Visit the Teladoc Medical Experts website for more information

As autumn settles in, it's a powerful time to take charge of your health and wellbeing. This October, explore ways to stay proactive—like keeping up your exercise momentum as the weather shifts, practicing deep breathing to support mental clarity, and making informed choices around cancer screening and prevention. Whether you're building healthy habits or simply tuning in to what your body needs, small actions this season can lead to meaningful, lasting impact.

Control the controllable: Cancer screenings and prevention

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death in Canada.[1] It would be hard to find a person or family that hasn't been affected by this disease.

While this fact may seem scary, it's not all bad news. Making certain lifestyle choices can help lower cancer risk.[3] These actions, along with regular screenings, could reduce your chances of being diagnosed with cancer. And if you are diagnosed, early detection could improve your chances of survival. The most common cancers (in descending order) are breast, prostate, lung, colorectal and skin cancers.[4] Interestingly, these, like many types of cancers, have risk factors that can be controlled.[3]

About 4 in 10 cancer cases can be prevented through early screening, healthy living and health policies.[2]

Awareness counts

Being aware of how you feel when you're healthy is important. Regular self-exams of skin, breasts and testicles allow you to understand what your "normal" baseline is. Listen to your body when things look or feel different. Noticing new aches, pains or feeling something being "not right" is easier when you're in tune with it. Participating in regular screenings is an incredible tool to use and may even reduce your risk or catch it early. Early detection can make all the difference in your prognosis and treatment plan. Talk with your provider about the screening options and timing that's best for you.

People of average risk should consider the following:[5]

Breast cancer

Screening imaging (mammography, ultrasound, MRI, etc.) is recommended every two years from 40 through 74 or more frequently if you have a family history of breast cancer.

Cervical cancer

Screenings should start by age 25 and should be done every three years. This should also include hrHPV (high-risk human papillomavirus) and should be done until the age of 70.

Colorectal cancer

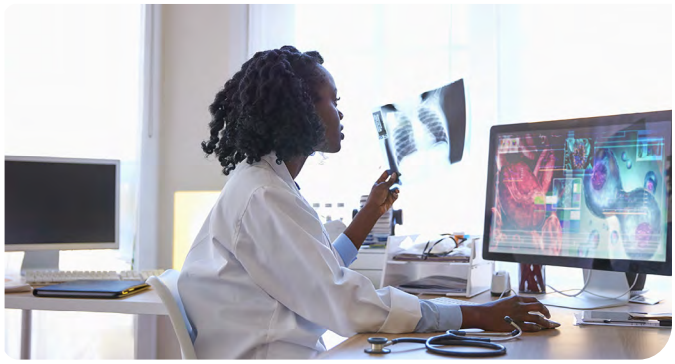
Based on individual risk factors, regular screening should start by the age of 50, either with a stool-based test or by a direct visualization approach (colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy, CT colonography) and continue until age 75. Your doctor will help you find the best fit.

Prostate cancer

By the age of 50 (or 45 if you are considered high risk), you should, talk to your healthcare provider about prostate cancer screening options and individual risk factors.

Lung cancer

A low-dose CT (LDCT) scan for people ages 55 to 74 is recommended annually for those who currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years.



Preventive things you can do

Don't smoke or use tobacco

Stay physically active

Maintain a healthy weight

Avoid too much sun

Eat healthy foods

Some foods play a role in preventing cancer. Adopting a healthy eating pattern can reduce overall risk of some cancers by 10%-20%.[7]

The best options to help prevent cancer are:

- Prioritizing fibre-rich foods like whole
- grains, beans and lentils
- Consuming fresh fruits and veggies
- Limiting processed foods
- Avoiding sweetened beverages

This is a lot of information to incorporate into your health planning. However, eating simple, clean meals made with whole foods is one step in the right direction.

Spinach and mushroom risotto

Makes: 4 servings | Prep: 10 mins | Total: 35 mins

This healthy recipe combines fresh vegetables and herbs.[8] Made without butter or cream, it still tastes rich but has very little fat. For a decadent touch, drizzle individual portions with truffle oil or extra-virgin olive oil before serving.

Ingredients

- 4 cups reduced-sodium, low-fat chicken broth (or vegetable broth)
- 2 Tbsps extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- ½ onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 cup arborio or carnaroli "risotto" rice, rinsed and drained
- ½ cup dry white wine (such as sauvignon blanc or pinot grigio)
- 340 g assorted mushrooms (such as shiitake, cremini and button), sliced
- 3 cups fresh baby spinach, coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp fresh thyme leaves
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Truffle oil, optional

Preparation

In a saucepan, bring the broth to a simmer. Cover and keep warm over low heat.
In a large stockpot over medium heat, add 1 Tbsp of the olive oil. Sauté the onion for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add the rice and sauté for 1 minute. Add the wine and stir until it is almost completely absorbed.
Begin slowly adding the broth, ½ cup at a time, stirring frequently. Wait until the liquid is almost completely absorbed before adding more, 2 to 4 minutes. Continue to add the broth, stirring frequently, for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the risotto has a creamy texture but is still al dente (just firm). You may not need to use all of the broth.
Meanwhile, in a skillet over medium-high heat, add the remaining 1 Tbsp of oil. Sauté the sliced mushrooms for 3 to 5 minutes, or until they have softened and released their liquid.
When the risotto is ready, stir in the spinach until wilted. Add the mushrooms, thyme and cheese and stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately. Drizzle individual servings with a small amount of truffle oil or olive oil if desired.

Nutrition

Serving size: 1.5 cups

Calories: 320 | total fat: 12 g | saturated fat: 3 g | sodium: 450 mg | cholesterol: 10 mg
total carbs: 40 g | fibre: 3 g | sugars: 2 g | protein: 10 g | potassium: 500 mg

[1]https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/250305/dq250305a-eng.htm
[2]https://cancer.ca/en/research/cancer-statistics/prevention-statistics
[3]https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention.html
[4]https://cancer.ca/en/research/cancer-statistics/cancer-statistics-at-a-glance
[5]https://cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/find-cancer-early/screening-for-cancer
[6]https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/cancer/preventing-cancer/
[7]https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/eat-healthy/find-healthy-recipes/main-dishes/spinach-and-mushroom-risotto.html

Keeping momentum as the seasons change

Leaves are changing, and sweater weather is coming. Cooler weather offers new options to enjoy the great outdoors. Regular exercise is one of the foundations of a healthy lifestyle. It helps control body weight and protects against a variety of diseases. Exercise also helps lower blood pressure and improves your health overall.[1] Try these exciting outdoor activities to stay active this fall.

Regular exercise is one of the foundations of a healthy lifestyle.

Hiking

Hiking is a relaxing way to keep your step count high during the fall. The changing leaves create a beautiful outdoor landscape. Visit a park or nature trail, or take a day trip to an area you've been wanting to explore. Some parks offer paved and wheelchair-accessible trails so that everyone can enjoy them. Invite friends, family or a significant other. You can pack a light meal for a picnic. Homemade, healthy trail mix is a great option for light trail snacking.

Apple picking

Try apple picking as an activity. If you live in a climate where apples grow, visit an orchard. Pick enough to snack on or cook with for weeks. **Apples will add a boost of healthy flavour to your menu**. Plus, you may have enough left over to share with friends.

Camping

If you are looking for a weekend adventure, camping has much to offer. You can hike or ride bikes on a camping trip. **Spending the night under the stars can be a low-cost way to escape daily stress and ground yourself.** Spend your days exploring your surroundings. Spend your nights making lifelong memories with family and friends around the campfire.

Bike riding

Biking is a popular way to stay active. Many towns and parks have bike trails to enjoy. Much like hiking and camping, biking in the fall can be visually stunning.

Leaf collecting

Looking for colourful leaves is like taking an art walk in nature. There are books and apps that identify different leaves. Borrow one from the library and see which ones are in your local area. Like recording your activities and feelings in your journal, **pressing leaves between the pages is a way of being mindful of your days.**

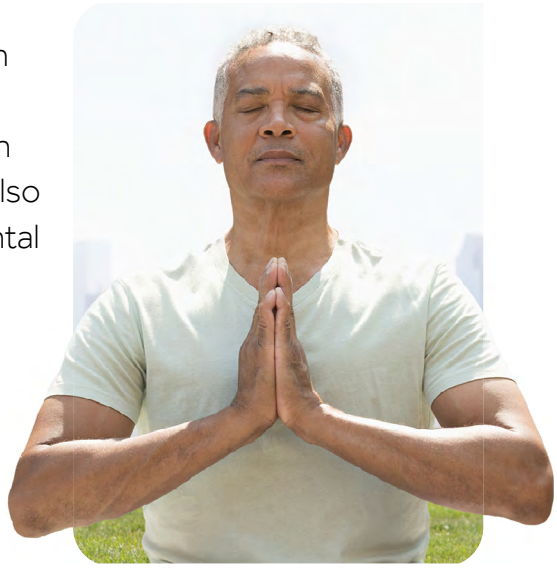
Adding physical activity into your daily routine delivers feel-good chemicals that help boost your mood and reduce stress.[2] It also improves your physical health and mental well-being. While you are out and about, relax and breathe deeply. Become aware of your senses. Focus on your breath and relax your muscles to help soothe your nerves.

Breathe deep for better mental health

Take a deep breath.

We instinctively do it several times each day. You take a big breath before you jump into things literally, like a pool, or figuratively, like a task that requires mental focus. We use a deep breath to clear our minds, signal the start of something new, or even to bring a moment of calm when it's busy.

How deep breathing works



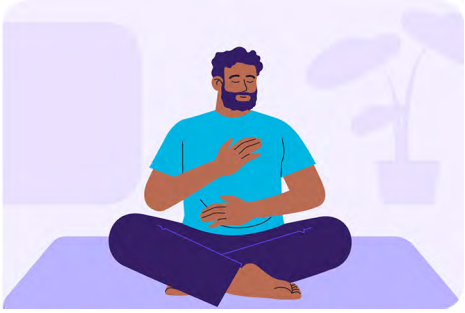
When you take a deep breath, you fill your lungs with oxygen and that stimulates your parasympathetic nervous system. The infusion of oxygen calms down your sympathetic nervous system's "fight or flight" response and increases your "rest and digest" mode. This can increase your feelings of peace and calm.[1] Deep, slow breathing is also shown to decrease muscle tension and may support improved mental health.[2]

There's been a lot of attention on high-level athletes and top executives using breathwork to get through their challenges and perform better. However, it's not just for them. Some wellness, exercise and medical professionals hold the opinion that deep breathing practices can benefit many people. It costs nothing but a few minutes and may offer physical and mental health rewards.

Before you start any new exercise routine, talk to a doctor to make sure it's safe.

The following breathing exercises are used in meditation,the practices of yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi and more. Find your favourite or just take a deep breath—it's that easy.

Belly breathing



Deep belly breathing can help strengthen the diaphragm, lessen the work of breathing and decrease oxygen demand.[3]

- From a seated orlying position, place one hand on your chest and one hand on your abdomen. The bottom hand should do the moving. The top hand should remain still.
- Inhale through your nose for about 4 seconds, feeling your abdomen expand.
- Hold your breath for 2 seconds.
- Exhale very slowly and steadily through your mouth for about 6 seconds.

Pursed lip breathing

Pursed lip breathing slows your breathing pace, which can make each breath more effective. It also helps increase the amount of oxygen in your lungs.[3]

- Inhale slowly through your nose for 2 seconds with your mouth closed. You don't need to take a deep breath; anormal breath is OK.
- Purse (pucker) your lips as though you're going to whistle.
- Exhale slowly and gently through your pursed lips for 4 or more seconds. It may be helpful to count to yourself.

Box breathing

Box breathing, or square breathing, can reset the mind and body after a stressful situation by breathing in patterns of 4.[4]

- Exhale, then breathe in through your nose as you slowly count to 4 in your head. Fill your lungs and let your stomach rise.
- Hold your breath for a count of 4.
- Exhale for a count of 4.
- Hold your breath again for a count of 4.
- Repeat 3 or 4 times.

This is not a lot of hot air. The simple act of deliberately catching your breath can lead you to a calmer, more restful and relaxed mental state.

[1]https://www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/counseling/anxietytoolbox/breathingandrelaxation.html
[2]https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10013266/
[3]https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/breathlessness-clinic/breathing-techniques
[4]https://health.clevelandclinic.org/box-breathing-benefits

Webinar Spotlight

Prioritizing Self-Care: Practical Strategies for a Healthier, Happier You

In July, Dr. Karolina Filipowska emphasized daily, intentional self-care as the foundation of resilience and balance. From her own journey, she showed how simple rituals like movement, meditation, or unplugging reduce stress, boost productivity, and strengthen relationships.

Key takeaways:

- Self-care must be intentional and personal.
- The seven pillars of self-care (emotional, physical, mental, spiritual, social, practical, professional) guide holistic wellness.
- Identifying barriers (guilt, self judgement, time scarcity, burnout, cultural norms) enables solutions.
- Consistency matters as habits (micro-habits, habit stacking, reminders, cues) sustain well-being long term.

At its core, self-care means valuing yourself so you can thrive and care for others.

Understanding Infertility

In April, Dr. Serena Natale explored infertility, which affects one in six couples. She explained causes, treatment pathways ranging from lifestyle changes to assisted reproductive technologies, and the equal role of both partners.

Key takeaways:

- Infertility is common, affecting both men and women equally.
- Causes include age, lifestyle, medical conditions, and environment.
- Early consultation improves outcomes and treatment options.
- Emotional support and stress management are essential.
- Compassionate, holistic care helps couples navigate challenges.

Infertility care requires knowledge, empathy, and support to guide individuals and couples toward medical solutions while navigating the stress and emotional toll.

Did you miss these webinars?

You can still watch both webinars and explore more expert-led talks anytime in our on-demand archive. Revisit the strategies, insights, and resources designed to help you live healthier and feel more supported.

Interested in learning more wellness tips from the Teladoc Health Canada team? Join us for our upcoming

Wellness Webinar

Empowering Women's Health:
Key Screening and Preventative Measures

Dr. Karolina Filipowska
Deputy Medical Director
Teladoc Health Canada, Inc

Thursday, October 30

12:00 - 1:00 PM EST

Scan here
to register

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