



Toronto Western
Family Health Team
*Garrison Creek
Bathurst*

TW FHT Newsletter

March 2026

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Clinic Updates & Reminders

NEW Mental Health Group at TW FHT

ACTivate Your Life



The TW FHT is proud to offer "**ACTivate Your Life (Psychotherapy Group)**". This 6-week Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) group is for patients of the TW FHT who are experiencing challenges with physical and/or mental health conditions.

This group will give you a new perspective on your troubles by helping you open up to difficult thoughts and feelings while doing what really matters to you.

In this group you will:

- Develop skills to manage and cope with difficult experiences, painful thoughts and emotions
- Discover your personal values
- Learn about and practice mindfulness
- Take action to do what matters to you

Two social workers will facilitate the group.

The facilitators will complete a brief phone intake with you to confirm suitability for this group. If interested and available to attend all 6 sessions, please sign-up below.

This group will run Tuesdays from April 21 to May 26 from 1:30 to 3:30pm, in-person at the [Garrison Creek site](#).

Limited spaces available. Exclusive to TW FHT patients.

[Sign up for this group](#)

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Verify Your Email is Correct

When signing in at the kiosk or with a member of our reception team, please double check that your email address is correct.

- Look for small errors that can occur such as missing letters, extra dots, or underscores.

If you are expecting an email from your healthcare provider but do not receive one, please confirm that your email on file is correct.

Keeping your email accurate ensures you receive important updates from your healthcare team.

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Health Promotion: Health Topics

Stroke Risk and Prevention

Know the signs of STROKE

F **Face**
is it drooping?

A **Arms**
can you raise both?

S **Speech**
is it slurred or jumbled?

T **Time**
to call 9-1-1

Beat stroke, call 9-1-1 FAST

© Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, 2023

Preventing stroke and heart disease starts with knowing your personal risk.

In Canada, 9 out of 10 people have at least one risk factor for stroke or heart disease, yet nearly 80% of early strokes and heart disease cases can be prevented through healthy lifestyle choices.

Things that put you at risk for stroke include:

- Unhealthy diet
- Not exercising enough
- Smoking tobacco
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Recreational drug use
- Stress
- Birth control and Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)

[Learn more about each lifestyle risk factors](#)

What can you do? Simple actions such as eating well, staying physically active, and avoiding smoking, can make a significant difference in protecting your long-term health.

Health conditions that are risk factors:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Atrial fibrillation

What can you do? Attend all recommended preventative care appointments to closely monitor your ongoing health conditions. Take your medications exactly as prescribed by your healthcare provider to help reduce your risk of stroke.

Risk factors you cannot control:

- Age - the older you are, the higher your risk of stroke.
- Sex - your risk increases after menopause.
- Family and medical history - if you have a close relative who has experienced a stroke or TIA (mini-stroke) at an early age, you are at increased risk.
- Heritage - People of Indigenous heritage, African or South Asian heritage have a higher risk of stroke.
- Personal circumstances - things like access to healthy food, safe drinking water, health services and social services have an influence on your health.

[Learn more about stroke risk and prevention](#)

Online Resources

- [Heart & Stroke's Risk Screen](#)
- [What is stroke? | Heart and Stroke Foundation](#)
- [Stroke in Canada - Canada.ca](#)

Mental Health in Older Adults

The words "MENTAL" and "HEALTH" are spelled out in black letters on yellow rectangular tiles. To the right of the "MENTAL" tiles is a small green leaf with several smaller leaves attached to a stem. The background is a light, neutral color.

MENTAL

HEALTH

Mental illness is not a normal part of aging. Some mild declines in cognition and mood may be normal as we age, but mental illnesses like depression, anxiety, and psychosis are medical conditions that can be treated.

Older adults have a higher risk for developing mental health problems due to the significant life changes that come with aging such as:

- Retirement and decreased income
- Possible need to move from your home to a supportive housing residence
- Changes in your health or needing more help from others
- Death of a spouse, family member or close friend
- Being a caregiver for a spouse, family member or close friend

It is important to know the symptoms of common mental health illnesses like mood and anxiety disorders in order to get the help or treatment you need.

Common symptoms of depression in older adults:

- Loss of pleasure or interest in previously enjoyed activities

- Sleeping too little or too much
- Rapid weight gain or loss
- Low energy
- Unable to focus
- Experiencing confusion
- Having unusual outbursts of crying, agitation or anger, or showing little emotion
- Thinking/talking about suicide

Common symptoms of anxiety in older adults:

- Excessive worries or fears
- Compulsive, repeated safety checks
- Avoiding social situations
- Avoiding routine activities
- Physical signs like shallow breathing, sweating, trembling, racing heart, headaches, stomach aches

Here are some things you can do to help improve or maintain good mental health:

1. Be active. Have a variety of activities that help keep you physically, mentally, and socially active. For help finding fitness, social or recreational activities for older adults, call 2-1-1 or [search online for tips](#).
2. Eat a healthy diet. [Tips on healthy eating for older adults](#).
3. Practice mindfulness or meditation daily. You can find a variety of free guided mindfulness exercises in the following links:
 - [Insight Timer](#)
 - [YMCA](#)
4. Increase your knowledge about mental health wellness by reading self-help books or use a self-help app. [Find a variety](#).

[of books and apps.](#)

5. Set small health goals to gradually improve your health. The [Fountain of Health app](#) is free and can help you with this.

6. Speak with a mental health professional. Ask your family doctor for a referral or call the Toronto Seniors Helpline for help finding mental health and other support services:

- Phone: 416-217-2077
- Website: <https://torontoseniorshelpline.ca/>

7. Ask your doctor if medication may be helpful in managing any symptoms.

Online Resources:

- [CAMH Anxiety in Older Adults](#)
- [CAMH Depression in Older Adults](#)
- [Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health](#)
- Check out our [Senior Health Series](#) for health education workshops for seniors.

Written by Social Worker Lina Amaral

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Nutrition Month

NOURISH TO FLOURISH

NUTRITION MONTH 2026

March is Nutrition Month!

This year's theme is Nourish to Flourish. Food is more than fuel, it connects us to our cultures, our communities, and ourselves. Keeping nourished helps people flourish in all aspects of their lives.

Here is a budget-friendly, heart healthy meal recommended by the TW FHT's Registered Dietitians.

- You can make the recipe below in 15 minutes! Add your own cultural spin by substituting harissa paste with other delicious options provided in the notes below.
- Serve this with bread, rice, potatoes and/or salad and enjoy!

Written by Registered Dietitian Sarah Hunt and Janna Kwong



Chickpea Shakshuka

15 minutes, serves 4

Shakshuka is a delicious dish of eggs poached in a savory tomato and pepper sauce. It originated in North Africa but is also very popular in the Middle East.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups chickpeas (or 2 cans - 15 ounce cans)
- 1 can (28-ounce) diced peeled tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons harissa*
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 4 eggs
- Sea salt & black pepper

Directions:

1. In a large pan over medium heat add the chickpeas, diced peeled tomatoes, and harissa. Bring to a boil, and reduce the heat down to simmer. Let cook for about 10 minutes.
2. Add the baby spinach and cook for another 2 minutes.
3. Create 4 pockets and crack an egg into each pocket. Cover the pan and cook until the eggs are set, about 5-6 minutes.
4. Season with salt and pepper, and enjoy!

Notes:

***Harissa substitutes:**

- 1:1 ratio of tomato paste and spices such as chili powder, cayenne, or paprika
- Sriracha
- Gochujang
- Sambal oelek
- Thai red curry
- Peri peri sauce

Leftovers: Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Serving size: One serving is equal to approximately 1 1/2 cups.

More veggies/ flavour: Sautee garlic, onion and bell peppers in olive oil before adding the chickpeas, tomatoes and harissa.

Additional toppings: Garnish with feta cheese and fresh herbs.

Recipe credit: <https://thatcleanlife.com/>

Online Resources

- [Cookspiration](#) - for more recipes and menu planning
- [Unlockfood.ca](#) - for nutrition content by RDs

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Upcoming Seniors Health Series Health Education Workshops

March to April 2026

The TW FHT is proud to offer a [Senior Health Series](#).

These workshops focus on providing practical tools, reliable information, and supportive guidance to help you live well as you age.

These workshops are **for TW FHT patients only**.

Recommended for patients aged 65 and older, but individuals of other ages are welcome to participate.

Spaces are limited. Online registration is required.

If you need help with registering online, please ask a member of our team.

Top 5 Moments for Medication Safety

In-person at Bathurst site



Research shows that medication-related safety issues are common, particularly for older adults.

This workshop will guide you through practical steps you can take to stay safe when taking your medications.

[**Sign up for this workshop**](#)

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Nutrition for a Healthy Heart

In-person at Garrison Creek



Have you been diagnosed with high cholesterol or high blood pressure and want to learn about nutritional management?

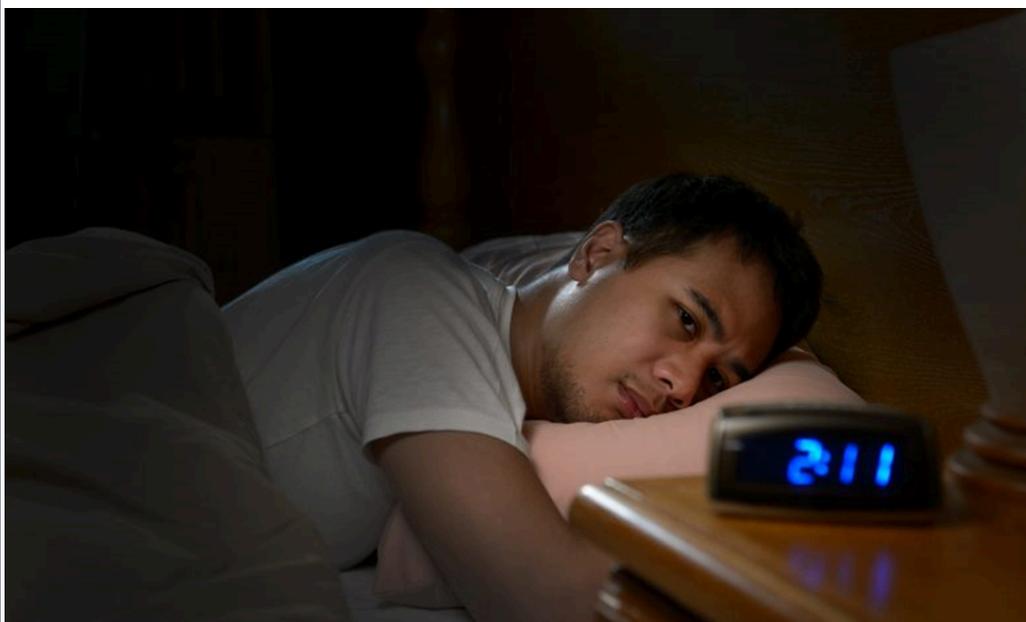
Join us for this workshop to get heart healthy!

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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Sleep Therapy 101

In-person at Garrison Creek



Struggling with sleep? Whether falling asleep or staying asleep? Join our in-person Sleep Therapy 101 workshop designed for patients who want to learn practical, non-medication strategies to improve sleep.

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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Resources for Seniors: Government Benefits, Housing and Community Services

In-person at Bathurst site



Learn about what programs, services and government benefits are available to seniors. This is an important part of healthy aging to make sure that your later years are safe and secure.

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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Check out additional health education workshops in the Senior Health Series (April 2026):

1. [Advance Care Planning](#)
2. [Preventing Falls: Staying Strong and Steady](#)
3. [Osteoporosis Foundations: Taking Control of Bone Health](#)
4. [Footcare for Seniors](#)
5. [Living Well as We Age: Staying Healthy, Active and Connected](#) *NEW*

Spaces are limited. Online registration is required. If you need help with registering online, please ask a member of our team.

Senior Health Series

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www.twfht.ca

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up-to-date health information

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Do you have ideas about other health topics?



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