

Health Care Needs: Choosing Wisely Canada



Quality
health care is
the right care
at the
right time
for the
best results.

Do you think you need an MRI for your knee or back pain?

Do you need that antibiotic for a skin infection? Tests and procedures are costly, and sometimes they're unnecessary or harmful. So how do we know which medical tests or treatments are truly appropriate?

To help us, the Canadian Medical Association and the University of Toronto launched the **Choosing Wisely Canada** national campaign. This initiative helps patients and providers talk about unnecessary procedures, tests and treatments.

The program has identified many tests and procedures that have low value to many patients. They include:

- Pap smears for women before age 21 or who have had a hysterectomy for non-cancer disease.
- Annual EKGs or any other cardiac screening for low-risk patients without symptoms.
- Bone density screening for osteoporosis in women and men before age 65 with no risk factors.
- Antibiotics for acute mild-to-moderate sinusitis unless symptoms last 7 or more days or worsen after initial improvement.
- Imaging for low-back pain within the first 6 weeks, unless red flags are present.

Discussing the services listed above with your provider will help save health care dollars while ensuring you get high-quality health care.

» Learn more at choosingwiselycanada.org.

How well do you work with your provider?

- I ask questions about my diagnoses until I understand the problem.
- I ask questions about prescribed tests and treatments until I understand them.
- I follow my treatment plan (e.g., taking medications and recording symptoms).
- I recognize that I'm the one in charge of my health care.

BEST bits

■ **On the road, as in life, we can become overwhelmed by distractions** — phone calls, messages, a chatty passenger, a snack we didn't have time to eat at home. Turn off mobile devices while driving and focus on the task at hand.

■ **When spring rolls around, nature lovers rejoice and pollen allergy sufferers bring out the tissues.** How can you lessen symptoms? Options including nasal steroids, oral antihistamines and nasal irrigation may help. You can also take non-medication measures, such as keeping house vents clean and avoiding the outdoors during high-pollen count days. Ask your health care provider about possible treatment options.



April is Daffodil Days: Cancer Awareness Month.

Being overweight or obese is a leading risk for developing cancer. It is linked to cancers of the colon and rectum, esophagus, kidney, pancreas, and breast (in women past menopause); it may also raise the risk for gallbladder, liver, cervix, ovary and certain prostate cancers. Having too much belly fat, regardless of body weight, also raises these risks. The connection between excess weight and belly fat are not fully understood; research is ongoing.

Get Up and Dance

There's an unmistakable joy that comes from dancing, whether you're technically trained or lacking in rhythm. It's the experience that can boost your mental and physical health.

Here's what you can gain from moving to the groove: ➔ Continued on page 4.

“It always seems **impossible** until it's **done**.” — Nelson Mandela





The link between moderate alcohol use and heart protection is complicated.

The concept that **moderate drinking*** helps lower heart disease risk presents 2 arguments:

- 1] Studies have been observational only and do not connect a cause and effect with alcohol use and heart health.
- 2] Light-to-moderate drinkers who also have heart-healthy habits may already have less cardiovascular risk. So, if you are thin, eat a healthful diet, don't smoke and have no family history of heart disease, is it your health habits or drinking alcohol that's protecting your heart?

For people with a moderate-to-high risk for heart disease or low HDL cholesterol, and no history of alcohol abuse, you might benefit from moderate drinking. But you can get similar benefits with regular aerobic exercise, watching your weight and eating well. If you don't drink, don't start.

*Limit alcohol to no more than 2 drinks a day most days and 10 per week (women), or 3 drinks a day most days and 15 per week (men) – with an extra drink allowed on special occasions. Every week, designate non-drinking days to avoid developing a habit (Centre for Mental Addiction and Health).

Drinks DEFINED

Each of these drinks contains about 14 grams of pure alcohol:



- 12-oz. regular beer
- 5 oz. of table wine
- 3 oz. of fortified wine
- 1.5 oz. of liquor (40% alcohol)

5 Awesome Work Habits



Creating better work habits usually means changing some old ones. In any changeable environment, doing things the same way can eventually reduce our productivity. Here are some tried and true habits to work on:

- 1 **Stay organized** to save time and energy. Are you spending hours every week looking for stuff when you could be doing something useful? **Good habits:** Tidy your work space, reduce distractions and create procedures that help you streamline and focus on your tasks.
- 2 **Plan and prioritize.** If you don't, the day may take you anywhere, even where you don't want to go. Planning directs your time and energy toward the most essential task. **Good habit:** Identify and schedule your work daily so you see how best to control it.
- 3 **Stay connected.** Effective communication is vital to productivity on all levels. But if you're spending hours every day in meetings and answering email, change

- your system. **Good habits:** Keep email and phone calls brief and explicit; limit meetings unless face-to-face contact may save time and mistakes.
- 4 **Monitor industry trends.** When time allows, study developments in your company and industry and learn ways to develop skills relevant to the business. **Good habit:** Follow social media accounts that deliver news and information related to your field.
 - 5 **Manage emotions.** Being able to work without feelings distracting you is a powerful skill to have. Practice separating work from personal issues so you can stay focused on the task at hand. **Good habit:** Reserve time to resolve private concerns.

Asperger's Syndrome

By Eric Endlich, PhD

Autism, once considered a very rare disorder, now affects at least 1 in 68 children. Since there is no cure, the percentage of adults who are autistic is probably just as high. Many people on the autistic spectrum have an intellectual disability.

Those who have average or above average IQs — almost half of the autistic population — are often referred to as having

Asperger's Syndrome (AS). More males than females seem to be affected, but it is also possible that AS is underdiagnosed in girls and women. Many professionals now place AS under the umbrella term **autism spectrum disorder (ASD).**

Some of the common features of AS are:

- » **COMMUNICATION** — discomfort with eye contact; difficulty understanding gestures, facial expression, tone of voice or humour.
- » **SOCIAL INTERACTION** — avoidance of people, lack of awareness of social norms (e.g., knowing when to take turns or how to dress appropriately for the situation).
- » **RESTRICTED FOCUS** — rigid routines, intense interest in 1 subject, sensitivity to certain stimuli (e.g., bright lights, loud sounds, food or clothing textures).

Learning more about AS, or obtaining a diagnosis from a professional, can help people with AS and their loved ones better understand what is going on. There are also support groups for people with AS as well as their partners.



National Autism Awareness Month



Social Jet Lag — and Your Sleep

On weekends, do you go to sleep late at night and wake up later than you do during your work week? Sleep experts say this ongoing sleep pattern may cause social jet lag — when you throw off your biological clock with a late-night lifestyle. Seems harmless enough — workers have been doing it for decades. But studies now link this habit to obesity, heart disease, fatigue and depression.

In a small study of 1,000 adults ages 22 to 60, participants recorded their general health as well as sleep duration and quality on weekdays and weekends. **Results:** With each hour that sleep shifted, participants reported that their general health and moods were poor or fair compared to excellent, and their risk of heart disease increased by about 11%.

The body's hormones and circadian rhythm may explain these effects — similar to traditional jet lag when traveling — but social jet lag could occur more consistently.

Help your body clock:

Get 7 to 9 hours of sleep every night and resist the urge to sleep in longer on the weekends.



TIP of the MONTH

Noodle Know-How

No matter which noodle you choose, make

sure you bring your water to a rolling boil before adding the pasta. Noodles that are added too soon will be soggy and improperly cooked. And be sure to stir the noodles so they don't stick and clump together, an error that no amount of sauce can mask.



Go on a Pasta ADVENTURE

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Once upon a time, noodles were made only from wheat flour. Now, there are more choices to suit a variety of nutritional needs. Try these:

» **Grain pasta:** Try options made from **quinoa, corn, buckwheat** and other gluten-free grains. **Note:** Sometimes noodles are made with a mixture of grains, and may contain wheat. If you can't eat wheat, read ingredient lists carefully.



» **Legume noodles:** These gluten-free and nutritionally dense noodles — made from **lentils, chickpeas, black beans** or a combination — have more protein than white and whole-grain pasta. They have more fibre than white pasta, but about the same amount of fibre as whole-grain pasta. They have a pleasant bean-like flavour and marry well with any rich sauce.



» **Rice noodles:** From vermicelli to fusilli, noodles made from **white or brown rice** are easy to find. These high-carb noodles have less fibre than wheat noodles, but are easier to digest (rice is lower on the allergen scale versus wheat). Their mild flavour suits soups and Asian noodle dishes.



» **Shirataki noodles:** These clear noodles are made from the root vegetable **konjac**. They are especially high in fibre with 6 grams and 25 calories in a 200-gram serving. They are bland and quite chewy.

» **Vegetables, too?** Oh, yes. Put any long vegetable (think **zucchini, sweet potato, carrot** and **cucumber**) through a kitchen tool called a **spiralizer**. They make a lovely base for salads, and hold pesto sauce quite well.



CHICKPEA PASTA WITH BASIL AND TOMATO

easy | RECIPE
From Personal Best®

- 1 package (227g) chickpea fusilli
- 2 cups grape tomatoes
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup chopped fresh basil
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- Pinch salt and pepper

Boil pasta according to package directions.

Do not overcook. **Drain.** In a large bowl, combine fusilli, tomatoes, olive oil, basil, parmesan cheese, salt and pepper.

Toss to coat and serve.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving:

300 calories | 15g protein | 12g total fat | 2g saturated fat | 7g mono fat
1g poly fat | 39g carbohydrate | 1g sugar | 6g fibre | 178mg sodium

Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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**Lambton
Public Health**

Help us make Lambton
County a safe and healthy
place for everybody.



SAFETY corner

S-A-F-E Spring Cleaning

It's time to open the windows, circulate the air and start your spring cleaning routine.

However, making your home fresh and clean doesn't come without its hazards. Stay **S-A-F-E**:

Substitute harsh cleaning supplies with gentler options such as baking soda and vinegar.

Always clear clutter from pathways, walkways and table tops.

Follow instructions on cleaning products. If it states to wear a mask and gloves, do so. Never mix chemicals.

Exercise caution when climbing ladders or moving furniture.



EXPERT advice

Q: Dandruff relief?

A: Dandruff is flakiness of the scalp, a condition that leaves telltale white flakes of dead skin on your hair and shoulders — embarrassing, but usually treatable.

Dandruff is often produced by the fungus *Malassezia*. While this fungus is common to most scalps, in some people it can irritate the scalp and cause excess skin cells to grow and flake off. Most at risk are males and those with oily hair.

Using a dandruff shampoo daily often helps. Several over-the-counter shampoos can reduce oiliness and skin cell buildup, especially those containing antifungal agents such as pyrithione zinc or selenium sulfide. Shampoos with coal tar or salicylic acid may help, too. More severe dandruff may respond to the antifungal ketoconazole shampoo. Carefully follow product directions. If your symptoms persist, confirm your diagnosis with your health care provider and ask about prescription options.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP



Dance offers something for everyone. Find one you like and have a ball.

Get Up and Dance → Continued from page 1.

» **Balance:** Studies show dances including jazz, ballroom and tango can improve balance and motor skills, even among the elderly. This is promising for those with motor-system disorders such as Parkinson's, which is marked by stiff limbs, tremors and impaired coordination. Parkinson's patients who engaged in dance for rhythmic stimulation saw progress in gait and upper extremity function, according to research.

» **Mind and mood:** Dance can reduce stress and release feel-good chemicals in the body. When compared to 11 other physical activities, only dance was linked to reduced dementia risk, based on a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Furthermore, dance may also benefit depression and anxiety.

» **Heart:** Burn calories and get your heart pumping with an upbeat dance. An interval waltz has shown to potentially improve heart and blood vessel function in those with stable chronic heart failure. Weight control can further help your heart: A person weighing 68 kilograms (150 pounds) can burn 240 calories per hour dancing, on average.