

HealthMatters

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DOCTORS IN THE HOUSE

**Website helps
patients find
family doctors**



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PrimaryCare
Networks
CALGARY AND AREA

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.

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Paula Beauchamp, Keith Bradford, Terry Bullick, Anne Georg, Bart Goemans, Harder Lee Photography, Cory Leyte, Dr. Christine Luelo, Jimi Scherer, Erin Sutherland, Chrissie Worth, Neil Zeller.

We appreciate your feedback and article suggestions. Contact our editorial team at communications@mypcn.ca.

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Get your Prescription to Get Active

Program inspires, motivates active living

Active living is a pillar of healthy living. But simply knowing that is not always enough to get people up and moving. That's why the award-winning Prescription to Get Active program—a partnership between Calgary-area PCNs and municipal recreation facilities—gives people free passes to fitness centres.

The starting point

Lyndsay Waymouth received her Prescription to Get Active in January 2015. She has become an inspiration for friends and family. She invites them on hikes; they join her for Zumba classes. Her mother does deepwater workouts with her, and her boyfriend is now more active.

Waymouth wasn't always an advocate of exercise, but that changed about one year ago, when the licensed nurse practitioner had back surgery for a badly herniated disk.

"I wasn't feeling good about myself. I knew I needed to lose weight to deal with the back pain I was experiencing," she recalls. "I didn't feel like exercising because I was afraid I'd hurt myself."

A doctor's perspective

Waymouth went to Dr. Mark Sosnowski, a member of the Mosaic PCN, and as a firm believer in the program, he happily wrote her a Prescription to Get Active. "We need to make active living part of everyday living," he says.

Photography by Neil Zeller



Lyndsay Waymouth has become an inspiration to family and friends.



**"I feel better about myself.
It would never have happened without my Prescription to Get Active."**

Active living reduces the risk of colds, prevents dementia and aids in managing depression, cancer, arthritis, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Waymouth agrees. "My main goal is to strengthen my core and my body to help my back get better."

Facilities partner for healthier communities

Waymouth is one of more than 250 people who have filled their prescriptions this year at partner facilities in Calgary and area. In Airdrie, Genesis Place is one of those partners.

"This facility was built for people to become more active," facility manager Greg Lockert says. "The program is an opportunity for people who are not active to get into the facility, become more active and make healthy lifestyle changes." He adds that the program's values mesh well with the facility's focus to create a healthier community.

A rewarding journey

Waymouth says the first week of the program was difficult but she forced herself to keep at it. "Then I noticed that my back wasn't as stiff and that I could stand on my feet longer. I was feeling better and that kept me going."

We need to make active living part of everyday living

After going to a variety of classes at a nearby rec centre for several months, Waymouth has moved her activities outside for summer. During weekend camping trips, she finds campsites near water so she can paddle board and near trails so she can hike. Once camping season is over, she'll resume classes in the rec centre.

Being active is part of her life now. "I've met amazing people and my relationships are better because my mood is better," Waymouth says. She also has more energy and her back pain has eased.

Who qualifies?

Patients of PCN family doctors in the Calgary area who need to become more active and can exercise without supervision or medical restrictions.

— Anne Georg

FIND OUT MORE

Visit prescriptiontogetactive.com to learn more about the program and participating facilities.

Back-to-school lunches

It's back-to-school time and these ideas can make packing nutritious and delicious lunches easier for your family



Grade "A" lunch ideas

- Whole grain crackers + cheese + leftover chicken breast + grapes + carrot sticks + water
- Whole grain pita + hummus + canned salmon + bell pepper strips + milk
- Chili or bean soup + whole grain roll + tomatoes + chocolate milk
- Sliced turkey wrap with cheese + melon balls + yogurt + homemade cookie + water
- Whole grain pancakes + yogurt + sliced strawberries + hard-boiled egg + water
- Pasta salad with beans, corn and bell peppers + cheese cubes + mini oranges + water.



1) Talk about it

If children come home with uneaten food, ask them a few simple questions. Was the food the right temperature? Was it too hard to open or eat? What lunch would you like again?

2) Get all hands on deck

Children are more likely to eat food they have a hand in preparing, so brainstorm healthy lunch ideas with them and then shop for the food together. Making and packing lunches is something most school-aged children can help with or do on their own the night before.

3) Stock up

- **Freezer:** homemade muffins, leftover soups or stews in individual portions, whole grain pitas/tortillas
- **Fridge:** leftover meat for sandwiches, fresh fruits, cut-up vegetables, cheese, yogurt, hummus, salsa, hard-boiled eggs
- **Pantry:** canned tuna and salmon, whole grain bread/crackers, black or refried beans, avocado, nuts, seeds, fruit packed in water or juice
- **Supplies:** various sizes of reusable containers, plastic bags, insulated containers, frozen ice packs, water bottles, insulated lunch bags, napkins, cutlery.

4) Think three to four food groups

Pack three to four food groups from Canada's Food Guide to ensure your children are ready to concentrate, learn and play. Try making a chart with options from each food group and then mix-and-match!

— Erin Sutherland, registered dietitian

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TIPS FOR
KID-
APPROVED
LUNCHES

Recovering from a heart attack

Teams of health professionals help patients regain health

When you meet Calgarian Ray Morton, you are greeted by the strong, friendly handshake of a former professional hockey player, and the confident demeanour that comes from a long and successful media sales career.

But all his strength and confidence weren't enough to prevent a heart attack in June 2014. Morton had just completed his final business appointment of the day and felt unusually tired, sweaty and short of breath. During the drive home, he lost consciousness and woke up in an ambulance as paramedics were defibrillating his heart.

"The pain was tremendous," says Morton. "I was asking the paramedics to stop shocking my heart, because it hurt so much."

They kept going, and he was admitted to hospital.

After undergoing heart surgery to insert a stent, he was back home under the watchful care of his cardiologist, family physician Dr. Scott Forsyth and a health team at the Calgary West Central Primary Care Network.

PCNs across Alberta have health teams that work alongside doctors in their clinics. Helping with Morton's care was registered nurse Shawna Curry. Curry spent time with Morton carefully reviewing his diet. Because he has high blood pressure, changes were needed, especially around his sodium intake and eating habits.

BY THE NUMBERS

328:

Number of health professionals who make up the health teams in Calgary and area PCNs, including nurses, registered dietitians, pharmacists, kinesiologists and social workers, to name a few



After Ray Morton (second from left) had a heart attack, registered nurse Shawna Curry, (left), his wife Darleen and family doctor Scott Forsyth (right) worked with him to speed his recovery.

"We had a lengthy discussion around food quality, focusing on Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide," says Curry. "It is difficult to dramatically change your diet and part of the PCN's role is to help people make the change through understanding and by setting goals."

As part of his health team, Morton's wife Darleen helps him stay on track with his medication and healthy eating. Forsyth and Curry also give him information on managing coronary artery disease.

All this support has helped. Over the last few months, Morton has lost nearly 15 pounds and tracked his blood pressure for his followup appointments.

"The road to recovery can be a long one," says Forsyth. "Patients need support to cope with immediate changes in their lifestyle, whether dietary or activity-based—change can add additional stress. Many people have helped Ray back to his full potential . . . it took a team effort."

— Bart Goemans

Photo: Harder Lee Photography

DOCTORS IN THE HOUSE

A new website (calgaryareadocs.com) helps Calgary and area patients find a family doctor

Olena Badham's growing baby bump added a sense of urgency to her search for a family doctor.

But thanks to a new website that connects Calgary-area residents with doctors who are taking patients, the 27-year-old found one just in time—two months before her due date.

"I wanted a doctor really close to where I live so that when the baby is born I can get there quickly," says Badham, a first-time mom-to-be. She spent months searching for a regular family doctor and received care from a few different clinics before she was referred to the Find a Doctor service at calgaryareadocs.com.

"I had been looking for a while but I always seemed to have bad luck. When I found out about the website, I clicked on a few options and I saw one I liked. I made an appointment right away. I was surprised how easy it was," Badham says.

A 2014 Health Council of Canada report suggested about six per cent of Albertans—compared with the national average of seven per cent—don't have

a regular doctor or clinic where they go for care. Despite another 2014 study showing an all-time high number of Canadian doctors, anecdotes such as Badham's suggest access is still an issue.

Badham and her husband Scott are among the first patients to benefit from the Find a Doctor service, which launched in July 2015. Developed by seven local Primary Care Networks in partnership with Alberta Health Services, it is designed to make it quicker and easier for patients to find a family doctor. Through the user-friendly website, patients search an interactive map that shows which PCN doctors in Calgary and area are accepting patients. Users can search areas close to work, family or wherever is most convenient. Patients can call the clinic immediately and request an appointment. Currently, more than 250 family doctors listed on the website are accepting patients.

Patients can also complete an online form for a PCN to find them a family doctor — an updated and streamlined version of the Need a Doctor service that's been in existence since 2010. Both



Photograph by Neil Zeller

BY THE NUMBERS

250:

Approximate number
of Calgary-area PCN doctors
taking patients

1,197:

Number of PCN doctors
listed on calgaryareadocs.com

The Find a Doctor service is designed to make it quicker and easier to find a family doctor

options are also available by calling Health Link at 811. A province-wide online service is available at pcnpmo.ca.

After using the website, Badham booked an appointment with Dr. Alana Luft, based at the Foothills Primary Care Centre. Research shows that when people have a family doctor and visit them regularly, they are healthier as they age and live longer.

"It really makes a difference when I know my patients. Having that relationship adds a lot of value" says Luft, a member of Calgary Foothills PCN who began building a practice earlier this year with her colleague, Dr. Andrea Behie. "Not everyone needs an annual checkup in the traditional sense, but at any age there is benefit

Olena Badham and her husband Scott both found a family doctor using the Calgary and Area PCN Find a Doctor website.

from having routine screening and preventative care. When new issues come up, having a relationship with a family practitioner who is familiar with your history and social context makes diagnosis and treatment planning easier."

Growing up in Strathmore, Badham had the same family doctor throughout childhood and into her late teens. When she began searching for a new doctor as an adult, her September due date wasn't the only consideration.

"I was looking for someone to care for my children as they grow up," Badham says. "My doctor is young so she will be able to stay with us for some time. I was looking for something long term."

"You get to know each other and she will get to know how I parent and what kinds of things I want. I definitely lucked out."

— Keith Bradford

Health Teams

Find yours. **mypcn.ca**



Beverley, Registered Nurse

Farah, Pharmacist

YunYun, Dietitian

Luke, Physiotherapist