

## Health and Safety Matters

### Healthy Living

Healthy living means making positive choices that enhance your personal physical, mental and spiritual health. You make these choices when you:

- Eat nutritiously, choosing a variety of foods from all of the food groups as suggested by [Canada's Food Guide](#);
- Build a circle of social contacts to create a supportive environment of people who care for you and respect you;
- Stay physically active to keep your body strong, reduce stress, and improve your energy.
- Choose not to smoke; and
- Put an end to other negative lifestyle practices.

Healthy living choices are affected by where you live, work, learn and play. Keeping yourself informed about positive health practices within your environment is an important way to improve your overall health and sense of well-being.

Source: Health Canada ([www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca))



### Relaxation Techniques

If you are looking for some relatively easy techniques that you can do yourself to enjoy the many benefits of relaxation, try one of these:

- Autogenic relaxation
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Visualization
- Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Listening to music
- Exercise
- Meditation
- Hypnosis
- Massage

Explore these simple relaxation techniques to get you started on de-stressing your life and improving your health.

Source: MayoClinic.com  
(<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/relaxation-technique/SR00007>)



## Health and Safety Matters

### 7 tips for winter health

How to keep your energy up, your immune system strong and your body healthy all winter long.

In winter, the sun sets earlier, a chill fills the air, and we spend less time outside being active and more time inside eating starchy and sugary foods. Our hibernating instinct doesn't keep us healthy. Rather, our immune system takes a hit, allowing winter colds and flus to grab hold.



Luckily, there are certain things you can do to keep your energy up, your immune system strong and your body healthy all winter long.

#### 1. Drink healthy fluids

Sugary and caffeinated beverages can suppress immune-system function, not to mention cause weight gain and dehydration. Drinking six to eight glasses a day of water or herbal tea can keep your digestive system healthy, your weight down and your energy up. This is especially important over the winter months to help flush the system. Green and white teas are also wonderful antioxidant-rich options to keep you healthy throughout the season.

#### 2. Get some z's

Sleeping is one of the most effective ways to refuel after a stressful day. Make sure to sleep in a dark room to ensure your body properly secretes the hormone melatonin, which is believed to help repair the immune system.

#### 3. Avoid added sugars

In addition to causing weight gain, refined flours and sugars can suppress immune-system function. In other words, if there is a flu or cold circulating and you go a little crazy on the white sugar (cookies, pop, candy, etc.), you're creating the perfect environment for illness to strike. Turn to naturally occurring sugars found in fruit for some sweetness. If you crave chocolate, go for

dark chocolate (minimum 70 per cent cocoa), which contains plant phenols that have been shown to lower blood pressure. Cut up squares and store them in your freezer. Grab one or two when you need a sweet treat.

#### 4. Go for garlic

The sulfur-containing compounds in garlic help increase the potency of two important cells of the immune system, T-lymphocytes and macrophages, which in turn help battle colds. Eat garlic raw or cooked for an immune-system boost.

#### 5. Eat zinc-rich foods

Zinc helps prevent a weakened immune system. Get adequate amounts by eating oysters, liver, lean beef, pork, turkey, lamb, lentils, pumpkin and sesame seeds, garbanzo beans and yogurt.

#### 6. Favour fruits and veggies

A recent study of more than 35,000 Canadians conducted by the Canadian Community Health Survey showed that the majority of us eat fewer than five servings of fruits and vegetables a day -- Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends eating five to 10 servings per day. One serving is equal to:

- 1 medium-size fresh vegetable or fruit
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) fresh, frozen or canned vegetables or fruit
- 1 cup (250 mL) salad
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) juice

#### 7. Move it

Don't succumb to inactivity this winter -- hit the yoga studio, run on the treadmill or suit up and head outdoors. A brisk walk burns calories, gets the blood flowing and increases energy.

And don't forget to watch your stress levels over the winter -- when we don't get enough sun exposure, mood and energy tend to fluctuate. Journaling, meeting with friends, enjoying "me" time and meditating are all wonderful ways to keep yourself healthy and happy.

Source: Canadian Living

([http://www.canadianliving.com/health/mind\\_and\\_spirit/7\\_tips\\_for\\_winter\\_health\\_2.php](http://www.canadianliving.com/health/mind_and_spirit/7_tips_for_winter_health_2.php))

## Health and Safety Matters

### The Importance of Taking Your Breaks

Have no time to take your break? You may be doing yourself and the organization no good. Studies show that breaks can lead to higher energy levels, reduced stress, weight-loss, vital rest for your muscles in MSD prevention, increased productivity and a better work-life experience.

The last edition showcased an article on MSDs and the employee role in exercising appropriate health promotion activities. Taking appropriately allotted breaks is part of good health promotion and health and safety in the workplace. The following article is a testament to the benefits of taking breaks.

So next time you try to skip your break and eat your lunch at your desk, remember the importance of taking your breaks!

### Academic Corner: Integration of Short Bouts of Physical Activity Into Organizational Routine: A Systematic Review of the Literature

#### Context

Recommended daily physical activity accumulated in short intervals (e.g., <10 minutes) may be more feasible and appealing to the relatively sedentary populace than longer bouts. The purpose of this paper is to present a systematic review of the evidence for the effectiveness of short activity bouts incorporated into organizational routine as part of the regular “conduct of business.”

#### Evidence Acquisition

PubMed, MEDLINE, and Google Scholar databases were searched in August 2009 (updated search in February and July 2010) to identify relevant, peer-reviewed journal articles and abstracts on school-, worksite-, and faith-based interventions of short, structurally integrated physical activity breaks.

#### Evidence Synthesis



The majority of interventions implemented daily physical activity bouts of 10–15 minutes in length. Schools were the most common settings among the 40 published articles included in this review. The rigor of the studies varied by setting, with more than 75% of worksite versus 25% of school studies utilizing RCT designs. Studies focused on a broad range of outcomes, including academic/work performance indicators, mental health outcomes, and clinical disease risk indicators, in addition to physical activity level.

Physical activity was the most commonly assessed outcome in school-based studies, with more than half of studies assessing and observing improvements in physical activity outcomes following the intervention. About a quarter of worksite-based studies assessed physical activity, and the majority found a positive effect of the intervention on physical activity levels. About half of studies also observed improvements in other relevant outcomes such as academic and work performance indicators (e.g., academic achievement, cognitive performance, work productivity); psychosocial factors (e.g., stress, mood); and clinical disease risk indicators (e.g., blood pressure, BMI). The average study duration was more than 1 year, and several reported outcomes at 3–6 years.

#### Conclusions

Interventions integrating physical activity into organizational routine during everyday life have demonstrated modest but consistent benefits, particularly for physical activity, and these are promising avenues of investigation. The proportionately longer-term outcomes available in these studies compared with individual-level studies suggest that physical activity promotion strategies at the organizational level may be more sustainable.

Barr-Anderson, D. J., AuYoung, M., Whitt-Glover, M. C., Glenn, B. A. & Yancey, A. K. 'Integration of Short Bouts of Physical Activity Into Organizational Routine: A Systematic Review of the Literature' *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, vol 40, iss 1, pp. 76-93

Source: American Journal of Preventative Medicine ([http://www.ajpm-online.net/article/S0749-3797\(10\)00558-1/abstract](http://www.ajpm-online.net/article/S0749-3797(10)00558-1/abstract))

## Health and Safety Matters

### Active Living At Work

#### What is active living?

Active living is an approach to life that values and includes physical activity in everyday living. You can find ways to be active at work, school, home, and during leisure time.

Active living is not the same as an exercise program. Active living means making physical activity part of everyday life whether you are taking the stairs instead of the elevator, gardening, taking the kids or dog to the park, walking to the other building at your facility, or swimming laps in the pool.

#### How much activity is enough?

It is easier than you think to be "physically active", Health Canada's Guide to Physical Activity says all you need is anywhere from 30 minutes of vigorous to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week to experience significant health benefits. This goal can be achieved throughout the day by accumulating 10 minute periods of activity. Physical activity should be a mixture of endurance, flexibility and strength activities. This mixture helps to strengthen the heart and lungs, keep joints flexible and mobile, and maintain strong bones.

#### How do I find time to be active at work?

Many times people feel they don't have time to 'add' activity into their day. The workplace can help. A workplace can encourage employees to take on various activities at all levels regardless of age and ability. For most people, they just need help to get started. "Balance" needs to come from the individual wanting to start or continue with an activity program, and having encouragement from the workplace in order to meet these objectives. Whether you work in a small or large company, there are many areas and strategies that can increase participation in fitness and active living programs.



Some strategies are:

- Develop a physical fitness policy for the workplace.
- Ask staff what types of programs they are interested in.
- Have flexible working hours. Allowing people to arrive at work a little later, or leave a little earlier can help them add activity to their day.
- Job sharing, telecommuting, and on-site day care will also provide some flexibility to schedules.
- Allow individuals to take an extra half hour twice a week at lunch to walk, swim, attend fitness class, etc.
- Encourage people to walk to a co-worker's office or workstation rather than using the telephone or e-mail.
- Map a 10 minute walking route inside or outside your workplace. Encourage staff to take a mid-morning or afternoon "active" break.
- Start each workday or shift with a pre-shift stretch program.
- Provide bike racks (in secure location).
- Offer on-site fitness facilities, or negotiate discounts to various health clubs in the area.
- Offer a wide range of company programs, whether it is a walk / bike group or an organized exercise activity (can be just 10 minutes long).
- Provide resources and education - newsletters, bulletins, community guides, health fairs, guest speakers, etc.
- Help staff to find a support group or buddy system to encourage each other.

Simply put, a workplace that supports physical activity provides and enhances quality of life for employees, both inside and outside of the workplace. When employees are encouraged to be active, there can be benefits for both the employee and the company.



## Health and Safety Matters

### RECIPE

#### Winter comfort beef stew

Makes 8 servings

Prep time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 3 ½ hours



#### Ingredients

- 4 large carrots, coarsely chopped
- 3 stalks celery, sliced
- 3 large potatoes, coarsely chopped
- 1 small rutabaga (500 g/1 lb), peeled and chopped (also called waxed turnip)
- 250 g (8 oz) button mushrooms, quartered
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 beef eye of round roast (about 1 Kg/2 lb)
- 25 mL (2 tbsp) dried Italian seasoning
- 15 mL (1 tbsp) dried oregano leaves
- 10 mL (2 tsp) dried basil leaves
- 5 mL (1 tsp) dried tarragon leaves
- 2 mL (½ tsp) freshly ground black pepper
- 900 mL (1 box) reduced sodium beef broth
- 2 bay leaves
- 125 mL (½ cup) all-purpose flour
- 125 mL (½ cup) water

#### Directions

1. In a large roasting pan, combine carrots, celery, potatoes, rutabaga, mushrooms, onions and garlic; set aside.
2. Trim any visible fat from beef roast and cut into 2.5 cm (1-inch) pieces; add to vegetables.
3. Sprinkle Italian seasoning, oregano, basil, tarragon and pepper over beef and vegetable mixture and using hands, toss to distribute herbs evenly.
4. Pour stock over mixture and add bay leaves.
5. Cover pan with foil or lid and roast in 180°C (350°F) oven for 3 hours.
6. In small bowl, whisk flour and water together until smooth.
7. Uncover pan and, using spoon, push beef and vegetable mixture over to one side.
8. Whisk flour mixture into pan juices until combined. Stir into beef mixture to spread evenly.
9. Return to oven, uncovered for 30 minutes or until thickened and beef and vegetables are very tender.
10. Remove bay leaves before serving.

#### Nutritional information per serving

- Calories: 328
- Protein: 31 g
- Total fat: 4 g
- Saturated Fat: 2 g
- Cholesterol: 48 mg
- Carbohydrates: 43 g
- Fibre: 6 g
- Sodium: 370 mg
- Potassium: 1,201mg

*Source: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada*

## Health and Safety Matters



### You Asked:

**Q:** *Is vitamin water a healthier choice than plain water?*

**A:** *Vitamin water is fortified with various vitamins and other additives, and some include sweeteners that add calories. If you're eating a balanced diet or taking a multivitamin, you won't likely benefit from drinking vitamin water. If you're trying to lose weight, the calories in vitamin water will only work against you. As always, it's important to check the label for ingredients. Remember, fruits, vegetables and other whole foods are the best sources of vitamins and minerals. And it's tough to beat plain water as a healthy, no-calorie drink. If you don't care for plain water, try sparkling water or a squirt of lemon or cranberry juice in your water.*

Source: MayoClinic.com  
(<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/vitamin-water/AN01734>)



### FINAL WORDS

#### 4 Facts about Colds & Flu

**Most adults sniffle and sneeze through each year with one or more colds.** The average virus lasts 7 days. Get extra bed rest to speed recovery and help your body fight the germs. Try to sleep longer than normal, or stay in bed for a full day.

**Why risk flu when you can fight it with an annual vaccination?** Influenza viruses are less common than colds, but their symptoms are often more severe. Health Canada suggests flu shots for most everyone. Check with your health care provider.

**Best self-care Rx:** Target specific symptoms. Examples: a nasal spray or oral decongestant (pseudoephedrine) and dextromethorphan for coughs. Doctors advise against multisymptom remedies, which may have needless side effects. Antibiotics? They fight only bacterial infections such as strep throat.

**Common-sense defence:** Keep your distance from people and wash your hands when either you or they are sick. Cover your coughs and sneezes. Remember, people are most contagious in the early stages of a virus.



#### Newsletter Contact and Editor:

Prabhjot Minhas HBSc, MPH (c)  
pminhas@toronto.ca  
Supervisor, Operational Planning & Support