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HealthMatters

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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 on the programs, services and other health-care professionals available through your family doctor.

Over 1,300 family doctors in 346 clinics are members of PCNs in the Calgary area. They provide care for about 1.1 million patients.

What is a Primary Care Network?

A Primary Care Network connects you to services, programs and information that can help you better manage your health. PCNs can also include physicians, health teams, after-hours medical access, clinics and workshops.

PCN services and programs are developed in partnership with your family doctor to meet your everyday health needs.

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

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Bart Goemans, Chrissie Worth, Dr. Christine Luelo Anne Georg, Cory Leyte, Jimi Scherer (design), Keith Bradford, Paula Beauchamp, Terry Bullick, Neil Zeller.

Each issue of *Health Matters* magazine will contain stories, promotional information and resources about primary care. We appreciate your feedback and article suggestions: contact our editorial team at communications@mypcn.ca.

To find the PCN your doctor belongs to visit mypcn.ca

- › Bow Valley Primary Care Network
- › Calgary West Central Primary Care Network
- › Calgary Foothills Primary Care Network
- › Highland Primary Care Network
- › Mosaic Primary Care Network
- › Calgary Rural Primary Care Network
- › South Calgary Primary Care Network



Get happy: skills can teach you how

A workshop offered by Primary Care Networks in the Calgary area can help you learn skills to feel happier

Take a deep breath. Reflect on it. Do you feel happy? It's easy to think happiness—and the swirl of emotions that help it grow—are beyond your personal control.

Research, however, shows the way happy people behave links directly to the positive way they feel. Those behaviours are skills each of us can learn and use to feel happier and improve our health and well-being.

Finding happiness

Cochrane retiree Elaine Lewis, 65, recently travelled a path to greater happiness. Separated from her husband in 2014, she was feeling low when a counsellor suggested she attend Happiness Basics, a free seven-week workshop run by the Calgary Foothills Primary Care Network. Based on positive psychology, the workshop has been shown to improve vitality and energy and reduce pain.

"I was in a slump, going around and around in my head and needed something to lift my mood,"



Elaine Lewis of Cochrane recently travelled a path to greater happiness by taking the Happiness Basics workshop.

Photo: Neil Zeller Photography

Lewis says. As it turns out, the workshop gave her the keys to unlock her own happiness.

Learning happiness

“I learned so much, partly because this opportunity came at the best possible time: when I was feeling so sad,” Lewis says. “I learned it’s all up to me, this happiness thing. I can choose to feel how I want to feel.”

Working with about 15 others, she learned 13 skills that can be used daily to increase positive experiences in life. These include simple activities such as making dates with friends, writing in a journal to reflect on good times, sending thank-you letters and setting goals. All increase opportunities for being with others, finding meaning and recognizing achievements in life.

One skill—visualizing your best possible self—has raised the bar for Lewis. “It helps me feel more confident, open and good about myself,” she says, with a warm, engaging smile. She is also developing her curiosity, a known happiness

booster, getting more involved in the community and volunteering. “I’m putting myself out there and I truly feel I can move on with my life and do so successfully.”

Shifting health care

Brice Willis, a Happiness Basics leader and a Foothills PCN behavioural health consultant, believes the workshop is “a paradigm shift in health care.” It takes deliberate effort to develop new habits and overcome natural biases, but this course gives participants the tools to be more proactive. “The thing that has struck me the most about the workshop is how big a difference investing time in applying the course concepts can have on people’s lives,” he says.

A number of PCNs in the Calgary area offer Happiness Basics workshops. Participation is free and open to anyone 18 or older. For more information or to register, please contact a Calgary and area PCN.

Paula Beauchamp



Best medicine for life after hockey

Olympic hockey star on track with a 'supporting
cast' of health professionals

Photos Courtesy, Dave Holland/Canadian Sport Institute Calgary

Hayley Wickenheiser has spent the past two decades blazing a trail in the sport of hockey.

A five-time Olympic medallist who has been in the spotlight since she made her world championship debut for Canada at the age of 15, she has become the face of the women's game. Dominant on and influential off the ice, the Calgary resident made history in 2003 when she became the first woman to score a goal in a men's professional hockey league.

At 36, Wickenheiser is still chasing the same dreams she had as a young child growing up in Shaunavon, Sask. But while her hopes of representing Canada at a sixth and possibly final Olympics in 2018 are well known to Canadian hockey fans, Wickenheiser's lifelong goal to become a doctor is not.

"Since I was a kid, I've always wanted to play hockey and be in the medical field," says Wickenheiser, who is currently taking a master's degree in medical science at the University of Calgary. "It's similar to hockey—there's a team environment, lots of action and pressure and it's never the same twice."

Although she's currently recovering from foot surgery, Wickenheiser has stayed remarkably healthy throughout her long and distinguished hockey career. A veteran of 12 world championships, her longevity has been fuelled by a strong commitment to her personal health and fitness regimen. She works with a team of doctors, surgeons and other health professionals, which includes her family doctor.

"I've had a regular family doctor for the last five or six years," says Wickenheiser, who also represented Canada at the Summer Olympics in softball in 2000. "The main reasons I use my family doctor right now are prevention and the functional work I do. For general health checkups, having a family doctor makes you more inclined to follow up and get on top of your own regular health than if you don't feel connected to somebody."

Research shows people who regularly visit a family doctor are healthier and live longer. In Alberta, most family physicians are members of Primary Care Networks (PCNs). First established in 2003, PCNs improve access to family doctors and strengthen the professional health services offered at clinics.

The Calgary area has seven PCNs, with about 1,300 doctors caring for 1.1 million people. Each PCN designs programs and services to meet the unique health needs of the people they serve. PCN doctors often work

in partnership with teams of pharmacists, dietitians, nurses and mental health consultants. PCNs also offer after-hours care as well as access to clinics and workshops.

Wickenheiser, whose doctor is a member of the Calgary West Central PCN, likens the PCN model to the holistic approach that has been adopted by many of the world's best sports teams and federations.

"I think it's crucial to have a primary point of contact and then a supporting cast of other professionals or experts that you can reach out to if you need something," says Wickenheiser. "That's basically how we do everything in the sport or athlete world. In family medicine that just makes total sense. It eliminates duplication and ensures consistency and continuity and gives people better care."

Wickenheiser's foot injury is one of the most serious injuries she's had as an athlete.

"Since I was a kid, I've always wanted to play hockey and be in the medical field."

"I had a broken navicular so it's basically foot reconstruction. So far, so good," says Wickenheiser, who has played varsity hockey for the University of Calgary Dinos since 2010. "My goal is to be back next season."

Wickenheiser has learned to balance demanding training and competition schedules with her studies and family life. Although she's taking nothing for granted when it comes to pursuing a career in medicine, she's hoping some of the skills she picked up on the ice will help her fulfil her dream of becoming Dr. Wickenheiser.

"I've spent a bit of time shadowing [doctors]. It is a very interesting and appealing career," she says. "But first of all I would just like to go to medical school. I don't want to get too far ahead of myself."

"In sport you learn a lot about time management and preparation and discipline. I feel like I'm pretty prepared to take on any challenges."

Keith Bradford

Patient on path to success with PCN's support

Team creates a caring environment for change



Debbie Tinkness is healing with support from her Primary Care Network. Since October 2013, Tinkness has worked closely with the Highland PCN in Airdrie as she strives to overcome depression and obesity; and to recover from surgery on both of her knees because of painful demobilizing arthritis. It has been hard work for the 56-year-old—but she's equal to the task. And she is grateful to her PCN, in particular her family doctor, Dr. Luba Kazatchenko.

PCNs across Alberta feature health professionals working in doctors' clinics offering specialized services to patients, including help with chronic illnesses. Teams include doctors and other health-care providers, depending on patients' needs. Tinkness's team consists of a family doctor, registered nurse, kinesiologist, pharmacist, social worker and behavioural health consultant.

“The PCN made me realize that there was no quick fix,” says Tinkness. “I needed to make life changes over the long term.”

Tinkness describes her PCN team as personal and non-judgmental. She credits them for creating the caring environment that has helped her make lifestyle changes to lose substantial weight, improve her self-confidence and lift her depression.

Tinkness is grateful she doesn't have to continually repeat her evolving story, because the PCN staff all work in one clinic. Registered nurse Laura O'Hara says having the PCN under one roof offers more consistent and immediate care.

O'Hara works closely with Kazatchenko. She has ready access to Tinkness's charts and has scheduled and impromptu conversations with the doctor about medications and other decisions. They keep Tinkness's pharmacist in the loop in real time. O'Hara can discuss Tinkness's exercise progress with the kinesiologist and her nutrition and lifestyle goals with the behavioural health consultant. A social worker on site provides Tinkness quick access to community resources.

“We work together on preventive health care, catching issues as they arise through screening and regular checkups, and by educating and empowering our patients to take achievable steps to stay healthy,” O'Hara says. “In Debbie's case, we explore barriers that get in the way of achieving her goals and set her up for success by giving her strategies to tackle them.”

O'Hara says the team had “big success” with Tinkness. “She keeps progressing and feels proud of herself for achieving her goals. It's so awesome to see.” For Tinkness, the support is invaluable. “For someone who has never had a support system, the PCN has been a major boost,” she says. “I know they are with me every step of the way.”

Anne Georg

REAL FOOD ON A BUDGET

Wholesome, healthy or even organic foods can be affordable. You might be surprised by the food choices your grocery store offers. Registered dietitians YunYun Lee and Sarah O'Hara recommend these tips:



Fruits and vegetables

Shop seasonal. For example, pick up strawberries, raspberries and blueberries in the summer, when they're much cheaper than the rest of the year. If you can, buy these fruits when they're in season and freeze them.

For fresh vegetables, consider a community supported agriculture (CSA) program, where you buy from local farms. Choose between a half-share (more than enough for two people or an avid vegetarian/vegan) or a full share (enough for a family of four or more). CSA shares are also great for splitting with others; a half-share is about \$13/week.

Shares run from June to mid-September, depending on the harvest. Some farms also encourage visits to U-pick farms, which can be a great family outing. For more information, visit www.csaalberta.com/calgary.

Chrissie Worth



Organic, non-organic and nutrition

Organic and regular produce have almost the same nutritional content, but organic foods are produced without synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, growth hormones, antibiotics or genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

According to Dietitians of Canada, there is not enough scientific evidence to say that organic food is more nutritious than non-organic food or that there are any health benefits to eating organic.

Some people, however, choose the organic option for these fruits and vegetables because non-organic production may use a variety of fertilizers, pesticides and other additives.

- Apples
- Peaches
- Nectarines
- Strawberries
- Grapes
- Celery
- Spinach
- Bell peppers
- Cucumbers
- Cherry tomatoes
- Potatoes
- Kale



Have a } Need a } doctor?



Over 1,300 Calgary and area doctors are part of a network.

Learn about services and programs *available at no out-of-pocket cost to you* through the Primary Care Network.

-
- ✓ Health teams
 - ✓ After hours services
 - ✓ Lifestyle programs
-

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