



September 2025

New Charge for Insurance Notes

[Addiction Medicine Clinic](#)

[Appointment Reminders](#)

[Flu Clinics](#)

External Partners

[Mothercraft EarlyON Child and Family Centres](#)

Health Promotion: Health Topics

[Understanding Arthritis: A Closer Look](#)

[Mindfulness](#)

Upcoming Health Education Workshops

September 2025

[Let's Talk About Menopause](#)

[Technology, Social Media and Mental Health](#)

[Gut Health 101](#)

[Migraines: A Survival Guide](#)

[Staying Safe Online: The Basics](#)

Health Education Workshop Survey

Clinic Updates & Reminders

New Charge for Insurance Notes



A **\$25 fee** is now in place for insurance notes requested for services like physiotherapy, massage, and chiropractic care if they are requested **outside of an appointment** with your primary care provider.

If you request an insurance note during your appointment, there will be no charge. However, if you call to request an insurance note separately, the \$25 fee will apply.

This decision was made to manage the administrative burden, as some insurance companies have stopped asking for these notes. If you have any additional questions, please ask your primary care provider.

[Go back to top](#)



The Toronto Western Family Health Team is proud to offer a specialty clinic in Addiction Medicine.

Addiction medicine is an area of medicine that focuses on the diagnosis, prevention, treatment and recovery from a wide variety of substance use disorders. Led by Dr. Gabilan Sivapatham and Dr. Alison Green, our clinic combines medical and psychosocial treatments to support recovery and healthy living.

[Learn more about what to expect from this clinic.](#)

How to Access the Addiction Medicine Clinic

To visit our clinic, you will need a referral from your primary care provider. This helps us focus on your specific needs and provide effective care. Please talk to your primary care provider about getting a referral.

[Go back to top](#)

Appointment Reminders



When you receive an appointment reminder, please check for additional reminders.

- There may be multiple visits scheduled.
- For example, you may be seeing the nurse first and then your family doctor.

[Go back to top](#)

Flu Clinics

Flu season is approaching!

We will be updating our website with Flu Clinic details as soon as they become available.

Please check our website regularly for the latest updates.

[Go back to top](#)

External Partners

Mothercraft EarlyON Child and Family Centres



Mothercraft

Shaping Children's Lives Through Learning

Mothercraft EarlyON and Family Centres provides child care and early years programs for children from **birth to age 6**, along with their caregivers.

They offer the following free services:

- Early learning and literacy programs for parents and children
- Programs to help parents and caregivers in all aspects of early child development
- Programs on pregnancy and parenting
- Links to other early years programs in the community

They also offer online workshops every **Wednesday from 2:00 to 3:00 pm**. View the [EarlyON Monthly Calendar](#).

[Mothercraft EarlyON Child & Family Centres](#)

[Go back to top](#)

Health Promotion: Health Topics

Understanding Arthritis: A Closer Look



September is Arthritis Awareness Month

Arthritis is more than just joint discomfort—it's a complex group of over 100 diseases that impact nearly 6 million Canadians. These conditions cause pain, swelling, and stiffness in the joints and other parts of the body. They can make it hard to move and do everyday tasks, and they can lower your quality of life.

Arthritis is a serious issue. 1 in 5 Canadians live with arthritis every day, and there is no cure.

Types of Arthritis

Arthritis is broadly categorized into 2 main types:

1. **Osteoarthritis (OA):**

- The most common form of arthritis.
- OA happens when the body cannot keep up with repairing damage in the joints. Overtime, this leads to breakdown of cartilage (the smooth tissue that cushions your joints).
- It often affects knees, hips, spine, and hands.
- Factors such as age, obesity, joint injuries and genetics can increase your chances of getting it.

2. **Inflammatory Arthritis (IA):**

- IA is caused by an autoimmune response where the body attacks its own tissues.
- It includes conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, and psoriatic arthritis.

[Learn about the different types of arthritis](#)

Signs and Symptoms

Common signs of arthritis include:

- Pain, swelling, and stiffness in one or more joints
- Morning stiffness around the affected joints
- Pain and stiffness that get worse with inactivity and improve with movement
- Reduced range of motion

If you or someone you know is experiencing these symptoms, it's important to consult a health care provider early. Early diagnosis and treatment can help manage symptoms and prevent joint damage.

[Try the arthritis interactive symptom tracker](#)

Treatment

Arthritis affects everyone differently, so treatment plans should be personalized to each person's needs with help from healthcare professionals like family doctors, rheumatologists, surgeons, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists.

Learn more from arthritis.ca about arthritis medications, treatment team members, surgery, and complementary and alternative therapies to help you make informed choices.

When you talk to your doctor or other members of your healthcare team, be honest about your expectations, concerns, and fears to ensure your treatment plan is effective for you.

Online Resources

- [Arthritis Society Canada](#)
- [Arthritis](#)

[Go back to top](#)

Mindfulness



Mindfulness is a powerful tool to support both your mental and physical well-being. Research shows that mindfulness can help with a wide range of health conditions. Anyone can practice mindfulness. These days, mindfulness is more accessible than ever before thanks to mindfulness resources like apps, workshops, and groups.

Benefits of Mindfulness

Adding mindfulness to your daily routine, even in small ways, can really make a positive difference. It can help with:

- Managing stress and chronic pain

- Reducing anxiety, depression, and substance use
- Improving focus and concentration
- Understanding yourself better
- Becoming more aware of your emotions and developing healthier responses
- Building self-worth and self-confidence
- Improving relationships with others
- Feeling overall well-being and life satisfaction

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is defined as *"the awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally"* (Jon Kabat Zinn).

Being aware of the present moment means focusing on what is happening right now, rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.

Paying attention on purpose means intentionally choosing what to focus on - like your breath, thoughts or feelings. You can focus on one single aspect of your experience (e.g., just the breath) or you can focus on many aspects of your experience as they arise (e.g., noticing thoughts, feelings, body sensations as they come and go).

A non-judgmental attitude means observing our thoughts, feelings, and sensations without labeling them as good or bad, right or wrong. Approaching our experiences with curiosity and noticing them without getting carried away by them. Accepting our feelings and experiences as they are, without trying to change them.

How do we practice mindfulness?

There are lots of ways to practice mindfulness, not just by meditating. You can also be mindful during everyday activities,

like walking, washing dishes, or eating.

Mindfulness can also be practiced more formally through guided practices or meditations. This type of practice involves following written or audio instructions that guide us to notice different aspects of our experience surrounding a specific object of focus. The object of focus in a guided meditation could be the sensations of the breath, a body scan, sounds, feelings, urges, or an activity like walking.

Let's Try a Practice Together!

Here's an example of a short, guided mindfulness practice called the 3 Minute Breathing Space. The goal of this meditation is to offer us an opportunity to drop out of autopilot and tune into our present moment experience, right here, right now.

You can follow along with the written instructions below or [watch this video to guide you.](#)

Step 1: Awareness - Stop what you are doing, close your eyes and turn your attention inward. Just notice and ask yourself what is here now? Check in with body, thoughts, and feelings.

Step 2: Gathering - Now narrow the lens of your awareness and focus on your breath. You don't need to change the breath. Just feel the sensations of breath as they change throughout the inhale and exhale. Do this for 1 minute or at least 4 breath cycles.

Step 3: Expanding - The last step is to widen the attention to take in the whole body breathing with a sense of spaciousness. Expand attention to the space and sounds around you as you transition into the rest of your day.



What was that like for you?

Remember, mindfulness is called a practice, because it takes time and repetition to build! It's not a one-time event but rather a skill that grows with regular effort, much like training a muscle at the gym. We invite you to keep practicing and experimenting mindfulness in your every day life. Try making time for short meditations to start, gradually building to longer meditations as you strengthen your mindfulness skills over time.

As you practice, you will learn more about yourself, discover what you need, and how to live your healthiest, most meaningful life.

Additional Resources:

If you are interested in learning more about mindfulness or deepening your existing mindfulness practice, here are some mindfulness resources offered at Toronto Western Family Health Team and in the community:

- [Mindfulness Training for Emotional Resilience Group at TW FHT](#)
- [List of Community Mindfulness Resources](#)

Written by Social Worker Kaitie Baek

[Go back to top](#)

Upcoming Health Education Workshops

Let's Talk About Menopause (Online)



This online 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.

Sign up for this workshop

[Go back to top](#)

Technology, Social Media and Mental Health
Online



MENTAL

HEALTH

Join this virtual workshop to learn and discuss the impact of technology use, especially social media and mobile devices, on mental health.

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

[Go back to top](#)

Gut Health 101: Nutrition Workshop for Digestive Health Online



Gut Health 101 is all about understanding and taking care of your digestive system!

Joining this workshop to discuss common digestive issues and learn tips for keeping your digestive system running smoothly.

Sign up for this workshop

[Go back to top](#)

Migraines: A Survival Guide (Online)



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

Join this virtual workshop to understand migraine symptoms and potential causes, and learn about lifestyle changes you can make.

Sign up for this workshop

[Go back to top](#)

Staying Safe Online: The Basics

Online



Discover the potential risks of your online activities and learn how to stay safe while connected. Join us for valuable tips on using the internet safely and protecting yourself online.

Sign up for this workshop

[Go back to top](#)

Health Education Workshop Survey

Tell Us Your Preferred Times



We are committed to providing workshops that best meet the needs and preferences of our patients and community. By filling out this survey, you help us understand your preferred times for attending our health education workshops.

Our online workshops are open to the public.

Take this survey now

[Go back to top](#)

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