

THE TADDLER

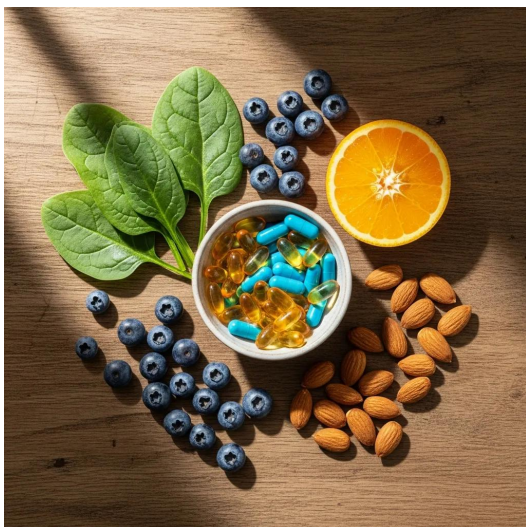
Natural Health Products: Are Your Vitamins & Supplements Safe For You?

By: Tania Ng, Pharmacist

If you look in your medicine cabinet, chances are you'll find at least one vitamin or supplement. In fact, 73% of Canadians use natural health products, including vitamins and minerals (Health Canada, 2024). Natural health products (NHPs) also include herbal remedies, homeopathic medicines, traditional medicines (like traditional Chinese and Ayurvedic medicines), probiotics, amino acids and essential fatty acids. There are many reasons why someone might take an NHP, but it is important to determine if they are safe.

What are the risks of NHPs?

Although NHPs are typically made from naturally occurring substances, they are not without risk. Some risks may include (Health Canada, 2016; Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2021):



- Contamination with toxic elements, such as lead, mold, or E.coli, or undeclared pharmaceutical drugs
- Incorrect or inconsistent ingredients or dosages
- Unproven claims of efficacy, such as claims for weight loss or sexual enhancement
- Interaction with prescribed or over-the-counter medications, other NHPs, or medical conditions
- Unwanted side effects, like allergic reactions or liver damage

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NHPs can interact with medications you take by raising or lowering the amount of the medication in your body. This can potentially cause more side effects or change how well the medication works. NHPs can also have similar side effects to medications already being taken, increasing one's risk of developing said side effects. For example, Omega-3 can act as a mild blood thinner, which could theoretically increase the risk of bleeding when used with another blood thinner, like Aspirin (Natural Medicines, n.d.). Additionally, some NHPs, like vitamin C and magnesium, are eliminated from the body by the kidneys. A risk for those with lower kidney function could be the build-up of NHPs in the body leading to toxic levels, and/or side effects. For these reasons, the dose of certain NHPs may need to be changed or stopped.

How do I reduce my risk of unwanted side effects from NHPs?

1. **Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist to check** whether an NHP is appropriate and safe for you.
2. **Make sure your health care provider knows what medications (prescription and non-prescription) and NHPs you are using** so they can check for interactions.
3. **Do your own research.** With all of the information available on the internet, it can be hard to find reliable sources on NHPs. [The About Herbs online database from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center](#) can be a helpful tool to explore a product's proven use, potential benefits, possible side effects, and interactions with other herbs or medicines.
4. **Use licensed NHPs** by looking for an eight-digit Natural Product Number (NPN) or Homeopathic Medicine Number (DIN-HM) on the label. This means that the product has been reviewed and approved by Health Canada for safety, efficacy and quality. It's still best to check with your health care provider before using even a licensed product.

While NHPs can be helpful, effective, and even necessary for improving health in some cases, they should be considered carefully. To discuss and review your medications and NHPs, you can get a referral to a Pharmacist at Taddle Creek Family Health Team by talking to your primary care provider.

References

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Mental Health Corner

Understanding Grief and Loss: Navigating the Healing Process

By: Maddie Potechin, Master of Social Work Student

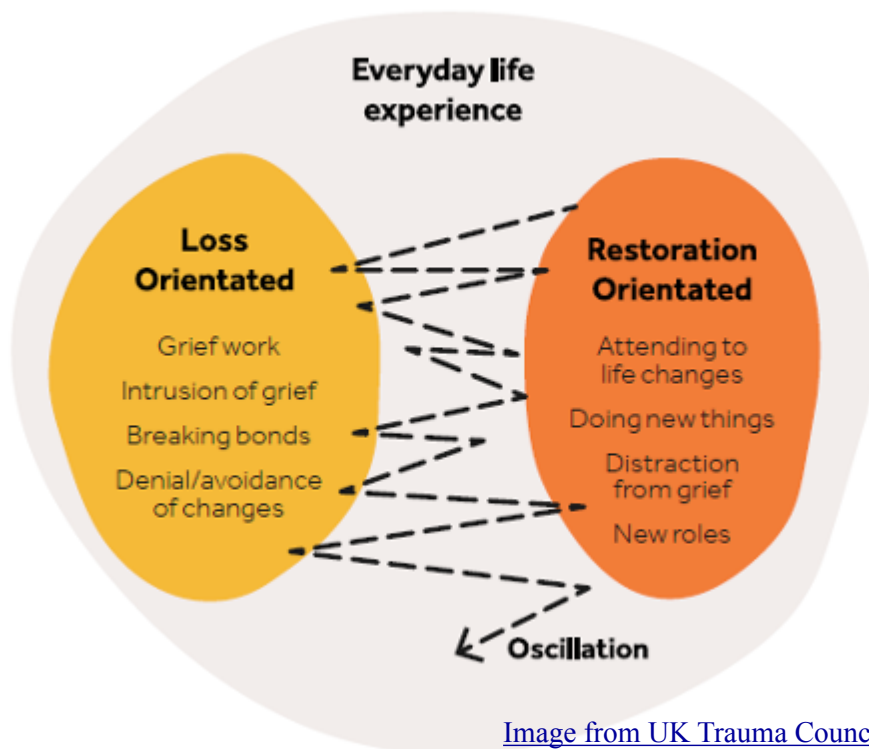
Grief and loss are universal human experiences. While grief is often associated with the death of a loved one, it can also arise from other losses, including the end of a relationship, changes in family life, or major life transitions like retirement or moving. Loss may be anticipated, such as preparing for a loved one's death or an expected life change, or sudden, which can bring up feelings of shock and confusion (John Hopkins Medicine, n.d.). Regardless of the type of loss, grief involves adjusting to a changed reality, which is a process that requires time, patience, and self-kindness.

The Grieving Process

Grief is a natural human response to loss and involves a wide range of emotional and physical reactions. Grief is highly individualized, with each person experiencing it differently. Emotionally, grief may involve feelings of anger, sadness, shock, guilt, numbness, resentment, and/or loneliness. Physically, grief may manifest as fatigue, restlessness, nausea, sleep or appetite disturbances, and/or concentration difficulties.

You may be familiar with the Kubler-Ross model of grief, where it is proposed that a person moves through the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. While these stages may resonate for some people, not everyone will experience each stage, nor will they necessarily experience the stages in order.

A more flexible framework of grief is the dual process model of grief, which suggests that people move between loss-oriented coping (focusing on the pain of the loss) and restoration-oriented coping (adjusting to a changed future) (Stroebe & Schut, 2010). Some days may be consumed by feelings of grief, while other days may involve rebuilding life and rediscovering moments of joy. Experiencing joy in these moments does not diminish the loss, but rather reflects one's ability to adapt and live alongside it.



[Image from UK Trauma Council](#)

Cont'd from page 3 (Understanding Grief and Loss: Navigating the Healing Process)

Ways of Coping

There are many ways to cope with grief and loss to help support the healing process, which can include:

- Acknowledging and expressing emotions by allowing oneself to feel sadness, anger, confusion, or any other emotions that arise.
- Connecting with trusted others to help process the loss, which can reduce feelings of isolation.
- Engaging in small acts of self-care, such as maintaining regular eating and sleeping routines, participating in gentle physical activity, and making time for joyful activities.
- Engaging in grief rituals, such as writing letters, lighting candles, or creating a scrapbook or memory box to honour the loss.
- Finding personal meaning in the loss by reflecting on what the person or situation meant to you.

If grief becomes overwhelming or interferes with daily functioning, seeking support from a mental health professional may be helpful (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, n.d.). We are here for you at Taddle Creek.

Conclusion

Processing grief does not need to be rushed or avoided, but can be welcomed and paced, as grief helps us mourn while we try to imagine a changed future. Though grief can feel all-consuming, with time and support, many people learn to carry the memories of what was lost alongside them as they live meaningful lives. Healing from grief does not mean forgetting the loss, but rather means learning how to move forward while simultaneously honouring what has been lost.

References

1. Canadian Mental Health Association (n.d.). Understanding and coping with loss and grief. <https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/understanding-and-coping-with-loss-and-grief/>
2. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (n.d.). Coping with loss and grief. <https://www.camh.ca/en/camh-news-and-stories/coping-with-loss-and-grief>.
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4. Stroebe, M., & Schut, H. (2010). The dual process model of coping with bereavement: A decade on. *OMEGA Journal of Death and Dying*, 61(4), 273–289. doi:10.2190/OM.61.4.b.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT TADDLE CREEK

By: Cheryl Dobinson, Executive Director

This column provides information about Taddle Creek Family Health Team (TC FHT) events, program updates and announcements.

Seniors Wellness Symposium - March 5, 2026

Our Mental Health Program hosted an in-person Seniors Wellness Symposium on March 5, 2026. The event featured five fantastic panelists who spoke on a range of important topics, including Advance Care Planning, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), supporting caregivers, and coping with change as a senior. More than 80 seniors and caregivers attended the symposium. Many participants shared positive feedback, expressing appreciation for the opportunity to come together, connect with others, and engage in meaningful discussions. Attendees also indicated that they would benefit from additional information related to Advance Care Planning - such as creating a will, appointing a Power of Attorney when family is unavailable, and related planning matters - as well as resources to support aging in place. Materials and resources from our presenters are available on our website: https://taddlecreekfht.ca/classes/seniors-wellness-symposium/?ref_program=mental-health

De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations Training

On March 24, 2026, we held a 90 minute training for the TC FHT team on de-escalating potentially violent situations for health care workers. Unfortunately, violence is a growing concern in health care settings and at TC FHT we aim to support our team's safety through training as well as through policies and procedures, safety assessments of our spaces and practices, and the physical set-up of our clinics. This trauma-informed training specifically designed for health care workers was delivered by Wilma Schroeder from the Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute. Team members learned strategies to combine assertiveness, empathy, and strong interpersonal communication to defuse tension before a situation turns violent. We explored how anger, violence, and the health care environment intersect and developed skills to assess the risks of violence and to respond in compassionate and boundaried ways.

Personnel Updates

Joanna Peddle, Nurse Practitioner, resigned effective February 27, 2026.

Karen Finch, Diabetes Nurse Educator, resigned effective April 17, 2026.

Jadie Stone, Nurse Practitioner, joined our team on March 30, 2026. Jadie is an experienced Primary Care Nurse Practitioner who has held positions with Anishnawbe Health Toronto and Health for All Family Health Team, as well as working as a Registered Nurse at Sick Kids for many years prior to becoming a Nurse Practitioner.

Taddle Creek

DIABETES
DIGEST

The Overlooked Organ: Why Liver Health Matters in Diabetes

By: Karen Finch RN, CDE (Diabetes Nurse Educator)

When we think about diabetes, the focus is often on blood sugar levels and complications involving the heart, kidneys, eyes, and nerves. However, people living with diabetes often overlook the liver as another important organ that can be affected.



Metabolic Dysfunction–Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD), previously known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), is a condition where excess fat builds up in the liver due to metabolic factors (ex. high cholesterol, high blood sugars) rather than alcohol use. As a result, it is commonly seen in individuals who have type 2 diabetes (T2D), prediabetes, high body weight, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol levels. It affects about **70% of people with T2D and 40–55% of people with prediabetes** (Diabetes Canada Clinical Practice Guidelines Expert Committee, 2018).

How MASLD and Diabetes Are Connected

High blood sugar leads to increased insulin and triglyceride levels (a type of fat in the blood). Together, these changes encourage fat to be stored in the liver. Fat in the liver can worsen insulin resistance, increasing the risk of developing T2D and making diabetes harder to manage.

A Spectrum of Disease

MASLD exists on a spectrum:

- **MASL:** Fat build-up in the liver without inflammation
- **MASH:** Fat build-up in the liver plus inflammation and liver cell damage
- **Fibrosis and cirrhosis:** Progressive scarring that can lead to liver failure

Many people have no symptoms in the early stages of MASLD. As the disease progresses, symptoms may include fatigue, discomfort on the right side of the abdomen, or signs of liver dysfunction.

Cont'd from page 6 (The Overlooked Organ: Why Liver Health Matters in Diabetes)

Why It Matters

People with both MASLD and diabetes are at significantly higher risk of:

- Heart disease and stroke
- Chronic kidney disease
- Liver failure and liver cancer
- Early death from any cause

Importantly, **heart disease is the leading cause of death in people with MASLD**, even more than liver failure.

Who Should Be Checked?

People with diabetes or prediabetes should be considered for liver assessment, especially if they also have:

- Increased visceral fat (fat around organs)
- Low muscle mass (sarcopenia)
- High blood pressure
- High triglycerides or low HDL (“good”) cholesterol

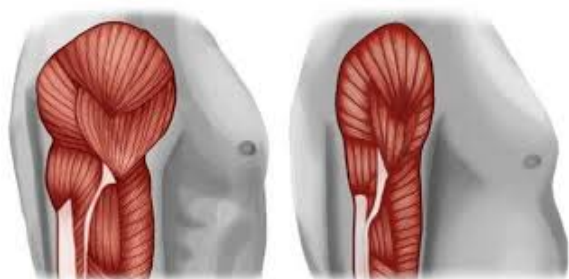


Illustration of muscle loss (sarcopenia), which can be associated with liver disease and diabetes.

If you have these risk factors, please talk to your primary care provider about being screened for MASLD. Diabetes Canada now recommends **screening for MASLD using the FIB-4 score**, which is a simple calculation based on routine blood tests, to identify people at low, intermediate, or high risk and to guide further testing or referral (Diabetes Canada

Clinical Practice Guidelines Expert Committee, 2024).

What Can You Do If You Are Diagnosed With MASLD?

The good news is that MASLD can improve with the right support, such as:

1. **Adopting health-supporting lifestyle habits.** Regular physical activity, nourishing eating patterns (such as a Mediterranean-style approach), adequate sleep, and stress management can improve liver health and insulin sensitivity. These habits help the body reach its natural balance and a healthy weight which can also reduce liver fat.
2. **Using diabetes and heart medications as prescribed.** Some diabetes medications may reduce liver fat. Statins are generally safe and important for heart protection unless there is advanced liver disease.
3. **Getting regular follow-up.** MASLD often goes undiagnosed—ask your healthcare team whether liver screening is appropriate.
4. **Accessing team-based support.** If you have diabetes or prediabetes, ask about referral to the Taddle Creek Diabetes Education Program or book follow-up with your care team.

References

Diabetes Canada Clinical Practice Guidelines Expert Committee. (2018). Diabetes and metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease in adults: A clinical practice guideline. *Canadian Journal of Diabetes*, 42 (Suppl 1), S1-S325. <https://guidelines.diabetes.ca/cpg/chapter42>

BETTER For All Program - Taking Charge of your Health Journey

Written by Arionne Mitchell, MSc., Team Lead BETTER For All Program and Adele Lewis, Registered Dietitian, MHSc., Prevention Practitioner at Taddle Creek Family Health Team

Cancer prevention is most effective when individuals, providers, and community partners work together to support healthy living. BETTER For All (BFA) is an evidence-based Peer Health Coaching (PHC) program that helps adults ages 40–69 reduce their risk of cancer and other chronic diseases through personalized support.

Taddle Creek Family Health Team began offering the BFA program to patients in July 2025 as part of its commitment to advancing preventative care and reducing health inequities in underserved communities. By expanding access to personalized support and evidence-based resources, the program helps ensure that more individuals can take meaningful steps toward improving their health and well-being. BFA is also offered at Access Alliance (College and Danforth sites), as well as partner locations including Village Family Health Team, Davenport Perth Community Health Centre, and Centre Francophone (Toronto).

Participants begin the program with a comprehensive assessment conducted by a prevention practitioner, which informs a tailored care plan. Prevention practitioners are healthcare professionals who receive specialized training through the Canadian

Cancer Society to support with assessing individual health risks, identifying screening needs, and helping patients set personalized prevention goals. After the initial assessment, participants receive up to six months of one-on-one virtual coaching from a trained PHC. PHCs offer friendly, goal focused support to help individuals make achievable lifestyle changes and stay on track with screening and wellness activities.

Who are the Peer Health Coaches (PHCs)?

PHCs are trained volunteers from the Canadian Cancer Society, aged 18–69, with diverse multicultural backgrounds and lived experiences that help them connect meaningfully with participants. To ensure culturally responsive support, coaching is available in English, French, Spanish, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujrati, Persian, Arabic, Yoruba, Pidgin, Bengali, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Twi.



Cont'd from page 8 (BETTER For All Program - Taking Charge of your Health Journey)

Program Benefits for Patients

BFA provides encouragement, accountability, and practical guidance—whether the goal is improving nutrition, increasing activity, reducing stress, quitting smoking, or better understanding of cancer screening. The program acts as an extension of preventative care with PHCs offering ongoing support and consistent reinforcement between visits with a primary care provider.

How to get involved

Due to the strong interest in the BFA program, registration at Taddle Creek Family Health Team is now full. **Patients who are still interested are welcome to register through Access Alliance, where the program continues to be offered. Registration is available until February 2027. To sign up, please email info.opendoor@accessalliance.ca. For more information about the program, please visit cancer.ca/betterforall.**

Your Health. Your Goals. Your Journey.

BETTER For All is a partnership between the Canadian Cancer Society, Women's College Hospital and Access Alliance. The program is offered through the Mid-West Toronto Ontario Health Team and is made possible through joint funding from the Canadian Cancer Society, Women's College Hospital Foundation and the Public Health Agency of Canada.



Inhaler Recycling Initiative

Help reduce plastic, metal, and greenhouse gas pollution by recycling your inhalers, spacers, and inhaler packaging through TC FHT's new inhaler recycling initiative. There are collection boxes now available in Suites 522 and 300 at 790 Bay Street, as well as in Suite 207 at 726 Bloor Street for you to drop off items. Please remember to remove labels with any personal information before recycling.

These items will be processed by [GoZero](#), a specialized recycling company that handles products which cannot be recycled through municipal programs.

- Metal and plastic parts are **recycled** and sold to local manufacturers who make products from recycled materials
- Any propellant gases remaining in the metal canisters are carefully **extracted and neutralized** so that they are no longer harmful to the environment
- Any powder in a dry powder inhaler device is **removed and incinerated**



Let's keep plastic and metals out of landfills and greenhouse gases out of the environment - together!

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:

1. Education on varied health-related topics
2. Regular communication about what is happening at TC FHT
3. Information on issues that impact TC FHT and its patients
4. 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 Spring 2026 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
Mental Health Program Workshops			
CBT-Insomnia Cafe In-person Note: Need to have taken the CBT-I group. Call to enroll- 416-260-1315 ext. 0	August 13, 2026 December 11, 2026	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workshop for people who have completed the CBT-Insomnia Group at Taddle Creek FHT • Provides a chance to connect with others who struggle with insomnia, share ideas and coping strategies, and brush up on CBT-I strategies • Combines both peer-support and psycho-education by the facilitators
Assertiveness Skills Practice Workshop In-person Prerequisite: Participants must watch the “Assertiveness Webinar” on the Taddle Creek website or have completed the Assertiveness Skills Workshop in 2025. Note: Call 416-260-1315 ext. 0 to join the wait list.	May 14, 2026 September 17, 2026	12:30 pm - 4:00 pm 1:00 to 4:30 pm	The assertiveness workshop is an educational group to provide information and strategies to help individuals better understand and develop techniques for assertive communication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how to define assertiveness • Learn about the spectrum between passive to aggressive communication • Explore the importance of boundaries and why they are valid • Learn tools for building assertive communication skills

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Dates are subject to change

Event	Date(s)	Time	Learn About/Assistance With
Mental Health Program Groups			
CBT-Insomnia In-person Note: Referral from your primary care provider is required to enroll	September 2, 2026 - October 7, 2026	Wednesdays 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioural and cognitive strategies to help treat insomnia, improve your sleep quality and promote good physical and mental health • An understanding of the physiological systems that regulate sleep • Learn about relaxation techniques to reduce stress and help you get to sleep • Use sleep diaries to monitor progress
Resourced and Resilient Group Virtual Note: Call to enroll- 416-260-1315 ext. 0	September 8, 2026 - October 27, 2026	Tuesdays 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm	The Resourced and Resilient Group is an 8-week group therapy program for adults who have experienced childhood trauma. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn different models, skills, and strategies that could support you in recovering from the long-term impacts of childhood trauma
DBT Skills Group Location TBD Note: Referral from your primary care provider is required to enroll	October 2026 Exact dates to be determined	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 12-week group with a focus on coping skills that can help participants navigate life's ups and downs • The four facets of DBT covered in this group include 1) distress tolerance, 2) emotional regulation, 3) interpersonal effectiveness, and 4) mindfulness • Each session includes time for practice of skills and sharing of experiences in applying the skills

Event	Date(s)	Time	Learn About/Assistance With
Diabetes Education Program			
<p>Blood Sugar Management Workshop</p> <p>Virtual</p> <p>Eligibility Criteria: Prediabetes or Diabetes</p> <p>Note: Call to register 416-204-1256 ext 0</p>	<p>May 21, 2026 (Part 1) May 28 2026 (Part 2)</p>	<p>Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm 5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	<p>An introductory two-part series designed to help individuals living with prediabetes or diabetes. Workshops will be held over Zoom.</p>
	<p>June 18, 2026 (Part1)</p>	<p>Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	<p>Part 1: Getting Started</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is diabetes?
	<p>June 25, 2026 (Part 2)</p>	<p>5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What causes diabetes? • How is prediabetes/diabetes diagnosed?
	<p>July 15, 2026 (Part 1)</p>	<p>Wednesdays 9:00 - 11:00 am</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I prevent long term complications related to diabetes?
	<p>July 22, 2026 (Part 2)</p>	<p>9:00 - 11:00 am</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is diabetes reversible?
	<p>July 23, 2026 (Part 1)</p>	<p>Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	<p>Part 2: Taking Charge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I manage my blood sugars?
	<p>July 30, 2026 (Part 2)</p>	<p>5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can I eat when I have prediabetes/diabetes?
	<p>Aug. 20, 2026 (Part 1)</p>	<p>Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can exercise help with prediabetes/diabetes?
	<p>Aug. 27, 2026 (Part 2)</p>	<p>5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does stress impact my prediabetes/diabetes?
	<p>Sept. 16, 2026 (Part 1)</p>	<p>Wednesdays 9:00 - 11:00 am</p>	
	<p>Sept. 23, 2026 (Part 2)</p>	<p>9:00 - 11:00 am</p>	
	<p>Sept. 17, 2026 (Part 1)</p>	<p>Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	
	<p>Sept. 24, 2026 (Part 2)</p>	<p>5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	
	<p>Oct. 22, 2026 (Part 1)</p>	<p>Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	
<p>Oct. 29, 2026 (Part 2)</p>	<p>5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>		

Event	Date(s)	Time	Learn About/Assistance With
Diabetes Education Program			
<p>Blood Sugar Management Workshop</p> <p>Virtual</p> <p>Eligibility Criteria: Prediabetes or Diabetes</p> <p>Note: Call to register 416-204-1256 ext 0</p>	<p>Nov. 4, 2026 (Part 1) Nov. 11, 2026 (Part 2)</p> <p>Dec. 3, 2026 (Part1) Dec. 10, 2026 (Part 2)</p>	<p>Wednesdays 9:00 - 11:00 am 9:00 - 11:00 am</p> <p>Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm 5:00 - 7:00 pm</p>	<p>An introductory two-part series designed to help individuals living with prediabetes or diabetes. Workshops will be held over Zoom.</p> <p>Part 1: Getting Started</p> <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? <p>Part 2: Taking Charge</p> <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?