

THE TADDLER

On the Move During the COVID-19 Pandemic

By: Jill McKinlay, Registered Nurse

Being or staying physically active during the COVID-19 pandemic can be a challenge. International data shows that in the month after the pandemic began, the average number of steps taken per day dropped by more than 1,400 steps.¹ Without regular school, work, social and physical activity patterns, it can be easy to forget to go outside or to be active inside. For some, the pandemic offers more opportunities to be active because of flexible schedules. If you have started a new activity, kudos to you!

Finding and sustaining safe physical activity routines during COVID-19 is good for mental health, beyond the physical benefits. When starting a new activity or routine, it is important to set an achievable goal; for instance, if you are currently inactive, aim to be active at least twice a week for 15 minutes. Start new activities slowly so you can see how your body responds and then increase the amount gradually. Below are some suggestions to help encourage and inspire activity.



The Great Outdoors

With the weather warming up, there are great options for outdoor activities. Being active or playing in the park is healthy for a person of any age. Depending on local guidelines (see link in references)², physically distanced groups can engage in activities like tai chi, passing a soccer ball or simply going for a walk. Making a plan and setting a date with a family member or friend is a good way to commit to getting physical activity. If going outside leads to feelings of discomfort or anxiety, choose times early in the morning or later in the evening when fewer people are outside.

In This Issue:

On the Move During the COVID-19 Pandemic 1

Pomelo Health Support 7

Regular

Mental Health Corner 3

What's Happening at Taddle Creek FHT? / COVID-19 Update 4

Diabetes Digest 6

Cont'd on page 2

Cont'd from page 1 (On the Move)

Indoor Pursuits

There are also very good ways to be active inside. Many community organizations that offered in-person activities pre-pandemic are now offering online courses; these classes range in intensity from seated chair yoga to spinning on a stationary bike. Ask friends and family members to help you get started if you are having trouble finding something that suits the activity level that you are interested in and able to do. Chances are they have felt the same way. Pedal exercisers are a good way to get indoor activity and can be used with either arms or legs.

COVID-19 Considerations

For those who have COVID-19 or are recovering from it, rest is key. Vigorous physical activity should be avoided because of its role in inflammation.³ Once recovered, gentle activities like stretching, walking or low intensity stationary bike riding are good options, and it is important to stop physical activity before becoming short of breath. A good test of exertion is, "Can I still carry on a conversation while I'm exercising?"

If you have a history of breathing or heart-related health problems and are planning to become more physically active, please consult a member of your primary care team first.

References

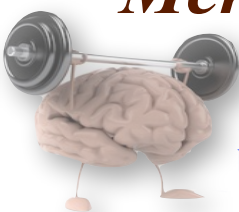
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Mental Health Corner

Burnout

by: Anseh Dibaji, Lead Social Worker



Burnout is a common phenomenon mainly associated with the workplace or caregiving. One year into a pandemic, it is important that we understand what it is, how to prevent it and what to do about it. Research into burnout began in the 1970s with psychologist Herbert Freudenberger; he characterized burnout as extreme exhaustion, depersonalization, cynicism, and a sense of inefficacy as a result of excessive, relentless stress.

What Triggers Burnout?

We are wired to deal effectively with acute, short-lived stress. Due to COVID-19, we may be feeling chronically stressed out and activities such as grocery shopping, riding on the TTC or engaging with news/media can chronically activate our stress response. Our nervous system is not good at differentiating between a life-threatening stressor and a modern stressor such as financial strain. Its job is to react and activate fight, flight or freeze (FFF) mode in the face of any threat (real or imaginary). Chronically triggering our FFF mode is like having feet pressing on both the gas and the brake pedals of our nervous system, leading to the burning out of our mind-body engine. Due to the buildup of chronic physiological stress, our mind-body may start to manifest the impact via symptoms such as frequent headaches, illness, changes in appetite and sleep, etc.

What Can We Do About Burnout?

The most important thing we can do is to intentionally and consistently take action to deal with the physiological stress and signal to our nervous system that we are safe and supported.

Consistent routines: Implement a relaxing bedtime routine, rise time, meal times and schedule in activities. Our nervous system needs predictability during stressful periods.

Exercise: The best way to signal to the body that we are not immobilized, that we fought the threat and won or ran away successfully and survived, is to move our body! If exercise is not possible, we can practice progressive muscle relaxation.

Adequate rest:

Good quality sleep is essential for wellbeing.

Breathing:

Sitting comfortably and engaging in slow, deep breathing calms the nervous system. It is only possible to breathe this way when we are safe.



Connection: Keep connection conscious and frequent with friends, family, colleagues and neighbours. Even via technology, it reminds our nervous system that the world is a safe place with loving people.

Forest bathing: Spending 20-30 minutes outdoors daily in nature, parks, ravines and green space leads to better health outcomes.

Creativity: Art, music, dance and other forms of creative expression are excellent for stress relief.

Lastly, many in our communities were experiencing burnout before COVID-19 due to the epidemic of opioid-related deaths, racism, structural oppression, etc. The answer to burnout cannot be individual self-care alone, but collective care. We need compassionate policies that are inclusive and provide care for everyone. If you need support, review the COVID-19 resources and single-session flyer on our website (under Downloads):

<https://taddlecreekfht.ca/programs/mental-health/>

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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT TADDLE CREEK

By: Sherry Kennedy, *Executive Director*

This column lets you know about Taddle Creek Family Health Team (TC FHT) events, program updates and announcements.

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

COVID-19 vaccine information is changing frequently. For weekly vaccine updates, please check our COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ document on TC FHT's website homepage. Questions have been chosen using multiple sources (e.g., Gov't of Canada, Toronto Public Health, Ontario College of Pharmacists, Ontario College of Family Physicians, etc.) and also from questions received from patients. The FAQ document is compiled by our pharmacist and reviewed frequently. If you are hesitant or have any doubts about taking a COVID-19 vaccine, we encourage you to contact us with your questions so we can help you make an informed decision.

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ

<https://taddlecreekfht.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/COVID-19-Vaccine-FAQ-May-5-2021-Final.pdf>

Redeployment for Community COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

On Apr 8, 2021, the Ministry of Health requested FHTs redeploy resources to assist with the administration of COVID-19 vaccines. TC FHT has answered this call by deploying staff to either Toronto Public Health or community pop-up vaccine clinics and to date we have done 72 clinic days.

Unfortunately this redeployment comes at a cost to service availability and some services may need to be temporarily reduced. For example, prediabetes and less urgent diabetes services may need to be rescheduled. It is possible you may experience longer than normal wait times to receive a response for voicemails and/or Pomelo Health (our patient portal) messages. We ask for your patience during this difficult time.

Accessing Care at TC FHT during COVID-19

The Ministry of Health continues to encourage TC FHT clinicians to conduct the majority of patient consultations virtually by phone or video. The clinician and patient then decide together if an in-person appointment is necessary or appropriate. The purpose of this is to support physical distancing and avoid inadvertent contact with another person who may have COVID-19. We also offer patients access via Pomelo Health which has secure messaging for patients to communicate with healthcare providers or staff. If you do not have a Pomelo Health account, contact your provider's office for help setting up an account. To book an appointment, you may call your provider's office or electronically book a phone appointment through Pomelo Health (only available for some offices). We also host virtual After Hours clinics Monday to Thursday and an on-site clinic on Saturday mornings. Information about our After Hours clinics and contact information for all providers is posted on our website homepage.

Cancer Screening Tests during COVID-19

Please visit Cancer Care Ontario's website for information.

Cancer Care Ontario's website

<https://www.cancercareontario.ca/en/covid19-cancer/screening-during-covid-19>

Cont'd on page 5

Cont'd from page 4 (What's Happening at TC)

COVID-19 Mental Health Resources

The Fall 2020 Taddler had an amazing list of COVID-19 mental health resources; one for adults, one for child/youth/families and one for seniors. This pandemic has affected our mental health and these resources offer a variety of mediums such as websites, workbooks, podcasts and support groups that may help us cope and improve our mental health during this pandemic. You can access the resources on the mental health program page on our website under *Downloads*.

COVID-19 Mental Health Resources

<https://taddlecreekfht.ca/programs/mental-health/>

Grade 7/8 Immunizations

Every year Toronto Public Health (TPH) provides free vaccinations for Grade 7/8 students in their schools. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, vaccines will not be provided in schools this year. Students in Grade 7 will require their full vaccination series* and students in Grade 8 will need to complete their 2nd doses in the series if they received their first doses in the 2019-2020 school year. TC FHT has close to 50 Grade 8 students who we will be prioritizing for vaccination in our suites. Grade 7 students may or may not be immunized by TC FHT, depending on school status in September 2021 and TPH's capacity to provide these vaccinations. More information will be available from TC FHT and TPH in the upcoming months.

*Grade 7/8 Immunization Series = Meningococcal-C-ACYW (one dose), HPV-9 (two doses) & hepatitis B (two doses)

Patient Care Survey 2021-22

For many years TC FHT has created a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and reported our progress to Ontario Health. As part of our QIP we conduct an annual Patient Care Survey. In order for TC FHT to focus our efforts on responding to the urgent needs related to COVID-19, Ontario Health has paused the QIP program for 2021/22 and thus TC FHT will not be conducting our Patient Care Survey this Fall.

Personnel Announcements

Sabine Thomé, Registered Nurse, has been hired for a 1-year maternity leave contract for Bay Suite 522 on Monday, April 12, 2021. Sabine comes to us with a BScN earned from Ryerson in 2015. For the last 2 years she has been working at Mount Sinai in Labour and Delivery, and previously she worked at Michael Garron in their Family Birthing Centre for 6 years. She also has experience as a Clinical Supervisor teaching and mentoring BScN students at Seneca College.

Venus Jaraba has resigned after 2.5 years as a FHT Administrative Assistant. She has contributed greatly to our success and provided tremendous support to me and many others. Venus has accepted a role with the Centre for Global Health Research at St. Michael's Hospital. Venus - you will be sorely missed and thank you for your commitment to TC FHT.

Taddle Creek
DIABETES
DIGEST

What You Need to Know About Low-Carbohydrate Diets for Diabetes Management

By: Francesca Chee, Registered Dietitian, Certified Diabetes Educator

A quick search on the Internet reveals that the low-carbohydrate/ketogenic diet made it onto the most popular diets list in 2020. In light of the growing interest in this topic, this article offers a brief overview of low-carbohydrate diets and discusses their safety and potential risks, as well as the official recommendations for these eating patterns for diabetes management.

What are Carbohydrates?

Carbohydrates are one of the three major nutrients, along with protein and fat. It is the body's primary and preferred source of energy. Excess carbohydrates can be stored in the body for later use. Carbohydrates are found in a variety of foods including grains, fruits, starchy vegetables, dairy and legumes.

About Low-carbohydrate Diets

Carbohydrate intake can be categorized as high-carbohydrate (more than 230g of carbohydrates per day), moderate-carbohydrate (130-230g of carbohydrates per day), low-carbohydrate (50-130g of carbohydrates per day) or very low-carbohydrate/ketogenic (less than 50g of carbohydrates per day). Essentially, the more restrictive the diet, the more nutrient-rich, carbohydrate-containing foods are avoided. When consuming a very low-carbohydrate diet, the body breaks down fat stores and converts them into ketones. In the absence of carbohydrates, the body enters a state of ketosis as ketones become the main source of fuel, hence the name 'ketogenic diet'.

Impact on Weight Loss

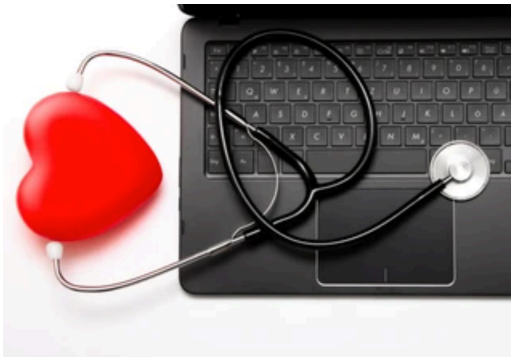
Since weight loss is a common objective for people with Type 2 diabetes, it is worth sharing what the research has to say about low-carbohydrate diets. Most studies have shown similar weight loss outcomes between low-fat and low-carbohydrate diets^{1,2}, whereas studies that favoured the low-carbohydrate diet demonstrated temporary weight loss results (less than 12 months) and potentially increased cholesterol levels in the long run.³

Effects on Diabetes Management

There is evidence that low and very low-carbohydrate diets were associated with short-term (3-6 months) improvement in lowering hemoglobin A1C (average blood glucose levels over 3 months) with Type 2 diabetes. However, its efficacy declined over time due to poor dietary adherence, and therefore, made no significant difference compared to high-carbohydrate diets beyond 12 months.⁴ Currently, there is no strong consensus on the use of low-carbohydrate diets for Type 1 diabetes.⁵ Meanwhile, Diabetes Canada's position statement on low-carbohydrates diets cautions about the risk of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) or diabetic ketoacidosis (when blood sugar is very high and ketones build up to a dangerous level in the body), particularly in people with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes who are on insulin and/or certain diabetes medications (sulfonylureas and SGLT2 inhibitors). Thus, those who choose to pursue low-carbohydrate diets should seek support from health care providers to ensure safety (as medication adjustment is likely required) and nutrient adequacy.



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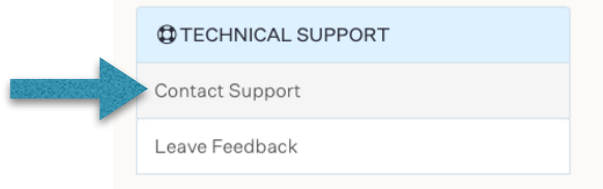
Pomelo Health Support

By: Taddle Creek Family Health Team

Pomelo Health is TC FHT’s patient portal for secure messaging, eBooking and appointment reminders. Patients have been contacting the FHT with portal related issues; thus, this article aims to provide information on how to get Pomelo Health support.

To access the patient portal, Google search “Pomelo Health Myself” (<https://healthmyself.ca/>) and login with your username and password. If you have forgotten your password there is a reset password option. If you do not have an account, you will need to contact your provider’s office and request an invitation be sent to you to create an account.

Once you are logged, there is a window at the bottom of every page:



Choose "contact support" and the window shown below will appear. Notice at the top of this window there is an option to access Pomelo Health’s how-to documents. If you do not find a solution through the how-to documents, you can send a technical support ticket describing your issue as shown below:

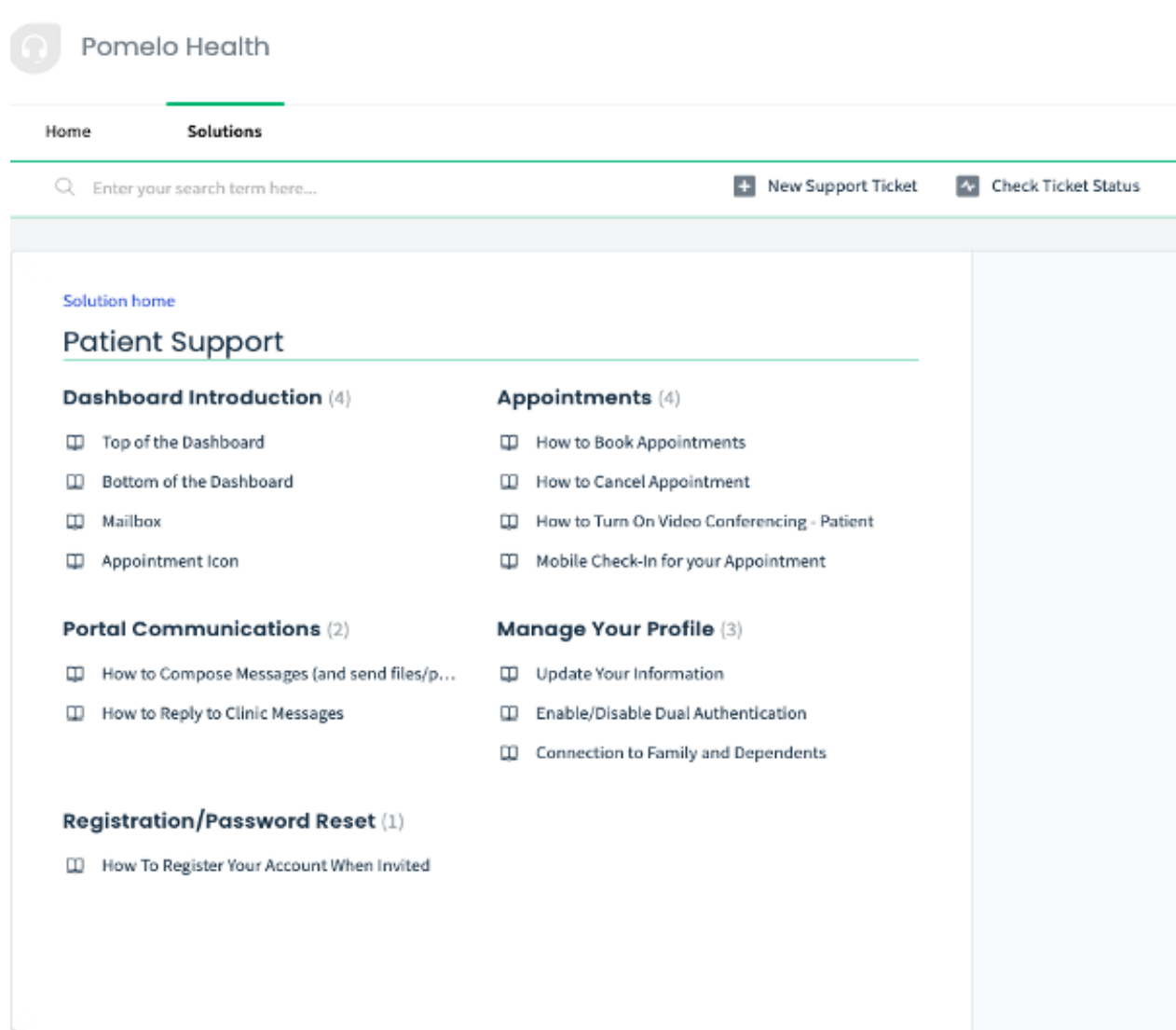
A screenshot of a web form titled 'Submit a technical support ticket'. At the top, there is a message: 'Patients can access our how-to documents by clicking here. Otherwise, submit a technical support ticket below.' The form contains several input fields: 'Clinic Name', 'Your name', and 'Your email' (with a dropdown arrow). Below these is a dropdown menu labeled 'What can we help you with?'. A 'Details' section follows, with a large text area containing the placeholder text 'Please enter additional details here'. A blue arrow points from the text 'Describe your issue here' to this text area. At the bottom of the form is a purple 'Submit' button.

Describe your issue here

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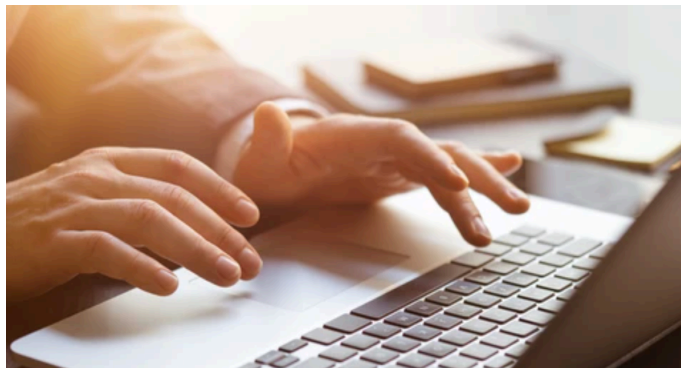
The how-to-document can help you resolve issues related to:



The screenshot displays the Pomelo Health user interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home' and 'Solutions' tabs. Below the navigation bar is a search bar with the placeholder text 'Enter your search term here...'. To the right of the search bar are two buttons: '+ New Support Ticket' and 'Check Ticket Status'. The main content area is titled 'Patient Support' and is divided into several sections:

- Solution home**
- Patient Support** (underlined)
- Dashboard Introduction (4)**
 - Top of the Dashboard
 - Bottom of the Dashboard
 - Mailbox
 - Appointment Icon
- Appointments (4)**
 - How to Book Appointments
 - How to Cancel Appointment
 - How to Turn On Video Conferencing - Patient
 - Mobile Check-In for your Appointment
- Portal Communications (2)**
 - How to Compose Messages (and send files/p...)
 - How to Reply to Clinic Messages
- Manage Your Profile (3)**
 - Update Your Information
 - Enable/Disable Dual Authentication
 - Connection to Family and Dependents
- Registration/Password Reset (1)**
 - How To Register Your Account When Invited

Pomelo Health's support team answers tickets Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Many tickets are resolved directly through Pomelo Health and others require TC FHT to help (appointment booking, connected accounts, messaging, etc.). Tickets are generally responded to within 24 hours (excluding weekends).



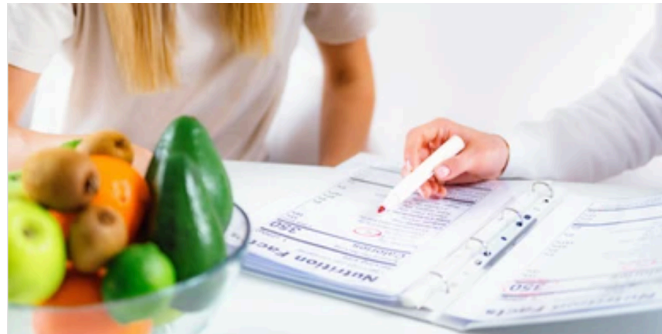
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Bottom Line

While modest benefits were observed in the short-term, there is a clear lack of data on the long-term safety and efficacy of low-carbohydrate diets. The decision to follow a low-carbohydrate diet should take into consideration its practicality, the possible need for close supervision, as well as whether this eating pattern aligns with your preferences and health goals. After all, no one size fits all.

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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
We hope you enjoy reading it!

**The Taddler is not for private marketing purposes*

Taddle Creek Family Health Team

April 2021 - December 2021 Groups/Workshops/Drop-In Offerings

Groups/Clinics are open to Taddle Creek Family Health Team patients
 Additional information is available on the Programs and Services drop down menu,
 see website: <https://taddlecreekfht.ca/>
 Dates are subject to change

Event	Date(s)	Time	Learn About/Assistance With
CBT for Insomnia Group (CAMH) Virtual Call 416-260-1315 Note: MD referral required	May 4 - Jun 1 Sep 10 - Oct 1	Tuesdays 2:00 - 4:00 pm Fridays 2:00 - 4:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is used when treating insomnia • Techniques to help you get quality sleep that will promote good physical and mental health • How our minds and thoughts contribute to insomnia • Practicing mindfulness to reduce stress and help you get to sleep
Lifestyle Balance Group Virtual Call 416-260-1315 Note: MD referral required	Apr 28 - Oct 27 10 Sessions to complete	Wednesdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching and maintaining a healthy balance between eating, physical activity and emotional eating • Essentials of nutrition and exercise • Recognizing and managing emotional eating
Intuitive Eating Group Virtual Call 416-204-1256	Jun 16 - Jul 28 7 sessions to complete	Wednesdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a healthy relationship with food, mind and body • Getting in touch with your body's signals of hunger, fullness and satisfaction • Mindful meditation and relaxation exercises • Strategies to cope with anxiety, depression, stress, fear and guilt around managing diabetes
Blood Sugar Management Workshop Virtual Call 416-204-1256	May 20, 2021 (Part 1) May 27, 2021 (Part 2) Jun 2, 2021 (Part1) Jun 9, 2021 (Part2) Jun 17, 2021 (Part 1) Jun 24, 2021 (Part 2)	Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm 5:00 - 7:00 pm Wednesdays 9:00 - 11:00 am 9:00 - 11:00 am Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm 5:00 - 7:00 pm	An introductory two-part series designed to help individuals living with prediabetes or diabetes. Workshops will be held over Zoom. Part 1: Getting Started <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is diabetes? • What causes diabetes? • How is prediabetes/diabetes diagnosed? • How do I prevent long term complications related to diabetes? • Is diabetes reversible? Part 2: Taking Charge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I manage my blood sugars? • What can I eat when I have prediabetes/diabetes? • Can exercise help with prediabetes/diabetes? • How does stress impact my prediabetes/diabetes?