

## Winter Safety: Sledding and Snow Safety

The Alberta Health Services Provincial Injury Prevention Team (PIPT) supports a smart risk approach to preventing injuries. Risk is a part of life. While you can't make all risks go away, you can manage most of them. Taking smart risks means recognizing the risks of an activity and choosing to manage that risk to prevent injuries. You are not born knowing how to recognize risk and make safe decisions—you develop this as you get older and have more life experience.

Getting outside in the winter is a great way for families to be active. Your child needs to be safe while doing winter activities like sledding and playing in the snow. To help lower the risk of your child getting hurt, make sure:

- you supervise your child closely
- your child is always in a safe place
- you and your child know about any dangers
- your child does age-appropriate activities

### General Winter Safety Tips

#### Look First

Check the weather forecast so you know how to dress for the day. Choose play areas with warm shelters nearby.

#### Wear the Gear

Dress in layers. Have a windproof, waterproof outer layer. Wear:

- a hat to keep the ears covered. If under 3, your child's head is larger than the rest of the body and heat is lost quickly from the head.
- mittens instead of gloves
- warm, dry, waterproof boots that aren't too tight
- a neck warmer instead of scarf
- clothes without drawstrings

#### Get Trained

Snow forts can be fun, but building tunnels can be dangerous. Tunnels can collapse and suffocate a child.

Watch your child for wet clothes, feeling chilled, frostbite, and being tired. Teach your child about frostbite and hypothermia and how important it is to dress warmly.

### Sledding

#### Look First

Only sled when the temperature is above -19 °C. Think about the windchill factor.

Choose hills with a gentle slope and a long, clear run-off area. Sled on snowy hills. Stay away from icy surfaces. Make sure the hill has no jumps, bumps, holes, bare spots, and obstacles. Stay away from roads, rivers, railway tracks, and parking lots. **Don't** sled over ice-covered rivers, streams, or ponds. Only go sledding in the daylight on hills that are well-lit.



Your child must be supervised by a responsible adult. If your child is under 5, have a responsible adult on the sled with him or her.

### Wear the Gear

Wear a hockey or ski helmet. If you don't have one, wear a bike helmet. To find out more information about helmets, visit [www.parachutecanada.org](http://www.parachutecanada.org)

Check the sled to make sure it is in good shape. Use a sled with good brakes and steering. Plastic discs and inner tubes are not safe because they are hard to control.

### Get Trained

Always supervise your young child. **Don't** let your older child sled alone. Have an adult check the sledding area first to make sure it is safe.

Go down the hill sitting up or kneeling on the sled. **Don't** go head first. Make sure your child's arms and legs stay within the sled. Slide down the middle of the hill. Move quickly out of the way and walk up the side of the hill, away from others. If you are tired, stop and rest. If you are cold, go inside.

### **Reminder:**

Children learn through their environment. But at the same time they don't have the physical and thinking skills they need to sense danger or to recognize and avoid hazards. This is what makes them more likely to be injured.

Many environments are designed for adults, which is why they present hazards to children. It is important that parents and other adults know the risks and manage them for children. It is up to adults to make sure the environment is safe, make sure children are supervised, teach and enforce safety rules, and model safe behaviours.

Teens make decisions about many new kinds of risk. However, being able to assess the risks and what can happen develops as they get older. To prevent dangerous risk-taking and injuries, teens must learn how to recognize risk, manage risk, and make healthy choices. Research shows parents have more effect on their teens' risk-taking behaviour than anyone else, including their friends. An important part of parenting teens is helping them learn to recognize and manage risks and letting them practice this. Adults should model smart risk-taking for teens.

### **For more information:**

Winter Sport and Recreation Safety Overview [www.myhealth.alberta.ca](http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca)

Winter Safety [www.parachutecanada.org](http://www.parachutecanada.org)

To learn more winter health, contact your doctor or speak to a nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling: Alberta Health Link toll free at 1-866-408-LINK (5465). Mandarin Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1554, Cantonese Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1556

Source: [www.myhealth.alberta.ca](http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca)

## Having enough energy to stay active in cold weather

You may be worried about having enough energy to exercise. These tips can help. And remember this: Exercise can actually give you more energy. After they start to be more active, most people feel more energetic throughout the day.

### Eat a balanced diet

Unless you're exercising for an hour or more, you don't need to eat more calories or eat special foods for energy. A balanced diet will give most people the energy they need for physical activity. **Have a healthy snack** like an apple, a whole-wheat bagel, or a handful of baby carrots if you're running low on energy. Nutrition bars are convenient, but be sure to read the label. They can be high in calories.

### Drink plenty of fluids

Many people do not drink enough fluids to balance the loss from sweating from physical activity. To protect yourself from dehydration:

- **Drink plenty of water** before, during, and after you are active. This is very important when it's hot out and when you do intense exercise.
- **Use a sports drink**, such as Gatorade or Powerade, if you will be exercising for longer than 1 hour, and try to drink it at least every 15 to 20 minutes.
- **Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol.** They increase dehydration.
- **Don't take salt tablets.** Most people get plenty of salt in their diets. If you are worried about replacing minerals lost through sweating, use a sports drink.
- **If you get dizzy**, light-headed, or very tired, stop exercising.

### Make sure you're rested

If you feel weak and tired but aren't sick:

- **Try a short, brisk walk** or similar activity. You may find that walking for 5 to 10 minutes actually gives you more energy.
- **Switch back and forth between rest and exercise.** Gradually increasing your exercise may give you more energy.
- **Avoid medicines that can cause tiredness**, such as tranquilizers and cold and allergy medicines.
- **Improve your diet.** Eating a balanced diet may give you more energy. Don't skip meals, especially breakfast.
- **Stay away from alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine.** They can actually make you feel tired.
- **Cut back on watching TV.** Spend that time with friends, try new activities, or travel to break the cycle of tiredness.
- **Get a good night's sleep:**
  - ✓ Try to get rid of all sounds and lights in your bedroom.
  - ✓ Don't eat just before you go to bed.
  - ✓ Use your bed only for sleeping and sex. Do not read or watch TV in bed.
  - ✓ Get regular exercise during the day, but not within 3 or 4 hours of bedtime. Figure out what time of day works best for your sleep patterns. Outdoor exercise may help.

If you feel weak and tired because of a cold or the flu:

- ✓ **Get extra rest** while you are ill. Let your symptoms be your guide.
- ✓ If you have a cold, you may be able to go on with your usual routine and just get some extra sleep. If you have the flu, you may need to spend a few days in bed.
- ✓ **Return slowly** to your usual activities.
- ✓ **Drink plenty of fluids** so you don't get dehydrated.

There are plenty of ways to be active in fall and winter, even if the weather turns cold. You can stay in shape and have fun while you're at it. Here are some ideas:

### **Indoors**

- Go for walks at the mall with a friend. Local schools and churches may have indoor gyms where you can walk. You may want to buy a pedometer from a sporting goods store. You can use it to count your steps. This will help motivate you to walk more.
- Get some hand weights or stretch bands to use at home for resistance exercise. You can get fit while you watch your favourite TV show or listen to music. Try doing a little more each week. Use cans of food if you don't want to buy weights.
- Buy or rent an exercise DVD, or borrow one at the library. If you have an MP3 player, you can download audio routines from the Internet. This can be a fun way to stay in shape at home.
- Take the stairs and fit in walk breaks whenever you can. This will give you extra activity, even on a busy day.
- Do active housework like sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, doing laundry, or washing the windows. You can stay active while you keep your home looking good.
- Join a gym or health club. You can use machines like treadmills, stair-climbers, or exercise bikes. Try a fitness class or a new indoor activity, like dancing or water aerobics. Many cities have community centres that offer affordable fitness classes.
- Get involved in sports leagues in your community or at work. Many cities offer indoor sports like basketball, volleyball, indoor soccer, or swimming.

### **Outdoors**

- Rake leaves or do other yard work.
- Bundle up, and take the dog for a walk. This can help you make walks part of your daily routine.
- Shovel snow. This can be great winter exercise. But if you have heart problems or other health concerns, be sure to ask your doctor if shovelling snow is okay. Overdoing it can put dangerous strain on your body.
- Try a new winter activity like skating, cross-country skiing, or snowshoeing. When you do outdoor activities in less populated areas, be sure to plan ahead. Let people know where you will be, and take the right gear for the conditions.

### **Dress for cold weather**

If you plan to be active outdoors, wear clothes that fit well and keep you warm and dry. For protection, it's best to wear:

- A warm hat. If it's very cold, you also may want to wear covering for your face, such as a scarf.
- Layers of clothing to keep you warm. Wear waterproof outer layers to keep you dry.

- Clothing made of wool or polypropylene. These will keep you from losing body heat even if the fabric gets wet. Don't wear cotton.
- Wool socks and waterproof shoes. Socks and shoes should fit closely but not too tight.
- Mittens rather than gloves. This way, your fingers are together so you can roll them into a fist for warmth.

**Be safe**

Check with your doctor before you start a new activity if:

- You have heart problems or other health issues.
- You have not been active in a long time.

Be sure to stop and call your doctor if you have chest pain or feel dizzy during any physical activity. If you have breathing problems like asthma or COPD, ask your doctor before being active in cold weather. To stay safe, try to do your walking and other activities when it's light out. Use your lunch break, or do family activities when the kids get out of school. If it's dark out, walk with a partner. Be careful not to slip on wet or icy ground. You can buy "grippers" for your shoes to help keep you from slipping. Avoid outdoor activity in extreme cold, and take the wind chill into account.

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## Weakness and Fatigue

Weakness and fatigue are terms that are often used as if they mean the same thing. But in fact they describe two different sensations. It is important to know exactly what you mean when you say "I feel weak" or "I am fatigued" because it can help you and your doctor narrow down the possible causes of your symptoms.

- **Weakness** is a lack of physical or muscle strength and the feeling that extra effort is required to move your arms, legs, or other muscles. If muscle weakness is the result of pain, the person may be able to make muscles work, but it will hurt.
- **Fatigue** is a feeling of tiredness or exhaustion or a need to rest because of lack of energy or strength. Fatigue may result from overwork, poor sleep, worry, boredom, or lack of exercise. It is a symptom that may be caused by illness, medicine, or medical treatment such as chemotherapy. Anxiety or depression can also cause fatigue.

Both weakness and fatigue are symptoms, not diseases. Because these symptoms can be caused by many other health problems, the importance of weakness and fatigue can be determined only when other symptoms are evaluated.

### Weakness

General weakness often occurs after you have done too much activity at one time, such as by taking an extra-long hike. You may feel weak and tired, or your muscles may be sore. These sensations usually go away within a few days. In rare cases, generalized muscle weakness may be caused by another health problem, such as:

- A problem with the minerals (electrolytes) found naturally in the body, such as low levels of potassium or sodium.
- Infections, such as a urinary tract infection or a respiratory infection.
- Problems with the thyroid gland, which regulates the way the body uses energy.
  - A low thyroid level (hypothyroidism) can cause fatigue, weakness, lethargy, weight gain, depression, memory problems, constipation, dry skin, intolerance to cold, coarse and thinning hair, brittle nails, or a yellowish tint to the skin.
  - A high thyroid level (hyperthyroidism) can cause fatigue, weight loss, increased heart rate, intolerance to heat, sweating, irritability, anxiety, muscle weakness, and thyroid enlargement.
- Guillain-Barré syndrome, a rare nerve disorder that causes weakness in the legs, arms, and other muscles and that can progress to complete paralysis.
- Myasthenia gravis, a rare, chronic disorder that causes weakness and rapid muscle fatigue.

Muscle weakness that is slowly getting worse requires a visit to a doctor. Sudden muscle weakness and loss of function in one area of the body can indicate a serious problem within the brain (such as a stroke or transient ischemic attack) or spinal cord or with a specific nerve in the body.

## Fatigue

Fatigue is a feeling of tiredness, exhaustion, or lack of energy. You may feel mildly fatigued because of overwork, poor sleep, worry, boredom, or lack of exercise. Any illness, such as a cold or the flu, may cause fatigue, which usually goes away as the illness clears up. Most of the time, mild fatigue occurs with a health problem that will improve with home treatment and does not require a visit to a doctor.

A stressful emotional situation may also cause fatigue. This type of fatigue usually clears up when the stress is relieved. Many prescription and non-prescription medicines can cause weakness or fatigue. The use of alcohol, caffeine, or illegal drugs can cause fatigue.

A visit to a doctor usually is needed when fatigue occurs along with more serious symptoms, such as increased breathing problems, signs of a serious illness, abnormal bleeding, or unexplained weight loss or gain.

Fatigue that lasts longer than 2 weeks usually requires a visit to a doctor. This type of fatigue may be caused by a more serious health problem, such as:

- A decrease in the amount of oxygen-carrying substance (hemoglobin) found in red blood cells (anemia).
- Problems with the heart, such as coronary artery disease or heart failure, that limit the supply of oxygen-rich blood to the heart muscle or the rest of the body.
- Metabolic disorders, such as diabetes, in which sugar (glucose) remains in the blood rather than entering the body's cells to be used for energy.
- Problems with the thyroid gland, which regulates the way the body uses energy.
  - A low thyroid level (hypothyroidism) can cause fatigue, weakness, lethargy, weight gain, depression, memory problems, constipation, dry skin, intolerance to cold, coarse and thinning hair, brittle nails, or a yellowish tint to the skin.
  - A high thyroid level (hyperthyroidism) can cause fatigue, weight loss, increased heart rate, intolerance to heat, sweating, irritability, anxiety, muscle weakness, and thyroid enlargement.
- Kidney disease and liver disease, which cause fatigue when the concentration of certain chemicals in the blood builds up to toxic levels.

Chronic fatigue syndrome is an uncommon cause of severe, persistent fatigue. If fatigue occurs without an obvious cause, it is important to evaluate your mental health. Fatigue is a common symptom of mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression. Fatigue and depression may become so severe that you may consider suicide as a way to end your pain. If you think your fatigue may be caused by a mental health problem, see your doctor.

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## Bedbugs

### What are bedbugs?

Bedbugs are flat, wingless insects about 0.6 cm (0.25 in.) long. They range in colour from almost white to brown. They turn rusty red after feeding. Like mosquitoes, bedbugs feed on blood from animals or people. Bedbugs have that name because they like to hide in bedding and mattresses. Bedbugs usually hide during the day and are active at night when they feed. They can go for weeks without feeding. Bedbugs do not seem to spread disease to people. But itching from the bites can be so bad that some people will scratch enough to cause breaks in the skin that get infected easily. The bites can also cause an allergic reaction in some people.

### Where can you find bedbugs?

Bedbugs are found worldwide. They are most often found in hotels, motels, hostels, shelters, and apartment complexes where large numbers of people come and go. Because bedbugs hide in small crevices, they can come into your house on luggage, furniture, clothing, pillows, boxes, and other objects. The bugs can hide in beds, floors, furniture, wood, and paper trash during the day.

### How do you know if you have bedbugs?

The first sign of bedbugs may be red, itchy bites on the skin, usually on the arms or shoulders. Bedbugs tend to leave straight rows of bites, unlike some other insects that leave bites here and there. Look also for these other signs:

- The bugs themselves, especially along the seams of mattresses.
- Tiny bloodstains on sheets and mattresses.
- Dark spots of insect waste where bedbugs might crawl into hiding places on furniture, walls, and floors.
- A sweet odour from bedbugs' scent glands where bedbugs are found in large numbers.

### How can you treat bedbug bites?

Home treatment can help stop the itching and prevent an infection. You can:

- Wash the bites with soap to lower the chance of infection.
- Use calamine lotion or an anti-itch cream to stop the itching. You can also hold an oatmeal-soaked face cloth on the itchy area for 15 minutes. You can buy an oatmeal powder, such as Aveeno Colloidal Oatmeal, in drugstores. Or you can make your own oatmeal solution. Wrap 250 mL (1 cup) of oatmeal in a cotton cloth, and boil it for a few minutes until it is soft.
- Use an ice pack to stop the swelling.
- See your doctor if you think the bites may be infected.

### How do you get rid of bedbugs?

Bedbugs can be hard to kill. Bugs can hide in cracks and crevices in the mattress, bed frame, and box spring. They can spread into cracks and crevices in the room and lay their eggs. For these reasons, it is best to call a professional insect control company for treatment choices. The usual treatments include:

- Heat. Equipment is used to heat rooms to kill the bugs and their eggs. The temperature needs to be around 50°C (122°F).
- Insecticides. Make sure that the product the company uses has been shown to be effective against the bugs you are trying to get rid of.
- Other cleaning steps such as vacuuming, laundering, and freezing things that might hide bugs. Washing and then drying items in a dryer on a hot setting is adequate to kill bedbugs in clothing or linens. Turn the dryer to the hottest setting that the fabric can handle.
- When the bugs are gone, be careful not to bring bedbugs back into your house.

### **How do travel accommodations become infested with bedbugs?**

Guests may bring bedbugs into the hotel or other accommodation on their belongings. There is little that the accommodation keeper can do to prevent this. A well run facility will have a bedbug protocol in place so that cleaning staff are on alert for signs of bedbugs.

### **How can I protect myself from bedbugs while travelling?**

- Know what bedbugs look like and where to look for them.
- Inspect your room for signs of bedbugs before you start to unpack.
- Don't put clothing or suitcases on the bed.

### **What should happen if I find bedbugs in my hotel room?**

- The hotel should offer you a new room. They may want to inspect your belongings to make sure bedbugs are not being spread to the new room.
- The guests clothing and any other items that may have been infested should be treated to kill any bedbugs. Placing clean clothing in a hot dryer for 30 minutes will kill all stages of bedbugs. The hotel should offer to do this or make some other arrangement for you.
- The hotel should have a procedure in place to keep the room out of service until it is bedbug free.

### **What else can I do to protect myself?**

In any establishment, even one that is clean and well run, it is possible for a few bedbugs to be in a room. You may not notice them, but one or two of them may try to take a ride to your house.

There are things you can do before you leave and when you get home to protect your home:

- Don't pack anything that you can't put in a hot dryer.
- When you are travelling, don't put bags and suitcases on the bed. Use the luggage rack as long as it looks clean or an uncarpeted floor to put your luggage on. Sometimes the bathroom floor works or the top of a dresser.
- When you get home, don't take your suitcase to your bedroom to unpack. Wash and dry everything you had with you. It is the heat of the hot dryer that kills all stages of bedbugs. Items that can't go in the dryer should be inspected carefully.
- If you can't do these things right away you need to isolate your suitcase from your house to stop any bedbugs that are hiding in your suitcase from finding a new place to hide. You can do this by storing items in a sealed plastic bag right away.
- If you live in an apartment you might find the bathtub the best place to unpack. One of the reasons for this is that bedbugs are easy to see on white surfaces and they don't like climbing on smooth surfaces. If you have to keep your suitcase in your bedroom closet keep it sealed in a large plastic bag.
- If you bring one or two bedbugs into your home it will probably be a month or more before you notice them. Watch for signs of bedbugs when doing regular cleaning. It is probably a good idea to inspect your bed for bedbugs every time you change your sheets just as part of your normal routine. If we all did this bedbugs would have a harder time getting established anywhere.

### **Remember**

While bedbugs are unpleasant, they are not known to carry disease so they won't make you sick.

If you have an allergic reaction to a possible bedbug bite, treat the symptoms and get medical advice if you think you need it. Take precautions when you get home just in case.

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## Normal Aging

As your body ages, you can expect gradual changes, at your body's own pace. How your body ages depends in part on your family (genetic) patterns of aging. But your lifestyle choices have a more powerful impact on how well your body ages. Fortunately, you can control your lifestyle choices. Some of the following changes may apply to you. Others may not. A healthy lifestyle may slow many of these normal effects of aging.

**Skin.** With age, the skin becomes less elastic and more lined and wrinkled. Fingernail growth also slows. The oil glands gradually produce less oil, making the skin drier than before. You can slow skin aging by using moisturizer and protecting the skin from the sun with sunscreen and sun-protective clothing, such as a hat or cap.

**Hair.** It's normal for hair to gradually thin on the scalp, pubic area, and armpits. As hair pigment cells decline in number, gray hair growth increases.

**Height.** By age 80, it's common to have lost as much as 5 cm (2 in.) in height. This is often related to normal changes in posture and compression of joints, spinal bones, and spinal discs.

**Hearing.** Over time, changes in the ear make high-frequency sounds harder to hear and changes in tone and speech less clear. These changes tend to speed up after age 55.

**Vision.** Most people in their 40s develop a need for reading glasses as the lenses in the eyes become less flexible. It's also normal for night vision and visual sharpness to decline. Also in the later years, glare increasingly interferes with clear vision. Vision changes can affect your ability to drive safely.

Here are some other warning signs that it's time to stop driving:

- You often have close calls with other drivers.
- You have trouble moving your foot between the gas and brake pedals, or you get confused between the two.
- Loved ones are worried about your driving.
- You feel scared or nervous when you drive.
- Other cars, bikes, or people seem to appear out of nowhere.
- You miss traffic signs and signals when you drive.

**Sleep.** Changes in sleep occur as you age. You will probably sleep less at night, and you may not sleep as deeply as you did when you were younger. And it's more likely that you'll wake up during the night and/or wake up earlier in the morning. Here are some things you can try:

- Get regular exercise and sunshine during the day.
- Keep the bedroom cool, quiet, and dark in the evening and night.
- Keep food and snacks out of the bed, if possible.
- Get out of bed if you are unable to sleep.
- Limit or reduce the need to wake up at night, such as for medicines.
- Follow the same evening and bedtime routines.
- If you care for an older adult who isn't sleeping well, you might encourage him or her to try the above tips for improving sleep.
- Doctors recommend taking sleep medicines only now and then or only for a short time. They are not the first choice for treating chronic insomnia. This advice about medicines applies to everyone, but especially to older adults. Anyone can become dependent on sleep medicines, and these medicines can affect how well older people think during and after long-term use.

**Bones.** Throughout adulthood, men and women gradually lose some of the mineral content in their bones. The bones get less dense and strong. You can slow natural bone loss and reduce your risk of osteoporosis by getting regular, weight-bearing exercise (such as walking), getting enough calcium and vitamin D, and avoiding lifestyle choices that weaken bones (such as smoking). Your doctor may also recommend a bone-protecting medicine.

**Metabolism and body composition.** Over time, the body typically needs less energy, and your metabolism slows. Hormone changes in the aging body result in a shift to more body fat and less muscle mass. The best approach to managing these changes is to take in fewer calories while keeping up or increasing your physical activity. Strength training is an especially good way to build or keep your muscle mass. When your muscle mass is reduced, your metabolism slows down. Building or keeping your muscle mass allows your metabolism to remain the same or increase.

**Brain and nervous system.** Starting in the third decade of life, the brain's weight, the size of its nerve network, and its blood flow decrease. But the brain adapts to these changes, growing new patterns of nerve endings. Memory changes are a normal part of the aging process—it's common to have less recall of recent memories and to be slower remembering names and details. You can help keep your brain sharp. Engage in regular social activity. Challenge yourself to learn and do new things. And be physically active, to increase blood and oxygen flow to the brain.

**Heart and blood circulation.** The heart naturally becomes less efficient as it ages, and your heart has to work a little harder during activity than it did in the past. This makes the heart muscle a little larger. You'll notice a gradual decline in your energy or endurance from one decade to the next.

**Lungs.** In inactive people, the lungs become less efficient over time, supplying the body with less oxygen. Regular physical activity plays a key role in keeping your lungs strong.

**Kidneys.** With advancing age, the kidneys decline in size and function. They don't clear wastes and some medicines from the blood as quickly and don't help the body handle dehydration as well as in the past. This makes it increasingly important that you minimize the toxins, alcohol, and unnecessary medicine that you take in, and that you drink plenty of water.

**Urinary incontinence.** Age-related changes in the urinary system, decreased mobility, and some medicine side effects can all lead to urinary incontinence. This does not have to be part of normal aging, so talk to your doctor if urinary incontinence is affecting you.

**Sexual function.** Men and women produce lower levels of hormones starting in their 50s. Men produce less sperm, and their sexual response time slows. Women stop ovulating and have a number of menopausal changes linked to lower estrogen production.

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## Healthy Aging: Getting the Nutrition You Need

As you get older, good nutrition plays an increasingly important role in how well you age. Eating a low-salt, low-fat diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and fibre can actually reduce your age-related risks of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, osteoporosis, and other chronic diseases.

### In general, what nutrition does your body need?

By eating a wide variety of foods, you can pretty easily get what your body needs. Your body will need the following nutrition:

- Protein, which is needed to maintain and rebuild muscles. You can get low-fat, quality protein from poultry, fish, eggs or egg substitutes, soy, and limited amounts of nuts and low-fat meat and dairy.
- Carbohydrate, which is the body's preferred source of energy. There are two main sources of dietary carbohydrates: **simple sugars**, such as sucrose (the refined white sugar added to sweets and desserts), fructose (the sugar contained in fruit), and lactose (milk sugar); and **complex carbohydrates**, which come from vegetables and grains. Unlike refined sugars, fruits contain vitamins and fibre, dairy products contain nutrients such as calcium and vitamin D, and complex carbohydrates contain vitamins, minerals, and fibre. Get most of your carbohydrate calories from vegetables, grains, and fruits. Limit drinks and foods with added sugar. And try to replace fat calories with complex carbohydrates in your diet.
- Fat, which also provides energy. To help keep your blood cholesterol levels low, get most of your limited fat intake from the polyunsaturated fats (as in liquid corn oil or soybean oil) and monounsaturated fats (in olive oil, avocados, and nuts). Limit saturated fats (beef, pork, veal, butter, shortening, and cheese). You can do this by eating these foods less often, having smaller servings, choosing less fatty cuts of meat, and by using stronger tasting cheeses so you can use just a little and still get the cheese flavour. Try to avoid the trans fats (hydrogenated fats) found in stick margarine and in many processed foods such as crackers and cookies. Trans fats are now shown on the nutrition facts labels found on most packaged foods.
- Water, to replace water lost through activity. Be sure to drink plenty of water each day.

### As you age, what are the changes in your nutritional needs?

- Your body's daily energy needs slowly decrease. So you need fewer calories a day than when you were younger. Your doctor or a registered dietitian can help you calculate your ideal calorie intake.
- Natural hormone changes make your body prone to depositing more body fat and less muscle. Eating a healthy, balanced diet and limiting your intake of saturated fat, along with

increased activity and muscle strengthening (muscle cells are the major calorie burners in your body), can help you stay at a healthy weight.

- Your bones lose mineral content more rapidly than before, especially if you are a post-menopausal woman, because having less estrogen increases bone loss. As a result, you need to have calcium and vitamin D in your diet to help prevent osteoporosis. Your doctor may recommend that you take a calcium and vitamin D supplement.
- Plaque buildup (atherosclerosis) can naturally occur on the inside of the arteries that supply blood to the heart and brain. You can help slow this plaque buildup by eating heart-healthy foods such as lean meats, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. A healthy diet can help lower cholesterol and high blood pressure and prevent heart disease and stroke.

### **What can you do to help manage underweight or poor nutrition?**

People who are underweight or frail have low reserves for bouncing back after an illness or injury. In the later years, this can lead to permanent ill health or disability. If you have trouble keeping your weight up, it's critical that you take special measures to build your weight, energy, and resilience. Every day, follow your doctor's recommendations and:

- Eat three meals plus three snacks, and never miss a meal.
- Choose higher-calorie foods from each food group, such as whole milk instead of skim milk. But try to keep your overall saturated fat intake low—high cholesterol can affect anyone.
- Eat the highest-calorie foods in a meal first.
- Use liquid supplements, such as Ensure or Boost, between meals.
- If you are having trouble getting the food you need because of transportation, financial, or health problems, ask your doctor or call 211 about local meal programs. Most communities have Meals on Wheels programs that can deliver food to your door. And there are meals at churches and community centres that can nourish your needs for both food and social time.

### **Where can you get more information about healthy eating?**

For more information about healthy eating, visit [www.myhealth.alberta.ca](http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca) or talk to your doctor or speak to a nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling: Alberta Health Link toll free at 1-866-408-LINK (5465). Mandarin Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1554, Cantonese Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1556

Source: [www.myhealth.alberta.ca](http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca)

## **Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B, and HIV and the Chinese community in Canada**

According to Statistics Canada in 2011, **1.5 million** people reported being of Chinese origin. Of those surveyed:

- **29%** were born in Canada
- **40%** live in Toronto, **29%** in Vancouver,
- **72%** speak Chinese as their first language. For the most part, this first language is Cantonese, except for those under the age of 15, who are more likely to speak Mandarin
- **60%** report no religious affiliation

## Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B, and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

- Hepatitis C is a major public health concern in certain immigrant ethnic communities in Canada.
- These communities have also been identified as being at higher risk for other viral infections that are spread in a similar way, such as hepatitis B and HIV.
- It's important to get tested for these three viruses because many people's home countries have high rates of infection.
- Even though these infections are preventable, they continue to spread. This is because people in the community often do not know how the viruses are spread and how to protect themselves and others. Also, they may not know how to get tested or seek treatment.
- In Canada, it is illegal for anyone to treat a person differently because they have an illness. So, people who think they are at risk should not be afraid to ask their doctor for a test.
- These viruses are treatable. With proper support and access to healthcare – including treatment – in Canada, many people can still live well with these illnesses.

## Statistics in the China and the Chinese population in Canada

In Canada, there is very little information about the infection rates of hepatitis C, hepatitis B, or HIV specifically in immigrant populations. However, high rates of infection worldwide make it important for people to get tested and know their status.

- It is estimated that 3% of people in China are infected with the **hepatitis C** virus (40 million people).
- China has the third-highest rate of chronic hepatitis C infection in the world.
- **Hepatitis B** affects 8 to 10% of China's adult population (up to 93 million people).
- One-third of all the people in the world chronically infected with hepatitis B live in China.
- Approximately 300,000 people die from hepatitis B-related diseases annually in China.
- There are almost one million people living with **HIV** in China.
- Although the overall prevalence of HIV in China is low, even relatively minor increases in HIV infection rates in a country of more than one billion people signify that large numbers of people have become newly infected.
- In 2011, there were 48,000 new infections. Most of them were sexually transmitted.
- About 7% of people infected are male.

## Some Facts about Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B, and HIV

### What is Hepatitis C?

- Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus.
- Approximately 25% of people clear the virus after initial infection. However, in 75% of cases, it becomes a chronic (long-term) infection.
- Chronic hepatitis can lead to cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver and/or liver cancer.
- Treatment available in Canada can cure the infection.

### Who is at risk?

- The virus is spread through blood-to-blood contact with a person carrying the virus.
- Those most at risk are:
  - People born between 1945 and 1975 (age group with the highest risk for HCV);
  - People who have come into contact with the blood of another person through the use of unsterilized needles for medical or dental procedures, tattoos, or injection drug use.

### What do I do if I think I am at risk?

- Talk to a nurse or doctor. You will need blood tests to confirm whether you have the virus.
- If you have hepatitis C, it can be treated and cured. Talk to your doctor!

- There is currently no vaccine for hepatitis C, but it can be prevented.

## What is Hepatitis B?

- Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus.
- In 90% of adults, the hepatitis B virus can be cleared on its own. But, if contracted early in childhood, it becomes chronic in 90% of cases and treatment is necessary.
- Chronic hepatitis B can lead to cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver and/or liver cancer.

## Who is at risk?

- The virus is spread through contact with the blood, semen, or vaginal fluid of an infected person.
- Those most at risk are:
  - Children born to mothers with hepatitis B;
  - People who have come into contact with the blood of another person through the use of unsterilized needles for medical or dental procedures, tattoos, or injection drug use;
  - People who have had unprotected sexual intercourse with a person who may be infected.

## What do I do if I think I am at risk?

- Talk to a nurse or doctor. You will need a blood test to confirm whether you have the virus.
- Treatment for chronic hepatitis B is available; it controls the virus and limits its ability to replicate. However, there is no complete cure.
- Hepatitis B is preventable with safe and effective vaccines. Talk to your doctor about getting vaccinated!

## What is HIV?

- HIV is a virus that affects the immune system and weakens an individual's ability to fight against infections. Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is the most advanced stage.

## Who is at risk?

- HIV is spread through contact with the blood, semen, vaginal fluid, or breast milk of an infected person.
- Those most at risk are:
  - People who have come into contact with the blood of another person through the use of unsterilized needles for medical or dental procedures, tattoos, or injection drug use;
  - People who have had unprotected sexual intercourse with a person who may be infected;
  - Children born to mothers with HIV.

## What do I do if I think I am at risk?

- Talk to a nurse or doctor. You will need a blood test to confirm whether you have the virus.
- There is no cure for HIV, but there is treatment that can effectively control the virus.
- Without treatment, the individual can develop severe illnesses like tuberculosis and cancer.
- There is currently no vaccine for HIV but it can be easily prevented. Talk to your doctor!

**Getting tested is the only way to know your status. There are effective treatments, and they work best when started early.**

Source : Developed by the Canadian Ethnocultural Council in partnership with the Canadian Liver Foundation, and funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada

## Where can I get more information?



For more information, visit [www.myhealth.alberta.ca](http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca) or [www.liver.ca](http://www.liver.ca) or talk to your doctor or speak to a nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling: Health Link Alberta toll free at 1-866-408-LINK (5465).

## **Safe Medication Care Starts With You!**

You know the best what medications you take and how you take them.

If you take medications, you play a role in your healthcare when it comes to medication safety. Keep an up-to-date list of all the medications you take and carry it with you. Medication, or medicine, doesn't just mean the prescriptions you take. Your medication list speaks for you in case you can't, or if you don't always remember all the medications you take.

Sharing your updated list every time you see your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider helps them give you the best care possible. It could even prevent a dangerous medication situation.

### **Doesn't my doctor know what I'm taking?**

That's a good question. The problem is that you may have seen more than one healthcare provider, gone to more than one pharmacy to have a prescription filled, or may not be taking the medicine the way it was prescribed.

Your healthcare team also works to keep a correct and up-to-date list and tries to make sure other people caring for you also know. But, if we don't know everything that you take, something could be missed — like a medication that is very important to your health or one medication not working well with another.

### **Do you just need to know what prescriptions I take?"**

Medications are more than just those that a doctor prescribes. They include a long list of the ones that you buy "over the counter", such as pain killers, cold medicines, laxatives, vitamins, minerals, homeopathic, natural, herbal remedies, and recreational drugs, patches, inhalers, eye/ear/nose drops, creams, lotions, ointments, and even samples that the doctor may give you.

### **What do I need to know and share about the medication I take?**

When you meet with your healthcare provider, or go to a healthcare centre, tell them:

- the names of all the medication you take
- how you take the medication (for example, time of day, dose/amount, and how often)

### **How do I use the Medication List /MedList?**

This MedList can help you and your family keep track of everything you take to keep you healthy—your pills, vitamins, and herbs. Having all your medications listed in one place helps your doctor, pharmacist, hospital, or other healthcare providers take better care of you. Start using the MedList today at [www.albertahealthservices.ca/medlist](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/medlist)

1. If you need help filling out the MedList, ask a family member, friend, or a healthcare provider to help you.
2. Before filling in the list, collect all the medications you take, including patches, inhalers, eye/ear/nose drops, creams, ointments, and samples of medication. Include
3. anything you may take, such as: over-the-counter medication, vitamins, minerals, herbal products, or recreational drugs (for example, alcohol or marijuana).
4. Write down the following for each medication you take:
  - 1) The name (example: Tylenol®, also known as acetaminophen)
  - 2) The dose (example: 500 mg or 1000 IU)
  - 3) How much (example: 1 pill, 3 drops, or 2 puffs)
  - 4) How often and what time of day you take the medication (example: 1 pill a day, in the morning, or 1 time per week)
  - 5) Reason for taking the medication (example: arthritis)
  - 6) For any additional information, such as: who prescribed the medication (example: my family doctor).

Here's an example:

Name of medication	Dose	How much	How often and when					Why I take it	Additional Information
			Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Bedtime	As Needed		
Example: atorvastatin	20 mg	1 pill			√			To lower cholesterol	Prescribed by Dr. Goodheart

5. Keep this list with you at all times. Keep it in your wallet or purse so it is available when you need it.
6. Take this list and share it when you visit the doctor, pharmacist, have a medical appointment or test, or have to go to the hospital.
7. Whenever you stop taking something, start taking something new, have a change in the strength or how much you take, be sure to update your MedList, including the date you make the changes.
8. Contact your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions regarding the medications you are taking.

### How do I get health advice and information?

If you require health advice or information, contact your doctor or speak to a nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling: Alberta Health Link toll free at 1-866-408-LINK (5465). Mandarin Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1554, Cantonese Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1556.

Source: [www.myhealth.alberta.ca](http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca)

Author: MedRec Working Group, Alberta Health Services, last revised: November 14, 2013

## Patient Safety Expectations, Patient Complaints & Feedback

### Expectations and Responsibilities of Our Health Care Workforce, Patients & Families

Alberta Health Services AHS is committed to providing a respectful environment, where everyone is committed to safe, and quality care. We believe in working together and living our values. We honour our rights and responsibilities.

<b>If you work or volunteer at AHS, you have the responsibility of...</b>	<b>Everyone has the RIGHT to:</b>	<b>If you are a patient or family member, you have the responsibility of...</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treating others with respect and dignity</li> <li>• Being respectful and understanding with others</li> <li>• Being prepared to hear, listen and understand others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Be treated with respect</b></p> <p><b>Be listened to and heard</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treating others with respect and dignity</li> <li>• Considering that other patients may also need help</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a calm tone of voice and non-threatening body language</li> <li>• Reporting unsafe or potentially unsafe conditions</li> <li>• Educating patients and families about their role in safety</li> </ul>	<p><b>A safe physical, emotional, and psychological environment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a calm voice and non-threatening body language</li> <li>• Reporting unsafe or potentially unsafe conditions</li> <li>• Understanding your role in your safety and how you contribute to ensuring a safe environment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing information in simple language, and including patients and families in the development and management of the care plan</li> <li>• Communicating with your team (which includes the patient and family members) by providing feedback and expressing concerns</li> <li>• Knowing and respecting each health care team member's role and scope of practice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Be part of a health care team (patients, families and health care workforce)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding your health care needs</li> <li>• Letting your health care team know when you don't understand, asking questions and expressing concerns</li> <li>• Understanding your role in your care plan to the best of your ability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing information relevant to patient care</li> <li>• Giving timely responses to questions and concerns</li> <li>• Maintaining confidentiality</li> </ul>	<p><b>Information to provide or receive care</b></p> <p><b>Confidentiality</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing relevant information to your health care team</li> <li>• Maintaining the confidentiality of other patients' health information</li> </ul>

**Important:**

Your experience of care holds important information that helps AHS to continuously improve. We want to hear from you. If you have compliments for staff, physicians or volunteers, or suggestions on how we can improve health services,

here are three options for you to do so:

1. You can **talk to your local health care provider** directly. Because your care team knows you best, discussing your questions or complaints with them may resolve any issues right away. You can also ask the manager or supervisor for help.
  2. Contact the Patient Relations Department by phone 1-855-550-2555, fax 1-877-871-4340 or mail: Patient Concerns Officer and Executive Director, Patient Relations, Mail Slot #57, 11111 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L4
  3. You can complete an online patient feedback form at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/273.asp>
- Alberta Health Services is committed to working with you to resolve complaints as soon as possible.

**What can you expect when you share feedback?**

- We will listen and respond with privacy and respect
- We will gather information and investigate if you have a complaint
- A response will be provided
- At the conclusion of the review further options will be provided to you

There is no time limit to share your feedback. However, it is best to bring any complaints forward quickly so they can be resolved.

**Will things become worse for you if you raise a complaint?**

No. AHS is committed to addressing all complaints in a fair and objective manner. Alberta legislation is in place to uphold a patient's right to express their complaints with health services.

**Alberta Ombudsman**

As part of the patient concern process, the complainant is also informed of their right to contact the Alberta Ombudsman to request an external review should they feel the process used to review their complaint was not fair. You may contact the Alberta Ombudsman's Office by phone: 780-427-2756 or 403-297-6185 or visit [www.ombudsman.ab.ca](http://www.ombudsman.ab.ca) for more information.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

AHS protects the privacy of individuals receiving health services in accordance with the Health Information Act. To properly review and resolve complaints, we work with the patient, or an authorized representative (usually a close family member), to gather and share information about the services received.

**Health Advice and Information**

If you require health advice or information, contact your doctor or speak to a nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling: Alberta Health Link toll free at 1-866-408-LINK (5465). Mandarin Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1554, Cantonese Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1556.

Source: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/patientfeedback.asp>