

THE TADDLER

“Yearly Physicals or Check-Ups”: Is there any benefit?

By: Dr. Christina Biancucci, TC FHT Co-Lead Physician

A common question we receive in family practice is “When am I due for my yearly check-up?” This seemingly simple question is actually quite complicated to answer.

Traditionally, there is the belief that seeing your family physician or nurse practitioner once a year for a “head-to-toe physical exam” or “check-up” is a responsible way to ensure you remain as healthy as you can be. However, research suggests that this may not be the case.

In 2012, a Cochrane Review concluded that “although the number of diagnoses was increased, annual examinations did not reduce morbidity or mortality for cardiovascular or cancer causes.”¹ In other words, yearly check-ups may identify health issues, but these are not the health issues that are likely going to affect how long you live or the quality of your life.

From a family physician and nurse practitioner’s perspective, the purpose of the “check-up” (or periodic health exam as we tend to refer to them) is ensuring you are getting the appropriate screening tests (including physical exam checks like having your blood pressure checked), as well as to update us on changes to your health, your social habits (e.g. drinking, smoking), and your family history. While these tasks can be addressed in a “check-up” visit, we often integrate aspects of this type of preventive care into visits for other purposes. For example, you may see your primary care provider for a cough, and at that same visit, it may be noted in your chart that you are due for a mammogram and this information is communicated to you.

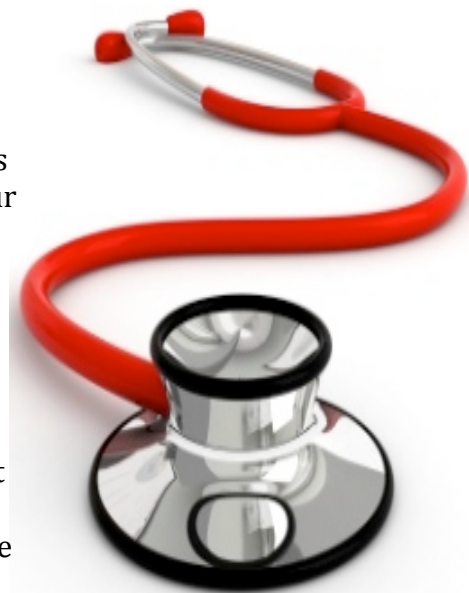
Furthermore, in Ontario, there are a number of province-wide screening programs that help to ensure you are receiving the appropriate screening test at the appropriate time. These include Cervical Cancer Screening, Breast Cancer Screening and Colon Cancer Screening.² You will receive a letter in the mail from Cancer Care Ontario advising you to arrange a screening test. Previous editions of The Taddler have featured a three-part series on cancer screening which is a great resource and is accessible on our website.

In This Issue:

	Pg
Yearly Physicals or Check - Ups? Is there any benefit?	1
Pneumococcal Disease - Protect Yourself	2
Don't Get Caught Without the Flu Shot	6

Regular Columns:

What's Happening at Taddle Creek FHT?	4
Mental Health Corner	3
Did You Know?	4



Cont'd on page 2

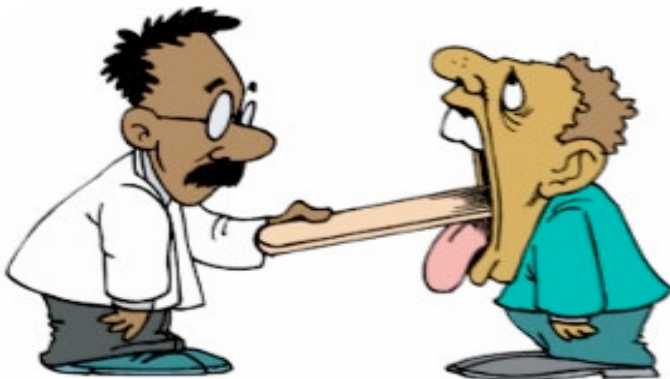
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For women, it should be noted that Pap tests, which in the past were linked to an annual “check-up”, are now recommended to be done *every three years*³ (*unless you have had previous abnormal Pap tests; speak to your primary care provider if this applies to you) and OHIP coverage for Pap tests reflects this recommendation. This, again, is NOT a cost-saving measure but based on good scientific evidence regarding low yield with yearly Pap tests or Pap tests performed every other year.

The bottom line is that there is no universal recommendation for the frequency of periodic health examinations, as it depends on your age, medical conditions, medications you are taking, etc. What we recommend is speaking to your family physician or nurse practitioner to discuss when you would benefit from a periodic health exam that focuses on preventive health and is tailored to your specific situation.

References

1. Krogsbøll Lasse T, Jørgensen Karsten Juhl, Grønhøj Larsen Christian, Gøtzsche Peter C. General health checks in adults for reducing morbidity and mortality from disease: Cochrane systematic review and meta-analysis *BMJ* 2012; 345:e7191.
2. Cancer Care Ontario Screen For Life. Available: <https://www.cancercare.on.ca/pcs/screening>
3. Cancer Care Ontario Cervical Cancer Screening. Available: <https://www.cancercare.on.ca/pcs/screening/cervscreening>



Pneumococcal Disease - Protect Yourself

By: Shazmah Hussein, TC FHT RN

Pneumococcal disease is caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, which causes many types of illness such as ear infections and pneumonia. It can also lead to a more serious infection known as Invasive Pneumococcal Disease (IPD). Pneumococcal bacterium is “invasive” because it has the ability to invade parts of the body that are normally free from germs. For example, the pneumococcal bacteria can invade the bloodstream as well as the tissues and fluids surrounding the brain and spinal cord, causing meningitis. IPD infections are severe and can lead to hospitalization and even death. IPD is most common amongst the very young, the elderly and high-risk groups. Individuals with immunosuppressive conditions (e.g. HIV infection, cancer), chronic cardiovascular disease (e.g. Congestive Heart Failure), chronic lung disease, Diabetes Mellitus and those receiving immunosuppressive therapy (e.g. long-term use of steroid medications) are especially at risk.

The pneumococcal bacteria can become resistant to certain drugs we normally use to treat infection; therefore, prevention is key. The best way to prevent IPD infections is by getting the pneumococcal vaccine.

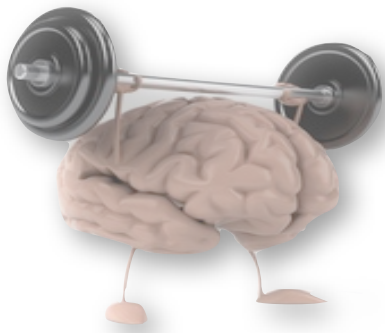
There are two types of vaccine to protect against pneumococcal disease. The pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (Pneumovax 23) protects against 23 types of pneumococcal bacteria. The vaccine is more than 80% effective against IPD in healthy young adults and ranges from 50% to 80% effectiveness in the elderly and in high-risk groups. **Free of charge**, one dose of Pneumovax 23 is recommended for all adults 65 years and older and for immunocompromised adults less than 65 years of age, as well as smokers. Even though immunity induced by Pneumovax 23 decreases over time, re-immunization of healthy individuals is not

Cont'd on page 5

Mental Health Corner

Honouring Your Skills and Values

*By: Martin Vera,
TC FHT Social Worker*



Dear Patient of Taddle Creek Family Health Team,

You are the expert on your own life. You are already equipped with many skills, beliefs, values, commitments, and abilities that will assist you in reducing the negative influence of the problems in your life (White & Epston, 1990).

Problems such as depression, anxiety, trauma, addiction, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) have a tendency to create a thick cloud of smoke and hide the skills, values and strengths that are already at your disposal. As social workers at Taddle Creek FHT, we want to collaborate with you to clear the smoke away and make visible to you the countless skills that you have used to deal with problems in the past.

How would your life be different if you could see your skills again? What would happen to the problem if you were able to highlight, sustain and further develop these skills?

You might not be aware of it, but some of your current life choices are actually reflective of your own skills and values. For example, if you chose to come to our Single Session Drop-In Counselling Clinic on a Friday morning (9am-12pm), what strategies did you use to make it into the clinic in spite of the presence of the problem? What is important enough about your life that you made the special effort to attend our Insomnia

Workshop or Self-Compassion for Depression Group? Which of your values made it possible for you to discuss the problem with your family physician? Were you drawing on your own courage? Resilience? Hopefulness? Determination? How did you come to learn these skills and values in your life? Who in your life would share a sense of pride in your ability to hold on to these skills and values after all these years? Problems may attempt to hide your skills and strengths, but with the right lens and a curious spirit, your skills can become visible, stronger and sustained.

As social workers at Taddle Creek FHT, we have the privilege of working with many patients who inspire us with the skills and values that they effectively put up against a myriad of problems. In addition, we are able to draw from our personal and professional experiences to offer you alternative skills and strategies that might be worth trying out against the problems you are facing. So remember, you are the expert on your own life. Feel free to experiment with the new skills that we may offer you while making sure to honour and sustain your personal skills, all in the interest of living the type of life that you deserve to be living.

Sincerely,

Martin Vera, MSW, RSW





Did you know....

By: Victoria Charko, TC FHT RN

Drinking alcohol, even a light to moderate amount, increases your risk of developing cancer. This includes cancer of the breast, colon, rectum, esophagus, larynx (voice box), liver, mouth and pharynx (throat). The risk is increased with any type of alcohol - beer, wine or spirits.

Drinking 3.5 drinks a day can increase your risk of breast, colon and rectal cancer by 1.5 times and can double or even triple your risk of mouth, laryngeal, pharyngeal and esophageal cancer.

If you choose to consume alcohol, it is recommended that women not exceed one standard drink a day and men not exceed two standard drinks a day. Those with a family history of cancer should consider reducing their intake even further or abstaining altogether.

A standard drink is:

- One 341ml (12oz) bottle of beer (5% alcohol)
- One 142ml (5oz) glass of wine (12% alcohol)
- One 43ml (1.5oz) shot of spirits (40% alcohol)

Keep in mind that decreasing your alcohol consumption also has other health benefits such as lowering blood pressure and cholesterol.

This holiday season, give yourself the gift of health!

References:

1. Canadian Cancer Society (2015). Alcohol. <http://www.cancer.ca/en/prevention-and-screening/live-well/alcohol/?region=on>
2. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) (2015). Light to moderate drinking linked to increased risk of certain cancers. http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/about_camh/newsroom/news_releases_media_advisories_and_backgrounders/current_year/Pages/Light-to-moderate-drinking-linked-to-increased-risk-of-certain-cancers.aspx

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT TADDLE CREEK

By: Sherry Kennedy, *Executive Director*

This column lets you know about TC FHT programs, events and announcements.

Programs

Please refer to the table in this newsletter outlining TC FHT's Group/Clinic Offerings from Nov 2015-Jan 2016. We have some great one-day workshops and multi-week groups. For some you need a physician referral and for others you simply need to contact the number provided.

For those who wish to see a social worker on short notice, our Mental Health Team continues to have Friday morning drop-in sessions from 9am to noon. If you are interested, these are first come, first serve in Suite 306 at the 790 Bay St. location.

If you want to learn more about groups, visit our website www.taddlecreekfht.ca, contact 416-260-1315 (main Administration Office) or contact 416-204-1256 (Diabetes Education Program).

Events

In July 2015, TC FHT purchased **Health Myself (HM)**, a patient/provider portal that offers electronic engagement tools (i.e. secure email, appointment reminders and e-booking). Most TC FHT providers have adopted HM for secure email and appointment reminders.

In order to access HM, an invitation must be emailed by your health care provider's office, and then accepted by you. In July 2015, bulk invitations were emailed to patients whose physicians joined HM and once a month, invitations will be re-sent for those not yet registered. To date, more than 4,000 of our estimated 25,000 patients have registered. You can also ask any TC FHT clinician to send you an invitation the next time you are in the office.

What are the benefits of registering with HM? The first benefit is that all HM communications use high-level encryption and are transmitted over a secure network. You can be confident that all sensitive data will remain private and well protected. The email function allows providers to send clinical documents securely. HM also frees up time wasted on 'phone tag' or time wasted trying to access busy phone lines. HM allows you to view your appointments and cancel online. You also receive email appointment reminders, thus, decreasing missed appointments. Finally, we will send health information (i.e. Taddler Newsletter,

Cont'd on page 5

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT TADDLE CREEK

Cont'd from page 4

flu shots arrivals and eventually, prevention reminders) to keep you informed and healthy. The last benefit, that has yet to be enabled, is e-booking. With this functionality, you are able to book an appointment online. We are hoping to have this up and going for Jan 2016.

We hope you enjoy this tool and find it beneficial. If you would like to access HM, talk to a TC FHT provider today.

Announcements

Since our last Taddler Newsletter (Fall/Winter 2014), we have had a lot of staff changes.

In the Diabetes Education Program (DEP), we have a new Diabetes Nurse Educator (DNE), Ramona D'Mello, who started in Mar 2015. Shivon Sanduja, DEP Lead/Dietitian, left in Sep 2015 and a new Dietitian, Jessica Zupan, started in Oct 2015. Karen Finch, DNE, has taken the DEP Lead position.

In the Mental Health Program, Martin Vera, Social Worker, is covering Anseh Dibaji's maternity leave until Jun 2016.

In our nursing area, Clea Lang, Nurse Practitioner (NP), joined us in May 2015 replacing Brandi Grozell. Devi Parag, Registered Nurse (RN), joined us in Oct 2015 covering Shazmah Hussein's maternity leave. Emma Tsergas, RN, joined us in Aug 2015 replacing Aislinn Hemmingway who left to pursue her NP designation.

Last but not least, we have a new Administrative Assistant, Alerta Mansfield. Alerta replaced Dianne Chanasyk in July 2015.

Welcome Everyone.



Cont'd from page 2 (Pneumococcal Disease)

recommended. However, re-immunization after 5 years is recommended for those at highest risk of IPD such as transplant patients. It is also important to consider the influenza vaccine every year, especially if you are in the high-risk group, because your risk of pneumococcal infection increases if you get the flu.

Reactions to Pneumovax 23 are usually mild. Soreness, redness and swelling at the injection site occur in 30% to 60% of those vaccinated. Rarely does this vaccine cause severe local reactions such as cellulitis or swelling in the extremities. The vaccine is not advised in persons with proven immediate or anaphylactic hypersensitivity to any component of the vaccine or its container. In such cases, consultation with an allergist is advised prior to vaccination. Administration of the vaccine should also be postponed in persons suffering from severe acute illness; however, it should not be delayed because of minor acute illness, with or without fever.

Part of the routine infant immunization schedule, the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV 13 or Prevnar 13) is now approved for use amongst selected high-risk adults as well. Prevnar 13 protects against 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria. However, this vaccine is **NOT** covered, requiring individuals to pay out of pocket.

For more information about pneumococcal disease and pneumococcal vaccines, please speak with your physician, nurse practitioner, registered nurse or physician assistant.

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013). Pneumococcal Disease. <http://www.cdc.gov/pneumococcal/index.html>
2. Public Health Agency of Canada (2014). Pneumococcal Vaccine. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/p04-pneu-eng.php>
3. Public Health Agency of Canada (2014). Invasive Pneumococcal Disease. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/vpd-mev/pneumococcal-pneumococcie-eng.php>

Don't Get Caught Without the Flu Shot!

By: Victoria Charko, TC FHT RN

Flu season is upon us and the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones is by getting the annual flu shot. The flu shot is safe, well-tolerated, and the longest-lasting and most effective way to prevent the flu. It is especially important for infants and children, pregnant women, older adults and those with chronic health conditions.

The flu shot is in stock! Call your primary care provider's office to book an appointment. If you have already received it elsewhere and are 65 years of age or older, please notify your primary care provider.

Don't forget:

1. The flu shot *cannot* give you the flu!
2. Anyone 6 months of age or older should get the flu shot (unless there is a medical reason preventing you from getting it; those with egg allergies *can* get the flu shot – please speak with your health care provider).
3. Flumist, the flu nasal spray vaccine, is now available for children 2-17 years of age and is most effective in children 2-5 years of age. Please speak with your health care provider if you are interested in this.
4. The earlier you get the vaccine, the better! It takes 1-2 weeks for the vaccine to take effect.
5. The most common side effects are soreness and redness where the shot is given. Children may get a low-grade fever too.
6. You need a flu shot, even if you had one last year. Protection lasts for about one year and the strains of viruses that cause the flu change frequently.



THE TADDLER

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DISCLAIMER

The information presented in The Taddler is for educational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for the professional advice, treatment or diagnosis from your health care provider. Contact your physician, nurse practitioner or other qualified health care professional if you have any questions or concerns about your health.

The purpose of the TC FHT Newsletter, "The Taddler" is to provide:

- ◆ Education on varied health-related topics
 - ◆ Regular communication about what is happening at TC FHT
 - ◆ Information on issues that impact TC FHT and its patients
 - ◆ A means for patients to get acquainted with TC FHT team members
 - ◆ An avenue for patient contribution
- We hope you enjoy reading it!*

Taddle Creek Family Health Team
November 2015 – January 2016 - Group/Clinics Offerings

All Groups/Clinics are open to all TC FHT patients, Diabetes Programs are open to the public.

All programs are held at 790 Bay St., Toronto, Ontario.

For additional information go to www.taddlecreekfht.ca/events-calendar. Dates are subject to change.

Group/Clinic	Date(s)	Time	Learn About:
CBT for Anxiety Suite 306 Call 416-260-1315 Note: MD referral needed	Jan 13 (Wed for 10 wks) Jan 13 (Wed for 10 wks)	1:30-3:30pm 5:30-7:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the physiology of anxiety • To learn CBT strategies and skills • To examine how our thoughts and beliefs are connected to our mood, behaviors, physical experiences and events in our lives • To be able to identify, evaluate & balance distress related thoughts • To learn techniques for relapse prevention
CBT for Insomnia Workshop Suite 306 Call 416-260-1315 Note: MD referral needed	Nov.13 (Fri) Jan. 7 (Thu) Mar. 31 (Thu)	9:30-4:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn about how cognitive behavioral therapy is used when treating insomnia • Learn techniques to help you get quality sleep that will promote good physical and mental health • Understand how our minds & thoughts contribute to insomnia • Practice mindfulness to reduce stress and help you with getting to sleep
Diabetes Do It Yourself Suite 508 Call 416-204-1256	Nov 5 (Thu) Nov 18 (Wed) Dec 3 (Thu) Dec 16 (Wed)	5-7:30pm 9-11:30am 5-7:30pm 9-11:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basics of diabetes self-management • Healthy eating, getting active & setting achievable goals • Maintaining healthy changes
Hypertension Clinic (Blood Pressure Education) Suite 306 Call 416-260-1315	Nov 9 (Mon) Dec 8 (Tues) Jan 11 (Mon)	5-7:30pm 9:30 am to 12:00 pm 5-7:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood Pressure (BP), hypertension & risk factors • Antihypertensive medications • Physical exercise & weight reduction • Dietary approaches to stop hypertension
Let's Get Moving – Diabetes Exercise Workshop Suite 508 Call 416-204-1256	Nov 4 (Wed)	9-11am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits of being physically active • Tips to reduce sedentary time • At home resistance band program (band provided)
Let's Talk Diabetes Suite 508 Call 416-204-1256	Nov 26 (Thu) Dec 10 (Wed)	5:00-7:00pm 9:00-11am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabetes self-management skills by engaging in open & meaningful discussions about living with diabetes <i>from others living with diabetes</i> • Common myths about diabetes
Quit Happens Suite 306 Call 416-260-1315	Nov 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Dec 7, 14, 21, 28, Jan 6, 13, 20, 27 (Wed)	4-5:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing free nicotine replacement therapy • Benefits of quitting smoking • How to making a quit or reduction plan • About quitting smoking medications