

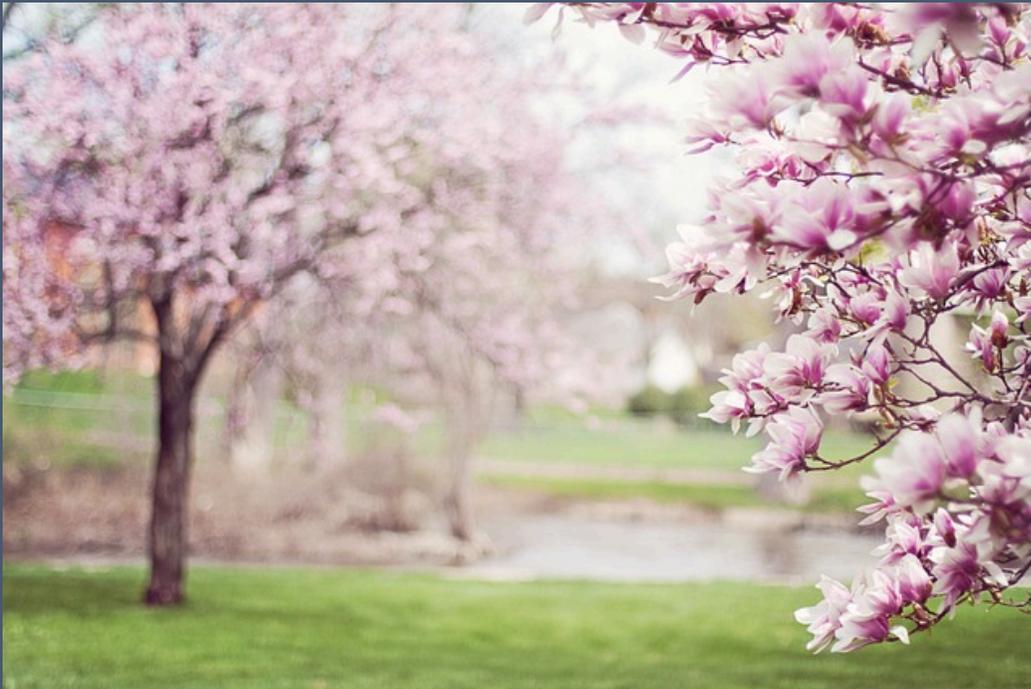


*Toronto Western*  
**Family Health Team**  
*Garrison Creek  
Bathurst*

# TW FHT Newsletter

March 2025

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## Clinic Updates & Reminders

### Uninsured Services

**What are "non-OHIP" covered services or "uninsured services"?**

Non-OHIP covered services are those services provided to patients that are not covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

The Ministry covers all insured medically necessary services provided by physicians, however, it does not pay for services that are not medically necessary.

Some examples of uninsured services are:

- Sick notes; cosmetic procedures; charges for missed appointments; completing forms for daycare, insurance, legal or employment purposes; or if your health card is not valid on the day of your appointment.

Our uninsured services are reviewed annually and are in line with the Ontario Medical Associations suggested fees.

To see a complete list of our uninsured services, [click here](#).

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## Updated Cervical Cancer Screening Guidelines

### What is Cervical Screening?

Cervical screening checks for changes that may lead to cervical cancer before you have any symptoms. It's important for anyone with a cervix and helps prevent cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is usually caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), and screening is covered by OHIP.

### What is HPV?

HPV stands for human papillomavirus and is a common virus that can be passed through sexual contact. It often goes away on its own, but some types can cause changes in cervical cells that may turn into cancer if not treated.

### What are the changes to cervical cancer screening?

As of March 3, 2025, the Ontario Cervical Screening Program now recommends cervical cancer screening with **HPV testing alone** instead of a Pap Test. HPV testing checks for infection with high-risk HPV types that can cause cervical cancer.

**The cervical screening test (HPV test), has now replaced the Pap test. HPV testing is the most effective method for detecting cervical cancer and more effective than a Pap test.**

The Ontario Cervical Cancer Screening Program recommends that starting at the age of 25, anyone with a cervix, who has been sexually active should have HPV testing and should **repeat this test every 5 years.**

You may need to get cervical screening ***every 3 years*** if you have a weakened immune system. Cervical screening is also recommended after getting treated for cell changes in the cervix. Based on the results of this treatment, your primary care provider will let you know how often you should get screened.

### **Where to get screened**

You can get screened at our clinic through your primary care provider. If your primary care provider is not available, you can be screened through our [Cervical Screening Clinic](#). HPV testing feels like a Pap test. A small, soft brush is used to take cells from your cervix for testing.

For more information about Cervical Cancer Screening, visit [our website](#) or [click here](#) to read the HPV testing Fact Sheet from Cancer Care Ontario.

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## **Health Promotion: Health Topics**

**Spring into Wellness:**

**Managing Your Mental Health as the Season Changes**



The transition from winter to spring can have a positive impact on mental health and allow us to feel more energized. However, it's a time to stay mindful of our mood and well-being. We may feel stressed as we adjust to new routine and environments, or we may feel pressured to match the season's energy and risk overexerting ourselves.

Here are some practical tips for maintaining good mental health this spring:

### **1. Embrace the Outdoors**

Take a mindful daily walk or sit outside for a few minutes. Exposure to natural light and nature helps regulate our circadian rhythm (our body's natural clock) and promotes feelings of well-being.

Try downloading the [Merlin app](#), which recognizes bird calls or [Picture This](#), which identifies plants, to connect with nature.

### **2. Check your Emotions**

Have you noticed that you spend a great deal of time circling or getting stuck on unhelpful thought patterns? [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy \(CBT\)](#) has tools to make sense of what is happening around us, and how our perceptions affect the way we feel.

### **3. Start an Exercise Routine**

Exercise can reduce stress, increase energy, and helps with anxiety and depression. Find something that you enjoy, whether it's biking, swimming or aerobics, and make it part of your spring routine. Many recreation centres in the city offer free or low cost drop-in options.

#### **4. Connect with Others**

Whether it's a weekend potluck, a virtual hangout, or a quick phone call, moments of connection with family, friends or new acquaintances can help to maintain positive mental health.

Apps like Meetup or Yubo can introduce us to new people, or you might find common ground with someone new at a special interest course or through a seniors program.

#### **5. Practice Gratitude**

Try keeping a gratitude journal to note moments you're thankful for each day, like a friendly chat at a coffee shop or the first flowers of spring. Focusing on positive moments, no matter how small, can help improve our mindset.

#### **6. Seek Help If You Need It**

Seeking support from a therapist or support group can greatly improve our mental health and self-awareness. Reaching out for help is a brave step toward healing and growth. The Family Health Team's Mental Health Resource List is a great place to start when seeking both private and OHIP-covered therapy, mindfulness programs, same day and crisis counselling resources, peer support services, family support services, and addictions support.

#### **7. Be patient with yourself.**

The shift from winter's stillness to spring's vibrancy can sometimes feel overwhelming. Remember that it's okay to transition at your own pace, and to focus on self-care, self-compassion, and rest.

Written by Social Worker Madeleine Adamson

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## Healthy Snacking for Adults



Snacking can be a part of balanced eating. Snacks offer a great chance to get nutrients you might miss in your daily meals. Eating small amounts of healthy foods throughout the day can help keep your energy levels up.

A healthy snack can also help manage your appetite and make you feel less hungry between meals. It can also improve your digestion. Choosing nutritious snacks can help you develop a healthy eating pattern and improve your overall wellbeing.

Try keeping these behaviours in mind to practice healthy snacking:

- A healthy snack includes foods from Canada's Food Guide, so try to include two food groups in your snack.
- The food groups are:
  1. Vegetables and fruits
  2. Whole grain foods

### 3. Protein foods

- Some examples of healthy snacks are:
  - An apple and a handful of nuts
  - Whole grain crackers and cheese or nut butter
  - Vegetables and hummus
- Try to limit highly processed snacks. Examples of snacks you should try to avoid are:
  - Sugary drinks
  - Chocolate and candies
  - Potato chips and pretzels
  - Ice cream and frozen desserts
  - Bakery products like muffins and cakes
  - Processed meats like sausages and deli meats
- Think about your snacks ahead of time and add them to your grocery list.
- Keep healthy snacks on hand to enjoy when hunger strikes.
- Practice mindful eating when you are snacking. Pay attention to the taste and your sense of hunger and fullness.
- Avoid snacking when you are reading, working, watching TV or playing on a computer. You are likely to eat more if you are distracted.
- Keep portions small. Try portioning out a single serving rather than eating from a box or bag.
- Snack when you are hungry, and not just because of habit, boredom, stress, or fatigue. Too much snacking may cause you to eat more than your body needs.

For more information and healthy snack ideas:

- <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/tips-for-healthy-eating/healthy-snacks/>
- <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/healthy-snacks-adults>
- <https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Recipes/Snacks.aspx>

Written by Dietitian Doreen Klar

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## Upcoming Health Education Workshops March and April

### Sleep Therapy (in-person)



Are you having trouble sleeping, such as falling or staying asleep? This workshop is for patients or caregivers that are interested in learning how to improve sleep without medications.

Join this in-person workshop at our Bathurst site. Both Garrison Creek and Bathurst site patients are welcome to join.

**\*\*Spaces are limited\*\***

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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## Nutrition for a Healthy Heart



Have you been diagnosed with high cholesterol or high blood pressure and want to learn about nutritional management? Join us for our virtual workshop to get heart healthy!

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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## Migraines: A Survival Guide



Are you an adult that suffers from migraines? Do you want to learn more about migraine headaches and the different treatment options available?

Join us for this virtual workshop to learn what lifestyle changes you can make and how you can improve your quality of life with migraines.

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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## Let's Talk About Menopause



This workshop has been co-designed with a patient partner, someone with lived experience of menopause. It will review the common signs and symptoms of menopause, and common real-world strategies for living well during this natural, healthy life transition.

Join this online workshop to learn more about menopause.

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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## Advance Care Planning



Have you thought about what is important to you when it relates to your health and personal care? What if you are not able to make decisions about your health? Who would be the best person to make these choices for you?

Join this in-person workshop at our Bathurst site. Both Garrison Creek and Bathurst patients are welcome.

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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