

THE TADDLER

The Sunshine Vitamin: Why We Need Vitamin D

By: Julia Stanislavaskaia, Registered Dietitian

Vitamin D is an essential nutrient that is integral to our health, yet vitamin D deficiency is one of the most common deficiencies we see today. Insufficient levels of Vitamin D may result in the following symptoms:

- Bone discomfort or pain (often throbbing)
- Increased risk of falls and impaired physical mobility
- Muscle aches or weakness
- Symmetric low back pain in women

Lack of vitamin D can also worsen symptoms of seasonal affective disorder and affect cognitive function, contributing to symptoms like brain fog.

Why is Vitamin D so Important?

Vitamin D is an essential nutrient responsible for:

- Calcium absorption
- Bone mineralization, bone growth and remodelling
- Balancing minerals in the body
- Reducing inflammation

Why is Vitamin D Challenging to Get?

Unlike other nutrients, it is impossible to get enough vitamin D from food. Instead, the key ingredient to getting enough vitamin D is sunshine. This nutrient is produced in the kidneys and skin and its production is regulated by sunlight. There are very few naturally occurring sources of vitamin D, which include salmon (600 IU of vitamin D per serving), sundried shitake mushrooms, and fortified products, such as milk, which barely offers 100 IU per cup.

In This Issue:	
The Sunshine Vitamin: Why We Need Vitamin D	1
Teens' and Tweens' Vaccinations	7
How to Talk to Family and Friends about Vaccine Hesitancy	9
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 (*The Sunshine Vitamin*)

Most vitamin D is produced during the summer, which means we are limited to only 2-3 months of exposure. People living closer to the equator, in sunnier, warmer climates are less likely to experience vitamin D deficiencies. There are other factors that make getting enough vitamin D challenging:

- The best hours to get vitamin D during the summer months are from 9 AM to 3 PM, which for many people are working hours
- While using sunscreen protection is important, using 8 SPF or higher will inhibit the production of vitamin D
- Darker skin pigments tend to have lower levels of vitamin D, as the pigment acts as a shade and makes it harder for the skin to synthesize energy from the sun
- Age: as we get older our skin becomes thinner, which makes it challenging to produce enough vitamin D
- Glass and plastic barriers block the UVB rays that allow for vitamin D production

How Can You Meet Your Vitamin D Needs?

Vitamin D supplementation is often recommended between the months of October and May (in Ontario), as during these seasons you cannot obtain any vitamin D even when you are in the sun because the UVB rays are falling at a different angle.

The recommended vitamin D doses are:

- 600 IU per day for adults
- 800 IU per day for older adults (60+)
- 2000 IU per day for those with osteoporosis
- 400 IU per day for breastfed infants



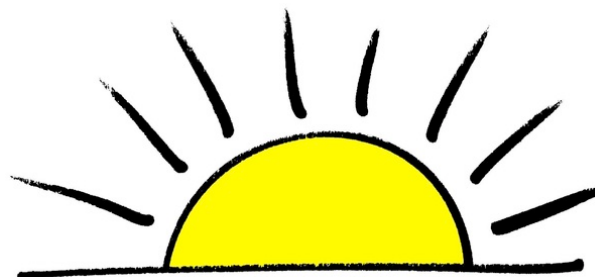
These recommendations vary based on other factors, such as blood test results, medical history, etc. Now is a good time of the year to have a conversation with your primary care provider, dietitian or a local pharmacist about your vitamin D needs.

References:

Michael F Holick & Tai C Chen, (2008). Vitamin D deficiency: a worldwide problem with health consequences, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Volume 87, Issue 4, Pages 1080S–1086S. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/87.4.1080S>

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Mental Health Corner

Asserting Yourself (Especially Now!)

by Amy Babcock, Registered Social Worker

Our style of communication is based on a number of factors, including our early life experiences. During this time, we develop beliefs about ourselves, others, and the world around us. These beliefs are typically carried into adulthood and may be helpful or unhelpful when it comes to navigating our adult world. Our beliefs influence many areas of our lives, including our communication style.

Non-Assertive Communication Styles

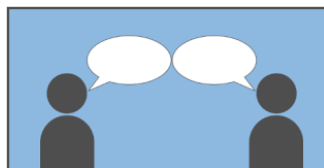
Passive – not speaking up for ourselves usually for reasons such as not wanting to disappoint others or believing that our needs/options don't matter.

Aggressive – forcing our needs or opinions on others generally in a bullying manner.

Communication and the Pandemic

During the past year and a half, communication and needs negotiation has come up as a theme in my conversations with clients, and it makes sense that it has. Some of us have moved into new living situations or returned to old ones. We have spent more time at home, either alone or with others. We've had to figure a lot out. And now, we are at another point of transition with the re-opening. Some of us may want to jump back into the swing of things while others feel that 'the world has opened up, but I have not'.

So, what does this mean for our relationships? It means that assertive communication is important, especially now.



What is Assertive Communication?

We all have the right to determine what we are ready for and how much is too much. Assertive communication can be understood as a form of expression that is clear and direct, while still being

respectful to others. It helps us establish and maintain healthy relationships. It includes saying 'no' and setting boundaries (ie: what you're willing to do or not do).

A Few Tips:

Use 'I statements' – own your message with 'I statements'. 'You statements' are much easier for others to argue against or even take offense to. Consider 'I'm not comfortable with that' instead of 'you are wrong about that'.

Be congruent – match your tone and body language with the content of your message. We can detract from our own message or appear as though we are open to persuasion when we are incongruent.

Buy yourself time – sometimes we need to remove ourselves from pressure or expectation to gain perspective. Consider 'I need time to think about that'.

Be as specific and clear as possible – vague or tentative statements can lead to misinterpretations. Consider 'I'd like to go, but I need more information about measures that will be in place' instead of 'I'm not 100% sure what I'll be up to that day'.

Assertive communication can feel challenging, especially if we are newer to it. People do not always celebrate our expression of needs or limits. We may need to re-evaluate some of our relationships. We may need to challenge old beliefs that no longer serve us well. We may need support or practice.

Let's be kind to ourselves and one other as we move through this next stage. We can do this by being good communicators as well as good listeners.

References

1. Boon, Steele, Van Der Hart (2011). Coping with Trauma Related Dissociation: Skills Training for Patient and Therapists – 1st ed. New York, NY. W.W Norton and Company Inc.
2. Palumbo, L (November 23, 2020). 'Setting Boundaries for the Holidays During a Pandemic', <https://www.nsvrc.org/blogs/setting-boundaries-holidays-during-pandemic>.
3. 'Assertive Communication', Healthy WA Health Information for Western Australians, https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Assertive-communication.
4. 'Assertive Communication Information Handout', <https://www.psychologytools.com/resource/assertive-communication/>.

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.

Vaccines, vaccines, vaccines...

Shingles vaccines – The shingles vaccine is typically covered for Ontarians aged 65-70 years old. However, as a result of the pandemic, individuals born in 1949, 1950 or 1951 who missed receiving this publicly funded vaccine can still receive the two-dose vaccine up until December 31, 2022 at TC FHT.

Flu shot vaccines – TC FHT will have limited flu shot clinics this year. If possible, we encourage you to visit your local pharmacy to receive your flu shot.

COVID-19 vaccines for ages 5-11 – We anticipate Health Canada will soon approve COVID-19 vaccines for ages 5-11. The [city of Toronto](#) announced the vaccination plan for this age group on Nov 10, 2021. The plan includes large fixed-site clinics (including five city-run immunization clinics), school-based clinics, hospital and community-based clinics as well as more than 450 pharmacies. TC FHT may host COVID-19 vaccine clinics. We will keep you updated via Pomelo (patient portal) or on our website home page.

Redeployment for community COVID-19 vaccine clinics – TC FHT provided over 100 clinic days at either Toronto Public Health or Mid-West Toronto Ontario Health Team community pop-up vaccine clinics between March-June 2021. We are anticipating that we will be helping in community clinics again this fall and winter.

COVID-19 - Accessing Care at TC FHT

Throughout the summer and early fall COVID-19 cases remained low resulting in our staff and providers experiencing an unprecedented number of patient requests for appointments, phone calls and email responses. We are striving to find the right balance as the demand for in-person visits increases at the same time that many patients prefer to continue with virtual care. We are trying to accommodate everyone's needs with the awareness that there is a backlog of care to be done, including cancer screening.

As we make this transition to more in-person care, we ask that you be patient with us. It may take longer to get an appointment or hear back from our offices. However, if your request is urgent, please call and indicate this to our medical secretaries and we will do our best to help you. Please do not email about urgent concerns.

To book an appointment at TC FHT, options include calling your provider's office or electronically booking a phone appointment through Pomelo Health (only available for some offices). If you do not have a Pomelo Health account, contact your provider's office and ask them to send you a Pomelo Health invitation.

Cont'd on page 5

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

We also have virtual after hours clinics Monday to Thursday evenings 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.

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

COVID-19 vaccine information is changing frequently. For regular vaccine updates, please check our [COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ](#) document on TC FHT's website. Questions have been chosen from multiple sources (e.g., Government of Canada, Toronto Public Health, Ontario College of Pharmacists, Ontario College of Family Physicians, etc.) and also questions received from patients. The FAQ document is compiled by our pharmacist and reviewed frequently. If you are hesitant or have doubts about getting the COVID-19 vaccine, we encourage you to contact us with your questions so we can help you make an informed decision.

Mental Health Webinars

Our Mental Health Program and our Patient & Family Advisory Committee have teamed up to offer Mental Health Webinars in November 2021. [Visit our website to learn more.](#)

Personnel Announcements

Julia Stanislavskaia, our generalist dietitian, resigned in August 2021 after 12.5 years with TC FHT. Julia contributed greatly to TC FHT's success and she will be sorely missed. We welcome Ekta Amarnani, our new generalist dietitian, who joined our team in September 2021.

Alexandra Kobayashi, Social Worker, is now on maternity leave and we are happy to announce that Farah Ahmed, Social Worker, joined our mental health team in September 2021 to cover Alex's leave.

Margarita Tkalenko, Administrative Assistant, joined TC FHT in June 2021. Welcome aboard, Margarita!

Jessica Lam, Pharmacist, returned from maternity leave in early November 2021. We say farewell to Niraj Maulkhan, Pharmacist, and wish him all the best in his career.

Taddle Creek

DIABETES
DIGEST

Why You Should Exercise During Pregnancy

By: Leila Hammond, Dietitian Student

Exercise in pregnancy is important not only for your health but also for your baby. Even if you were not active before your pregnancy, this can be a great time to start making healthy behaviour change.

Who Should Exercise During Pregnancy?

All women should be physically active during pregnancy, unless their primary care provider tells them to avoid exercise [1]. This includes women of all body shapes and sizes and women who were inactive prior to pregnancy. Exercise during pregnancy is not dangerous and does not increase the risk of negative outcomes. In fact, pre-natal exercise can lead to many health benefits for both the mother and baby. If you are unsure if it is safe for you to exercise while pregnant, talk to your primary care provider.

What are the Benefits of Exercising While Pregnant?

Exercising during pregnancy can lead to better outcomes for both mother and child. For the mother, exercise during pregnancy can reduce the risk of complications like pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes and depression [1]. It also reduces the risk of high birthweights in infants [1]. Some recent studies suggest that the benefits of exercise during pregnancy may be health protective for the child even into adulthood [2].

What Kind of Exercise Should Pregnant Women Do?

Current Canadian guidelines recommend that pregnant women get at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week [1]. Moderate intensity exercise is exercise that increases your rate of breathing, but you are still able to hold a conversation. Variety is also important when it comes to exercising so incorporating resistance exercises and stretching is also recommended [1].

Here are a few moderate intensity aerobic exercises to try during pregnancy:

- Brisk Walking
- Jogging
- Dancing
- Swimming



(Bonus: the water can help relieve tension in your back caused by your pregnancy belly)

What Kind of Exercise Should You Avoid?

Exercise during pregnancy is safe and beneficial, but some exercises should be avoided. These include scuba diving, and sports with a high risk of falling like soccer, basketball, wrestling, volleyball, skiing, and trampolining [3].

When to Stop Exercising

While exercise during pregnancy is safe, stop exercise immediately and seek medical attention if you experience any of the following symptoms [1, 3]:

- Chest pain
- Vaginal bleeding or leaking of amniotic fluid
- Shortness of breath or dizziness that does not go away after stopping exercise
- Uterine contractions

Cont'd on page 7

Cont'd from page 6 (Exercise During Pregnancy)

Gestational Diabetes and Exercise

Due to changes in hormones, some women develop high blood sugar during pregnancy, a condition known as gestational diabetes. Not only does exercising during pregnancy reduce the risk of gestational diabetes, it also has benefits for those already living with gestational diabetes. Exercise is a good way to manage blood sugar. Women with gestational diabetes have the same recommendations for exercise as women without gestational diabetes.

If you have questions, concerns, or challenges getting exercise while pregnant, speak with your primary care provider for support.

References

1. Mottola, M.F., et al., *Canadian guideline for physical activity throughout pregnancy*. British Journal of Sports Medicine, 2018. 52(21): p. 1339-1346.
2. Laker, R.C., et al., *Exercise during pregnancy mitigates negative effects of parental obesity on metabolic function in adult mouse offspring*. Journal of Applied Physiology, 2021. 130(3): p. 605-616.
3. Bø, K., et al., *Exercise and pregnancy in recreational and elite athletes: 2016/2017 evidence summary from the IOC expert group meeting, Lausanne. Part 5. Recommendations for health professionals and active women*. British journal of sports medicine, 2018. 52(17): p. 1080-1085.

Are Your Teens' and Tweens' Vaccinations Up-to-Date?

By: Registered Nurses at Taddle Creek Family Health Team

Although the COVID-19 vaccination program is top-of-mind, it is important to check that students received vaccines typically given at school in grade 7 or 8 through their local public health unit. Taddle Creek Family Health Team (TC FHT) can provide missing vaccinations, but the assistance of parents or guardians is needed as a first step.



Parents or guardians should check their child's vaccination history to see if they received one dose of Meningococcal-C-ACYW (Meng-C-ACYW), two doses of HPV-9/Gardasil-9 and two doses of hepatitis B vaccinations. It is ideal for them to start these vaccinations before they turn 15 because fewer doses are required, specifically two doses versus three of hepatitis B and HPV. If you have any trouble finding hard copies of the vaccine history, use the [Immunization Connect](#) portal to access their vaccine record (Please note that TC FHT cannot access this site on patients' behalf as it requires a unique user login).

If your child is registered with TC FHT, they can elect to receive these free vaccines at their TC FHT primary care provider's office. Once you have the vaccination information outlined above, please forward it to your primary care provider's office by sending it to the registered nurse (RN) either through PomeloHealth (secure email portal) or by calling the office to either fax or email directly to the RN.

Please note, Toronto Public Health (TPH) has intermittently held make-up vaccination clinics for students eligible for these vaccinations, but they are currently not running at the time of publication (November 2021). TPH's clinics and school vaccination plans will likely change again in 2022.

With a significant amount of attention being given to COVID-19, we are pleased to help our patients receive important vaccines that will keep them safe from other infections. We continue to encourage everyone who is eligible to prioritize getting fully vaccinated for COVID-19. The waiting periods both before and after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine has now been waived for receiving other vaccines.

Attention Asthma Patients!



Taddle Creek Family Health Team (TC FHT) has teamed up with eAMS (electronic Asthma Management System). If you have asthma, prior to your next appointment with your physician/nurse practitioner, you will receive an appointment reminder via email requesting you register with eAMS. Registering with eAMS can increase the efficiency and productivity of your asthma appointment (you can also register on your own anytime). Once you register, and complete a simple asthma questionnaire, information from your questionnaire is securely sent to your MD/NP with tailored recommendations to improve your asthma management. These recommendations are in line with the latest asthma research and guidelines. By registering you will also be able to view your personalized self-management asthma action plan and benefit from asthma educational material.



IF YOU HAVE ASTHMA PLEASE CONSIDER REGISTERING TODAY.

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT REGISTERING

CALL 416-260-1315

AND REQUEST THE eAMS

REGISTRATION GUIDE -

[HTTPS://WWW.EASTHMA.CA/PATIENTS.HTML](https://www.easthma.ca/patients.html)

How to Talk to Family and Friends about Vaccine Hesitancy

By Vicki McGregor, Registered Nurse

When a friend or family member delays acceptance or outright refuses to get a vaccine, despite it being available, that's called vaccine hesitancy.

We know that the best protection against COVID-19 is provided by getting fully vaccinated according to the latest guidelines (2 or 3 doses depending on eligibility). The global pandemic has left many people wondering how some people could reject the vaccine in such a risky context. There are a variety of reasons why people might be hesitant to receive the COVID-19 vaccine [1]:

- Concerns about the safety of the vaccine and the efficacy of the science
- Rumours, conspiracies, or misinformation
- Conflict with personal or political values
- Religious or moral objections to vaccines
- Past traumatic healthcare experiences
- Fear of needles

It can be challenging to have conversations about vaccine hesitancy with people in our lives; so, what's the best way to do this?

One helpful way to address these concerns is called the EAASE model [2], and though it was developed for use by health care practitioners, the principles can be used by anyone. EAASE stands for:

Engage with open questions
Affirm and reflectively listen
Ask for permission, then
Share information,
Evoke and evaluate options



Engage, Affirm and Reflectively Listen

Ask open-ended questions and listen without interruption or judgment to learn why the person is hesitant. Do not dismiss their concerns or feelings. Empathic listening can be practiced by affirming their concerns and reflecting their words back to them [2].

Ask and Share

Tailor your response to the reasons they are hesitant [2]. Ask permission to share facts that you know or to share a reliable source of information, such as the Centre for Effective Practice [3], Science Table [4] or Ministry of Health [5]. If they're open to speaking with a healthcare professional about their concerns, encourage them to call their trusted doctor or nurse, or to book a telephone consultation with a doctor through Scarborough Health Network's VaxFacts service [6] at 416-438-2911 ext. 5738.



Evoke and Engage

Steer the conversation from "why not" to the reasons why they should get vaccinated that really matter to them. Help with the process of scheduling their appointment.

The City of Toronto provides information on their website [7] about how to get vaccinated for COVID-19, including services for homebound people or those with transportation needs. CAMH offers a COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic [8] that supports people who have needle phobias or medical anxiety. SickKids Hospital offers support for paediatric patients in the GTA with specialized needs (e.g., medical complexity, developmental disorder, mobility, etc.) to reduce stress while receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. SickKids also offers medical consultation with a paediatric vaccination expert to discuss questions or concerns (requires doctor referral).

Cont'd on page 10

Cont'd from page 9 (Vaccine Hesitancy)

These conversations can be complicated and emotionally charged. The goal is not to “win” or immediately change someone’s mind, but rather to be an ally, validate their concerns, and aim for contemplation and ongoing discussion.

You can prepare for these conversations by reading the strategies in the vaccine hesitancy guide listed in the resources below [9]. Every person who chooses to get vaccinated will help bring us closer to moving past this COVID-19 pandemic, and as a trusted family member or friend, you can help play a role in this.

References

1. <https://www.vhguide.ca/explore>
2. <https://wecandohis.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/TalkWithFriendsFamily.pdf>

Resources

3. Centre for Effective Practice || <https://tools.cep.health/tool/covid-19-vaccines/>
4. Science Table || <https://covid19-sciencetable.ca>
5. Ministry of Health || <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccine-safety>
6. Scarborough Health Network VaxFacts|| <https://www.shn.ca/vaxfacts/>
7. City of Toronto COVID-19 Vaccination Information || <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-how-to-get-vaccinated/>
8. CAMH COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic || <https://www.camh.ca/en/camh-news-and-stories/covidvaccine>
9. Vaccine Hesitancy Guide || <https://www.vhguide.ca/explore>



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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

November 1 - February 1 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
Mindful Nutrition Group Virtual Call 416-260-1315 Note: MD referral required	Starts Jan 12, 2022 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	Nov 3 - Dec 15 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	Nov 3, 2021 (Part 1) Nov 10, 2021 (Part 2) Nov 11 2021 (Part 1) Nov 18, 2021 (Part 2) Dec 8, 2021 (Part 1) Dec 15, 2021 (Part 2) Dec 9, 2021 (Part 1) Dec 16, 2021 (Part 2) Jan 5, 2021 (Part1) Jan 12, 2021 (Part2) Jan 20, 2021 (Part 1) Jan 27, 2021 (Part 2)	Wednesdays 9:00 - 11:00 am 9:00 - 11:00 am 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 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?