



Toronto Western
Family Health Team
*Garrison Creek
Bathurst*

TW FHT Newsletter

Summer 2025

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Clinic Updates & Reminders

New Resident Doctors are Joining in July

On July 1, 2025, new resident doctors will be joining the TW FHT. The residency program is part of the University of

Toronto Faculty of Medicine's highly ranked training program for new family physicians. The UHN Department of Family and Community Medicine has been a training site for resident doctors for many decades, and works in partnership with the Toronto Western Family Health Team to train new family doctors.

What is a Resident Doctor?

Resident doctors have completed medical school and received their Medical Doctor (M.D.) degree. They are approved to practice medicine under the supervision of a university-appointed staff family physician, and must complete two years of training through the University of Toronto's Department of Family and Community Medicine. During their training, residents can do everything a staff doctor can do, such as ordering tests and prescribing medications, under supervision. If a resident refers you to a specialist or books additional tests, the name of the supervising staff doctor will appear on these referrals or tests.

We are proud to train excellent family physicians of the future. We thank you for helping us fulfill this important mission.

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OurCare Survey

With 6.5 million Canadians without a family doctor, we're facing a crisis in health care. That's why the OurCare survey is so important. Led by Dr. Tara Kiran at St. Michael's Hospital's MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions, this survey aims to gather feedback on your experiences with primary care.

The survey is being conducted in partnership with the Canadian Medical Association. By sharing your voice, you'll help researchers understand what's needed for a stronger, more equitable health care system in Canada.

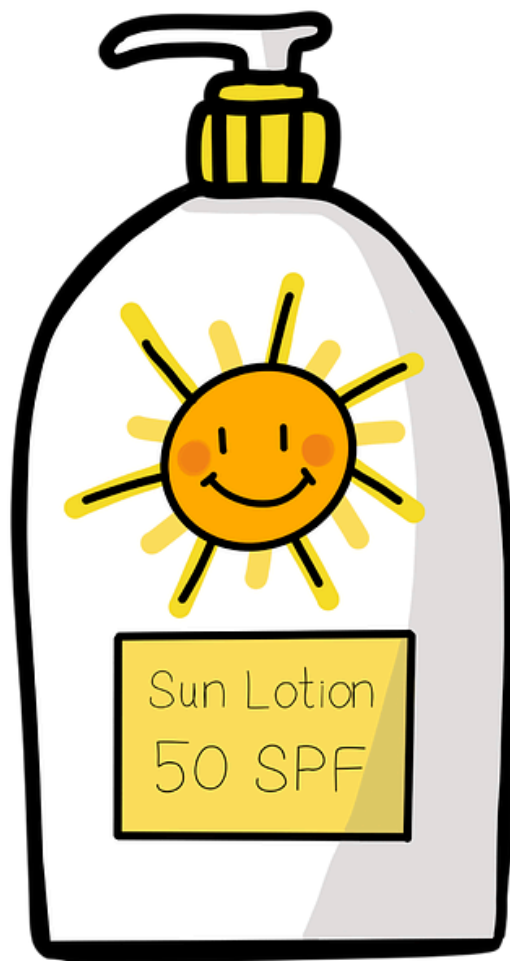
Take the OurCare research survey and share your voice.

Take the OurCare research survey

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Health Promotion: Health Topics

Sun Safety Tips



Sun safety is essential for everyone in the family. Some sun exposure is important for vitamin D production, which is needed for healthy bones and muscles. However, unprotected exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays can harm your skin, eyes, and immune system, and may lead to cancer.

Sunburn and too much UV exposure can harm your skin, causing issues like skin cancer, melasma (dark patches), or

early aging (photoaging). Sunscreen helps prevent your skin from darkening and aging, even if you don't get sunburned.

Protect Against UV Rays All Year Round

- UV protection is necessary year-round, not just in summer.
- Reflections off surfaces like snow, water, sand, and concrete can increase UV exposure.
- Cloudy days, swimming, and skiing still require UV protection.
- Model sun-protective behavior for children.
- Medications may increase health risks and UV sensitivity, it is important to talk to your healthcare provider.
- Avoid tanning equipment as it damages skin.
- Sunless tanning products do not offer enough protection.

Applying sunscreen is one of the most effective and simplest methods to safeguard your skin's appearance and health, regardless of age.
Consistent use of sunscreen helps prevent sunburn, skin cancer, and premature aging.

What is SPF?

SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor. SPF shows how well a sunscreen protects against UVB rays, which cause sunburn and skin cancer.

What sunscreen should I buy?

For daily use, choose a sunscreen with an **SPF of at least 50**. If you spend a lot of time outdoors, use SPF 60 or higher. Also, use a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen.

Most people do not apply enough sunscreen.
As a guide, adults should aim to apply around 2 to 3 tablespoons of sunscreen if you're covering your entire body. If sunscreen is applied too thinly, the amount of protection it gives is reduced.

Sunscreen has not been approved in infants younger than 6 months, so young babies should use protective clothing, sunglasses and avoid the sun.

Sun Safety Tips

- **Cover up:** Wear light-colored, long-sleeved shirts, pants, wide-brimmed hats and UV-blocking sunglasses. Clothing with higher UPF provide more protection.
- **Limit direct sun exposure (seek shade):** Stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- **Use the UV Index forecast:** Check local forecasts and wear protective clothing and sunscreen when the UV index is 3 or higher.
- **Use sunscreen:**
 - Wear sunscreen every day
 - Sunscreen should be SPF 50 or higher
 - Use broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
 - For extended outdoor activity, use SPF 60 or higher
 - Re-apply every 2-3 hours or after swimming or excessive sweating
- **Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of cool liquids, especially water.
- **Avoid tanning equipment:** It increases the risk of skin cancer.

Skin Checks

To check for possible skin cancers, it's recommended to examine your skin yourself every month. During the check, remember the ABCDEs: **Asymmetry, Border, Color, Diameter, and Evolution.**

- Unexpected bleeding is a serious symptom, and you should book an appointment with your primary care provider.
- Watch for unusual moles or any changes in a mole's color, size, or shape.
- [Click here](#) to learn how to perform a skin check.
- To monitor a specific mole, place a ruler next to it and take a picture with your cellphone. Track any changes in the shape and size of the mole with this picture.

Edited by Dermatologist Dr. Michal Bohdanowicz

Online Resources:

- [Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation](#)
- [Skin Cancer](#)
- [Spotlight on Sun Safety](#)

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Protecting Your Lungs from Wildfire Smoke



Wildfire smoke can irritate the respiratory system and can cause an immune response. This means that wildfire smoke can affect your lungs but can also affect other parts of your body. It is important to note that people respond differently to wildfire smoke.

Some people are at higher risk of health problems, including:

- Infants & young children
- Older adults
- Pregnant people
- People with chronic lung or heart conditions, diabetes, or cancer

What are common symptoms?

- Headache
- Sore throat
- Mild cough
- Runny nose or eye irritation
- Mucous or phlegm

What are serious symptoms?

- Shortness of breath
- Severe cough or wheezing
- Dizziness
- Chest pain
- Heart palpitations (irregular heartbeat)

If you experience any of the **serious symptoms** listed, please seek medical attention immediately.

What can you do to protect your breathing?

- Stay indoors and reduce outdoor activity when levels are high.
- Avoid exercising outdoors when levels are high.
- Keep your windows & doors closed. This will help reduce the amount of polluted air in your home.
- Use a portable air cleaner with a HEPA filter to reduce indoor air pollution.
- Do not vape or smoke indoors.
- Reducing exposure is the best way to protect yourself.
- Pay attention to air quality reports on your local news channels or websites ([Air Quality Index](#))
- Wear a properly fitted N95 face mask. It may help reduce the amount of smoke particles you breathe in. However, these masks won't fully protect your lungs from the tiny, harmful particles in smoke. No mask can completely prevent smoke from reaching your lungs.

Additional Resources

- [Air Quality Index](#)
- [Health Effects of Wildfire Smoke](#)
- [Lung Health Foundation, Ontario](#)

Staying Active and Preventing Injuries This Summer



Encourage all family members to be active together. Consider the following guidelines for your family:

Older adults 65 years and older should aim for:

- At least **150 minutes a week of moderate intensity activity (brisk walking)**. This is about 30 minutes, 5 times per week.
- At least 2 days a week of activities that strengthen muscles.
- Activities to improve balance such as standing on one foot.
- IMPORTANT: Be as active as you are able to.

Adults ages 18-64 should aim for:

- At least **150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activity (brisk walking)**. This is about 30 minutes, 5 times per week.

At least **2 days a week** of activities that strengthen muscles.

- IMPORTANT: Be as active as you are able to.

Children ages 5 to 17 should aim for:

- At least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily.

Children ages 3 to 4 need even more active time than 60 minutes.

Screen time:

- Screen time for children younger than 2 years is not recommended apart from video-chatting with caring adults.
- Limit non-active time spent on computers, electronic games, or watching TV to less than 1 hour per day for **ages 3 to 5**, and less than 2 hours per day for **ages 6 to 17**.
- Maintain daily screen-free times, especially for family meals and book-sharing.

Summer Safety

Stay safe this summer while enjoying wheeled activities like biking, scootering, rollerblading, and skateboarding.

Wearing a properly fitted helmet can protect your head from serious head injuries.

In Ontario, children and youth under 18 are required by law to wear a helmet when cycling. TPH encourages everyone participating in wheeled activities to wear a helmet, regardless of age.

Did you know?

- Electric scooters (e-scooters) are not allowed to be ridden in the City of Toronto, regardless of your age.
- E-bikes are only permitted for those 16 years and older.
- Learn more about where different forms of Micromobility are allowed to operate in the City.

Additional Resources

- [Healthy Screen Use - Guidance for Parents](#)
- [Physical Activity Recommendations for Different Age Groups](#)
- [Tips to Get Active \(Children 5 to 11\)](#)
- [City of Toronto's Electric Scooters & Electric Bicycles](#)

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Health Education Workshop Survey

Tell Us Your Preferred Times



We are committed to providing workshops that best meet the needs and preferences of our patients and community. By filling out this survey, you help us understand your preferred times for attending our health education workshops.

Our online workshops are open to the public.

[Take this survey now](#)

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Upcoming Health Education Workshops September 2025

Preventing Falls

In-person at Bathurst site



Have you had a fall or are you afraid of falling? Are you curious to learn what you can do to prevent a fall?

Join us for this in-person interactive information session to learn about falls, what contributes to falls and ways you can prevent falls.

Please note that this is NOT an exercise class.

Spaces are limited.

This workshop is exclusively for TW FHT patients.

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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Nutrition for a Healthy Heart



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

Join us for our virtual workshop to get heart healthy!

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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Let's Talk About Menopause



This online workshop has been co-designed with a patient partner, someone with lived experience of menopause. It will review the common signs and symptoms of menopause and common real-world strategies for living well during this natural, healthy life transition.

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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Technology, Social Media and Mental Health



Join this virtual workshop to learn and discuss the relationship between technology use, especially social media and mobile

devices, and mental health.

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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Migraines: A Survival Guide



Are you an adult that suffers from migraines? Do you want to learn more about migraine headaches and the different treatment options available?

Join this virtual workshop to understand migraine symptoms and potential causes, and learn about lifestyle changes you can make.

[Sign up for this workshop](#)

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