

Happy Holidays

from the Chronic Disease Steering Committee



The Chronic Disease Steering Committee developed this resource because we recognized that the holiday season is often accompanied by some challenges for our health related goals.

This holiday edition of the Chronic Disease Newsletter is intended to support both the employee and the patient populations navigate their health and wellness goals through the holidays.

This newsletter contains the following topics:

- Tips for staying mentally well during the holidays
- Giving yourself permission to be “off track”
- Tips for getting back “on track”
- Can I get you something to drink?
- Mocktail recipes

Please print and share this newsletter.

Tips for Staying Mentally Well During the Holidays

With pressure to shop, bake, clean, attend holiday gatherings and entertain, the holiday season can be a very stressful time! Minimize your stress and stay mentally well by following these tips:

1. Sometimes the simplest things are the greatest things! Warm yourself up with a cup of tea or hot chocolate, curl up by the fire and watch your favourite holiday movie.
2. Get outside! Winter weather may not be appealing but a walk, some fresh air or a winter sport can help you to de-stress.
3. Canada’s Food Guide recommends eating a variety of food every day, and what you eat on a regular basis matters to your physical and mental well-being. Being mindful of choices throughout the year is important but enjoying foods for traditional and celebratory reasons over the holidays is a part of healthy eating too.
4. If you have been keeping to yourself lately, now is a great time to reconnect with friends and family or to get out and volunteer.
5. Love social media? Over the holidays look at only positive and kind posts or take a break from social media altogether to relax and unwind.

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, we struggle with mental health and/or substance use concerns. If you or someone you know is struggling, there is help!

Identify and access online resources at www.nl.bridgethegapp.ca

The Bridge the Gapp website has information on mental health and substance use issues and provides residents of Newfoundland and Labrador with access to free and confidential online and telephone-based programs

Call 811 to find the Doorways location nearest you

DoorWays is the province’s single-session walk-in counselling service, available to all ages in many communities across the province. No referral required and no waitlist!

Call the mental health and addictions triage line at 1-844-353-3330

Residents in the central region of the province can self-refer to Mental Health & Addictions

Call 811 or text “wellness” to 741741 in a mental health crisis

The mental health crisis line is available through 811, or by texting “wellness” to 741741. You may also proceed to your nearest emergency department.



Give Yourself Permission to be “Off Track”

Change is hard, and over the holidays, staying on track with goals you have set for yourself can seem daunting. Consider giving yourself permission to be “Off Track” during the holidays: set a defined period of time when you aren’t thinking about sticking to your goals and just be. If you think this isn’t the best option for you then perhaps just make your goals smaller.

Anytime you are setting goals, remember to make them **SMART**:

S	M	A	R	T
Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Timely
Who? What? Where? Why?	How will you track your progress?	How will you achieve this goal?	How does this goal help you?	When will you achieve this goal?
Accumulate 7,500 steps per day for better health and increased happiness	Use the ParticipACTION app to track daily steps	Take a 20-30 minute walk each day, spend time gardening each week, and remembering to park further away when running errands.	Getting more steps each day will give me more energy, will lift my mood, and will help me be my best self!	Accumulate 7,500 steps per day for a total of 230,500 steps in one month!

There are resources available to support you:

- How to set SMART goals resource available [here](#).
- Consider using this [Action Plan Tool](#) to write down your goal - the simple act of writing it down will lead to success!

If you would like some more support, refer yourself to the Health Coach program by calling 256-5690 to receive one-on-one support from a trained provider.



Five Ways to Get Back On Track

1. AVOID THE NEGATIVITY

Stop beating yourself up! Falling off track doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you or that you lack willpower, it means you're human - a human that's trying to make positive changes. That's something to be proud of and feel good about. Never feel guilty or ashamed for trying. Hoping for better is what got you started in the first place and it's what's going to get you going again.

2. REALIZE YOU'RE NOT STARTING BACK AT SQUARE ONE

One of the most demoralizing parts of getting back on track is thinking that you've lost all your progress and have to start back at square one. Luckily, this isn't true! Every time you start, you make progress that you can't lose.

3. SEE EACH SLIP-UP AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN.

Framing your failures as learning opportunities is a great way to a) feel better and b) get better. Instead of dwelling on the fact that something went wrong, try to figure out what exactly went wrong and why. You may consider readjusting your goals to make them more realistic.

4. SET CLEAR PRIORITIES.

We often fall off track when we try to do too many things at once. Unfortunately, we only have so much time and energy each day. Sometimes to achieve certain goals, other ones must be left behind.

When you first started, your health was likely at the top of your priority list (that's why you decided to make a change in the first place). Consider what's happened since and what other priorities took over.

Balance is something we all must find in life, and health and wellness certainly doesn't have to be at the top of your list all the time. But it's also important to take a good hard look at how

you're currently spending your time and whether your daily activities are in line with your goals and greater vision for your life.

5. FIND WAYS TO MAKE IT MORE SUSTAINABLE.

Though our specific goals vary, in general, we're all hoping to make change last. Try to keep that in mind when you start again by using practical tips like:

- Set a schedule you can stick to and that takes into consideration your competing demands
- Enlist the help of a good friend or family member to regularly check in with you and hold you accountable
- Start smaller than you did last time and focus on consistency over intensity
- Remember that something is always better than nothing
- Place a greater emphasis on self-care



Can I Get You Something to Drink?

This is a question that you may be asked more this time of year. You may feel pressure to choose a drink that contains alcohol, and often those beverages will also contain a lot of sugar as well. Remember that it's okay to ask for a beverage of your choice, or simply decline without providing a reason. There are many reasons we make the choices we do and should not be judged or pressured to change that choice. Many things affect our choice of drink such as being a designated driver for the evening, pregnancy, medications that interact with alcohol, medical conditions, health related goals to decrease alcohol use or sugar intake, etc. Being mindful of beverage choices during the holidays or anytime of year, either as a host or participant, is important.

Some suggestions for hosts:

Avoid having alcohol as the focus of the party by planning some alcohol-free activities.

Reducing the amount of alcohol you drink can save you money, improve your mental health and support you in getting a good night's sleep.

Have non-alcoholic drinks available like water, juice or sparkling soda - this will help with the dehydrating effects of alcohol.

Avoid 'topping up' other people's drinks for them and ensure everyone has a safe ride home.

Consider these as options this holiday season

- Non-alcoholic beer or wine
- Flavoured sparkling water or club soda
- Diet/zero sugar pop (can have these caffeine free)

A festive punch formula:

- A clear beverage like club soda, lemon lime, or ginger ale
- Ice
- Fresh or frozen berries (raspberries, cranberries or strawberries)

Can add a splash of reduced sugar red juice like cranberry or raspberry juice to colour it red, and garnish with a lime, orange or pineapple.

Or you can try your mixology skills on one of these festive mocktail recipes:

Merry Mary Mocktail

- 1 cup (250 mL) tomato juice (low sodium versions are available)
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) dill pickle juice (optional)
- 2-5 dashes Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) lime juice (fresh or bottled “real” lime juice)
- Pinch celery powder to taste

Add all ingredients of your choice to glass and stir well. Add lots of ice and garnish (Garnish ideas: pickles, celery, pickled onions, olives, lime).

Source: mindfulmocktail.com

Festive Cosmopolitan Mocktail

- 1/3 cup (85 mL) reduced sugar cranberry cocktail*
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) lime juice (fresh or bottled “real” lime juice)
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) sparkling water (e.g. soda water)
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) 100% orange juice

1. Place cranberry juice, lime and sparkling water in a cocktail shaker (mason jar works great).
2. Add plenty of ice and shake gently (just enough to combine, you don't want to remove all the fizz from your sparkling beverage).
3. Pour into a martini glass (you can rim your glass with very finely grated lime peel and a little sugar if desired).
3. Add splash of orange juice and serve.

*try other reduced sugar blends like cran-pomegrante or cran-raspberry cocktail for variety.

