



fountain of health

Scotia funded a unique project called the Fountain of Health. The goal of the project, initiated by the Healthy Living Team of Capital District Seniors Mental Health, was to begin addressing the need for prevention and health promotion related to seniors by reaching out into the community and forming partnerships among the many organizations already engaged in providing services for seniors and/or their families.

Phase 1 of the project brought together 13 different organizations, from the non-profit sector as well as the Department of Seniors and Department of Health and Wellness. The groups all agreed there was a need for greater collaboration among the organizations involved in providing seniors services and increased public education focused on positive aging.

Over the course of the next 12 months, Phase 2 of the Fountain of Health initiative will develop and share positive aging messages throughout Nova Scotia. Six key messages, backed up by evidence, with examples and concrete steps that seniors can take will be developed. An Advisory Committee including seniors and near-seniors, Dalhousie University students and family caregivers are providing input on the messages alongside the experts in each topic area.

Upfront **Joanne Hussey,** **Project Manager**

In 2011/2012
The Mental Health
Foundation of Nova

These evidence-based positive aging messages will be shared every two months over the course of the year in a coordinated effort on the websites, social media accounts and newsletters of all of the participating organizations, and through conventional print form. Our goal is that Nova Scotia seniors will have improved physical, mental and cognitive health ten years from now compared to today.

Over the course of the year we will be using a number of different ways of checking in and measuring how we are doing. We will be surveying our target audience in February, May and November to find out who is receiving our messages and how they are using the information we are sharing. We will also be talking to our partners to get their feedback on the process so we can learn what we are doing right and what areas need improvement.

Get Involved

You can help us by providing your opinions through a short survey (<http://fluidsurveys.com/s/FOH1/>) and by sharing the Fountain of Health messages with friends and family. If you would like to be added to the Fountain of Health email list to receive the messages and survey invitations electronically please contact Project Manager, Joanne Hussey at jhussey@commonknowledgeconsulting.ca

Phase 2 of the FOH has been made possible with funding from the NS Department of Health and Wellness and the Positive Aging Grant Program of the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors.

Your Way to Wellness

Meet Mary, Bill and Liz. All three are Community Links Board members, but they have something else in common. Each of them is a volunteer leader in the Your Way to Wellness Program. Your Way to Wellness is a provincially sponsored, free program, led by volunteer leaders. The program is designed to help those with chronic conditions learn skills to live a healthier life. People who have chronic condition can attend the program with a support person of their choice. Your Way to Wellness is offered once a week for a 2 ½ hour session over six consecutive weeks.

Your Way to Wellness is based on Stanford University's Chronic Disease Self Management Program. It is designed to improve participants' self-confidence to manage the symptoms they experience as a result of their condition and reduce the impact it has on their lives and the lives of their families. The Your Way to Wellness program recognizes that although chronic conditions may cause different physical symptoms, the challenges are similar. The program helps participants:

- Become more active
- Eat healthier
- Manage symptoms
- Improve self confidence
- Manage fear, anger, and frustration
- Make daily tasks easier
- Talk to your doctor and health care team
- Set goals, learn problem solving, and develop action plans

Mary MacLellan, Seniors Outreach in Pictou County and a Community Links board member, has been a Your Way to Wellness volunteer leader for more than five years. Fellow Board member Liz

Henri and Bill Poole have also been a leaders for some time in Richmond County and Kings County respectively.

Leaders themselves gain a lot from the program. Mary says "the experience motivates me to make action plans and be accountable and it's very fulfilling. I love it. People in the program make life changes. You see spark come back into people's eyes and they know they can take control and learn how to do that. They have more knowledge. Small steps are big steps."

If you are living with a chronic condition or if you would like to help someone living with a chronic condition by becoming a volunteer leader, please contact: 1-888-672 -3444 - Toll Free or e-mail: yourway2wellness@gov.ns.ca .

Healthy Ageing Quiz: True or False

1. **T F** Nothing can change the swiftness with which you age.
2. **T F** Loneliness is bad for your health. .
3. **T F** Smokers lose more muscle mass as they age than non-smokers do.
4. **T F** Once you retire, you need to pay more attention to your health.
5. **T F** You need less sleep as you age.
6. **T F** Every year, more than one-third of Canadians 65 and older injure themselves in a fall.
7. **T F** As you grow older, you will need higher doses of most medications.
8. **T F** Eating ice cream regularly will shorten your life.

Answers on page 6 (Source Silver Century Foundation)

Passport to Healthy Living – Type 2 Diabetes

ALCOA (Active Living Coalition for Older Adults) has developed *Passport to Healthy Living*, a program your community or group can use to focus on the prevention and management of Type 2 diabetes among older adults.

For more information about the ALCOA Diabetes Project, go to www.alcoa.ca/e/diabetes.htm or Contact Mary MacLellan, Seniors Outreach, 902-752-8406

You're Only as Old as You Feel Think!

We've all heard the expression "you're only as old as you feel." And we all know people who seem to act much younger (or older) than their age. Recent research shows that there may be some truth in these impressions.

Research suggests that our beliefs about ageing, even dating back to childhood, can have an important effect on our health as we grow older. For example, Dr. Becca Levy at Yale University has found "that people with positive age stereotypes were more likely to eat a balanced diet, exercise, limit their alcohol consumption, stop smoking and get regular physical exams, and that they had a higher level of physical functioning over time."

Dr. Levy conducted experiments where groups of older adults were exposed to subliminal words containing either positive or negative stereotypes about ageing. Subjects were then asked to perform various tasks. Those that had been exposed to the negative stereotype words such as "decrepit" had poorer handwriting, slower walking speeds, and higher levels of cardiovascular stress. Those exposed to positive words like "wisdom" did much better.

So what does this research tell us in practical terms? Dr. Levy and other researchers admit that they don't have the full answer, but one approach is to combat ageism in our youth oriented society. Ways to do this include encourage intergenerational activities and communication, reinforce positive stereotypes about ageing even with young children, and be conscious of not letting ageism creep into our own communications. So let's think twice the next time we start to say "I'm having a senior moment"

Source: Judith Graham New York Times

Osteoporosis: The Silent Thief

By Anna Wartacz, Executive Director

Did you know that fractures from osteoporosis are more common than heart attack, stroke and breast cancer combined? Osteoporosis is known as "the silent thief" because bone loss occurs without symptoms and is often confused with osteoarthritis, because the names are similar. Osteoporosis is a bone disease; osteoarthritis is a disease of the joints and surrounding tissue.

Over 800,000 Canadians are affected by osteoporosis. At least one in three women and one in five men will suffer from an osteoporotic fracture during their lifetime. Osteoporosis can result in disfigurement, lowered self-esteem, reduction or loss of mobility, and decreased independence. The statistics related to hip fractures are particularly disturbing.

Osteoporosis Canada recommends that all woman and men age 65 and older have a bone mineral density test to screen for osteoporosis. Screening earlier than age 65 may be advisable if you have experienced a fracture or an injury that may have been caused by osteoporosis, a medical condition that is known to cause bone thinning, and/or other factors for, or symptoms that suggest osteoporosis. Screenings are painless and simple, and are available at 10 hospital sites in Nova Scotia. Talk to your medical professional about arranging a screening.

Calcium intake, vitamin D intake and regular exercise are the three essential factors in the prevention of osteoporosis.

*Source: Canadian Nurse November 2012 Volume 108
Number 9*



Housing and Health

Housing may not be the first thing we think of when we think of good health. However, from a

holistic standpoint, seniors need adequate housing in order to age well.

The provincial government recently announced an **Affordable Housing Strategy**. In January, 2013 Community Links presented a brief to government to add our voice for seniors.

Research has already been done in the area of seniors and housing, and perhaps now it is time for action. The Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance (ASHRA) for example, completed a study called *Projecting the Housing Needs of Aging Atlantic Canadians*. Key messages gathered from that research included:

- Seniors want to age at home and in their communities
- Seniors are not thinking about housing alternatives
- Seniors prefer seniors-only housing
- Seniors have home repair needs
- Seniors are not aware of available housing programs
- Seniors spend disproportionate amount of income on housing
- Seniors' health impacts housing-chronic conditions like arthritis may impact housing decisions
- Some seniors do not have social support
- Most seniors do not participate in seniors' programs

In its brief to government prepared by staff member Brenda MacKinnon, Community Links made the following points:

Seniors need help navigating the housing system. Many do not know what is available to them and how to go about accessing it.

Many seniors need minor adaptations to their homes to improve accessibility and reduce falls risk. But currently there are few options for seniors who need small adaptations. Often, a minor adaptation such as purchase and installation of grab bars, a raised toilet seat or another piece of bathroom safety equipment can allow seniors to stay in their home more independently, longer and more safely. It may not seem like a major expenditure, but for seniors on a fixed income, any expenditure above and beyond the norm can be very difficult.

Without a secure, adequate income, safe, adequate housing options for some seniors will continue to be limited. As a provincial advocacy group, we want government to continue to work on this issue so that no one falls through the cracks. As community members, we need to understand that morally we have an obligation to seek solutions so that our fellow community members do not live in vulnerable situations. Why are there unsafe rental properties? Why are there landlords who take advantage of the vulnerable? How can landlords be engaged and educated? As a community, as a people, we must look for solutions. We need to inform ourselves and understand the issues.

We encourage government to review current programs and to seek the advice of seniors ageing in place as government makes changes to improve the lives of seniors.

The Home Heating Assistance Rebate Program

allows a small rebate on home heating costs for those with lower incomes. Applications can be submitted until March 31, 2013. Get application form on line at:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/pdf/ans-individuals-harp-application-2012.pdf>

Or phone toll free **1-800-670-4357**.

Today's Exercises

Community Links has developed **Fitness in the Kitchen** – eight simple, physiotherapist approved exercises that you can do at home to maintain strength, balance and flexibility. Contact Community Links for a copy of our complete chart.

Strengthen ankle, calf and shin muscles with these two simple exercises you can do while waiting for the kettle to boil – or anytime



Hold onto counter for support. Stand with feet 12 inches apart. Rise up slowly on your toes as high as you can. Hold 5 seconds.

10 repetitions, once per day



Bend ankle up toward your body as high as you can. Hold 5 seconds.

Repeat 10 times each foot, once per day.



Heart Smart Carrot Muffins

Number of Servings: 12

Ingredients

- 1.5 cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 cup Unsweetened Apple Sauce
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1/2 cup fresh, plain yogurt -- make sure it is not sour!
- 1/8 teaspoon each of cinnamon and ginger
- 1/4 cup walnuts
- 1/4 cup raisins

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to (350 F).
2. Mix the apple sauce, sugar, carrots, and yogurt in a mixing bowl.
3. Sift the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and spices in a separate bowl
4. Add the dry ingredients to the wet and combine them well.
5. Mix in the raisins and walnuts,
6. Spoon batter into a lined 12 muffin pan.
7. Bake for 25 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean

Source: The Internet

211 Is Here!

Nova Scotians can now access free, confidential information and referrals 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. **Dial 211** or visit <http://www.ns.211.ca/>

Answers to Healthy Ageing Quiz From Page 2

1. **False.** (Nothing can change the swiftness with which you age.)
Chronic stress can make the very cells of your body age more rapidly. There are many ways to manage stress, including meditation, yoga, vigorous exercise and more. If you're not under stress, is it possible to slow down your ageing rate? Scientists are working on that.
2. **True.** (Loneliness is bad for your health.) People who are isolated often have health problems. They also tend to live shorter lives than those who are more closely connected to friends and family. Loneliness differs from solitude. Some people like being alone and even see solitude as an important path to spiritual growth. But for others, loneliness and physical ageing are a dangerous mix.
3. **True** (Smokers lose more muscle mass as they age than non-smokers do).. Researchers at the University of Nottingham in England found that smoking interferes with the body's ability to maintain its muscles on a day-to-day basis.
4. **False.** (Once you retire, you need to pay more attention to your health.) Your best chance of achieving a long, vigorous life is to have good health habits early on and maintain them through midlife into your later years. However, it's never too late. Richard S. Rivlin, MD, of Weill Cornell Medical College, reviewed more than 100 scientific studies done over the past 20 years and reported in 2007 that lifestyle changes can make a big difference to people even in their 60s and 70s. Lowering blood pressure through diet and exercise, for example, cuts the risk of heart disease more for older adults than for any other age group.
5. **False.** (You need less sleep as you age.) The amount of sleep you need remains relatively constant over your adult lifetime—generally seven to nine hours. But sleep patterns do change with age.
6. **True.** (Every year, more than one-third of Canadians 65 and older injure themselves in a fall.) Falling is the leading cause of from injury in this age group. One of the best ways to protect yourself from a fall is to maintain your strength, balance and flexibility. Contact Community Links for lots of tips.
7. **False.** (As you grow older, you will need higher doses of most medications.) You may actually need to take drugs in smaller doses than when you were younger. Many people begin to respond differently to medications once they're about 75, and by 85 they're particularly sensitive to high doses. Their bodies eliminate medications more slowly and they develop stronger concentration
8. **False.** (Eating ice cream regularly will shorten your life.) The American/Canadian diet of refined carbohydrates—sugar, white flour and white rice—combined with inactivity—is thought to be the root of the current obesity epidemic. Keep in mind that if you're basically healthy, anything you eat in moderation, including ice cream, is unlikely to send you to an early grave.



Notes and Notices

Volunteer Opportunity

Community Links Board Member for Colchester-East Hants:

*Are you active in your community?
Are you interested in issues of ageing and wellness?
Want to connect with a group of friendly, fun, like minded people?*

This volunteer opportunity includes:

- Attend Board meetings in Halifax 4 times/year
- Connect periodically with members in your district
- Participate in planning Community Links events in your region
- Opportunities to learn and share your ideas
- All travel and accommodation expenses paid

To discuss this volunteer opportunity contact:

Bill Poole President
pooles@xcountry.tv
1-902-582-1229

Anna Wartacz, Executive Director
1-902-422-0914 Toll free: 1-855-253-9355
director@nscommunitylinks.ca

Community Links and its Ageing Well Together Coalitions are pleased to announce **Fitness Where We Are**, a program funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors' Positive Aging Fund. The program will establish senior fitness opportunities in six new locations in the province. For further information contact the provincial office at.
Toll free 1-855-253-9355

Volunteer actors needed! *Talking About Seniors and Gambling*

*Do you have a flair for the dramatic?
Do you have an interest in the issue of seniors and gambling?*

Community Links is seeking senior volunteers to take part in our seniors and gambling workshops. These workshops will be offered to seniors' groups in your region and will explore the world of seniors and gambling through drama, conversation, food and fun!

As part of the workshop, you will act out a scenario involving one friend trying to talk to another about a possible gambling problem.

Training and a small honorarium will be provided to volunteer actors.

For more information contact
Anne at
902-422-0914
Toll free 1-855-253-9355 or email
admin@nscommunitylinks.ca

Would your group like to host a Seniors and Gambling Workshop in April or May?

Contact your Regional Coordinator (contact info on next page) or the provincial office.



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