone feel included.

Whether you're preparing gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian, vegan, or nut-free options, there are plenty of delicious ways to accommodate different needs. Here are a few tips to help you create a holiday meal everyone can enjoy.

More than 3 million Canadians report having at least one food allergy.[1]

Plan with your guests

Ask guests about their dietary needs ahead of time and what would help them feel comfortable. A little communication can make planning easier and help everyone feel included.

Read labels

In Canada, priority food allergens and gluten sources must be identified on prepackaged food labels. Check ingredient lists, "Contains" statements, and any "May contain" warnings each time you prepare a dish.[2]

Keep ingredients simple

There's a world of options with fruits, vegetables, beans, rice, potatoes, unprocessed lean meats (if not vegan), and nuts and seeds (if not allergic or sensitive).

Prevent cross-contact

When preparing food for someone with an allergy, use clean cookware, utensils, and preparation surfaces. Keep dishes separate, and prepare allergy-safe options first to help reduce the risk of cross-contact.[3]

Here are a few holiday favourites, reimagined for your food-sensitive loved ones.

Creamy smashed potatoes



Makes: 8 servings | Prep: 10 min | Cook: 1 hour

Made without milk or butter, these golden roasted potatoes offer a delicious alternative to traditional mashed potatoes. Boiling them before roasting creates crispy edges and soft, creamy centres.

Ingredients

- 3 lbs baking potatoes, peeled and cut into 1½-2 inch pieces
- 2 Tbsp salt (for water boiling)
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1-2 tsp salt
- Minced thyme

Preparation

Bring salted water to a boil. Add the peeled potato chunks to the boiling water and lower to a simmer for 8 minutes. They will not be fully cooked. Drain the potatoes and return them to the pot. Put a lid on the pot and shake it to rough up the potatoes. Leave them to cool. When ready to roast, drizzle the olive oil in a baking sheet and put into an oven that's been preheated to 425°F. Keep the baking sheet there for 5-7 minutes or until it's smoking hot. Carefully remove the baking sheet from the oven and place the potato chunks into the hot oil. Toss them to coat in the oil. Lower the oven temperature to 350°F and roast the potatoes for 45-60 minutes, flipping them once or twice and smashing them with a spatula to make sure they brown evenly. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with salt and finely minced thyme.

Nutrition

Serving size: 6 oz

Calories: 231 | total fat: 14 g | saturated fat: 2 g | sodium: 258 mg | cholesterol: 0 mg
total carbs: 24 g | fibre: 3 g | sugars: 1 g | protein: 3 g | potassium: 583 mg



Crispy rice tahchin with caramelized onion, cranberry and rosemary

Makes: 6-8 servings | Prep: 10 min | Cook: 1 hour 40 min

Skip gluten-filled bread stuffing and try this Persian-inspired rice dish. By incorporating fall flavours, it's a delicious addition to any holiday table. This is the vegan version, but dairy could be substituted in.

Ingredients

- 2 cups Basmati rice
- Kosher salt
- 1 cup plain vegan yogurt
- 2 Tbsp vegan butter
- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 medium yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 1 cup dried cranberries or dried cherries
- 2 Tbsp rosemary, finely chopped

Preparation

Rinse your rice in cold water until the water runs clear. Bring 6 cups of water to boil. Season it generously with salt. Add rinsed rice to water and cook for 4-8 minutes, until the rice is tender, but still firm. Drain the rice in a colander and rinse with cool water. Mix the rice and the yogurt. Heat 2 Tbsp vegan butter and 2 Tbsp of oil in a large skillet. Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until they are deep golden brown, 12-15 minutes. Turn off the heat, add the cranberries, and give everything a stir. Reserve about ½ cup for garnishing. Stir the rosemary into the remaining onion mixture and set aside. Lightly coat a deep 10-inch glass pie dish with oil. Add ½ of the rice mixture and use the palms of your hands to gently pack and spread the rice. Layer the rosemary-onion-cranberry mixture, spreading it evenly. Add the remaining rice to the pie pan. Gently press down again so that the surface is flat. Cover the dish tightly with foil and bake at 400°F until rice on the bottom and around edges has formed a golden crust, 60-80 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes before uncovering. Place a large plate or platter on top. Grab the sides of pie plate and the platter with dry kitchen towels and flip it. The rice should come out onto the plate in one piece. Scatter the reserved cranberry-onion mixture over the top and serve.

Nutrition

Serving size: ¾ cup

Calories: 330 | total fat: 10 g | saturated fat: 4 g | sodium: 16 mg | cholesterol: 0 mg
total carbs: 58 g | fibre: 3 g | sugars: 18 g | protein: 4 g | potassium: 94 mg



Skillet green beans with caramelized onions and mushrooms

Makes: 6 servings | Prep: 30 min | Cook: 30 min

Give green beans a starring role with this simple, flavourful side dish. Caramelized onions, mushrooms, and a touch of maple syrup bring a savoury-sweet balance to the table.

Ingredients

- 1 sweet onion, thinly sliced
- ½ cup low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 Tbsp real maple syrup
- 1 lb green beans, trimmed
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ Tbsp chopped fresh thyme
- 8 oz fresh button mushrooms, halved or quartered

Preparation

In a large non-stick skillet, cook onions for 10-15 minutes, until they start to caramelize. Add broth 1-2 Tbsp at a time to keep onions from sticking. When golden, remove them from heat and add maple syrup. Set aside. Cook mushrooms for 3-4 minutes, again, adding broth to keep them from sticking. Add green beans, thyme, and the remaining broth and bring to a boil. Simmer covered for 6-8 minutes or until beans are crisp-tender. Stir in onions. Season with salt and pepper.

Nutrition

Serving size: 1¼ cups

Calories: 52 | total fat: 1 g | saturated fat: 0 g | sodium: 18 mg | cholesterol: 0 mg
total carbs: 12 g | fibre: 3 g | sugars: 7 g | protein: 2 g | potassium: 280 mg



Fresh cranberry relish

Makes: 4 servings | Prep: 5 min

This fresh relish is tart and refreshing. Eat with heavy holiday meals or put on a sandwich to lighten it up.

Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh cranberries
- Zest from ½ lime
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- ½ Tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ¼ tsp pink Himalayan salt

Preparation

Combine all ingredients in a food processor. Pulse until cranberries are evenly chopped.

Nutrition

Serving size: ½ cup

Calories: 47 | total fat: 0 g | saturated fat: 0 g | sodium: 148 mg | cholesterol: 0 mg
total carbs: 12 g | fibre: 2 g | sugars: 8 g | protein: 0 g | potassium: 40 mg

[1]https://www.allergiesalimentairescanada.ca/food-allergy-basics/food-allergies-101/food-allergy-faqs
[2]https://inspection.canada.ca/en/food-labels/labelling/consumers/food-allergies
[3]https://www.allergiesalimentairescanada.ca/living-with-allergies/day-to-day-management/avoiding-cross-contamination/

Webinar Spotlight

Thriving Through Menopause: A Holistic Approach

In October, our member webinar discussed how menopause is a natural transition, but its physical, emotional, and mental effects can be different for everyone. In recognition of Menopause Awareness Month, this informative webinar explored a holistic approach to managing menopause symptoms, supporting overall wellbeing, and practical strategies to help you navigate this stage of life with confidence

Key takeaways:

- Holistic strategies to support physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing throughout the menopause journey
- The role of lifestyle factors such as nutrition, sleep, and exercise in symptom management
- How Teladoc Health Canada's Menopause Care Program provides access to personalized, expert guidance

Download the Menopause Webinar Handout

Did you miss this webinar?

You can still watch this webinar and explore more expert-led talks anytime in our on-demand archive. Revisit the strategies, insights, and resources designed to help you live healthier and feel more supported.

Explore our on-demand archive.

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