



HOT FLASHES



Newsletter of the Women's Mid-Life Health Centre of Saskatchewan

March 2008 Edition

Making Life Precious

by Dr. Vicki Holmes

Have you ever had the sensation when a moment in time stood still? A vivid moment where you were intensely aware and present, when you seemed to have a special connection to the universe, or to God? It may come unexpectedly as when a child tells you he loves you, or when a friend shares an intimate secret, happy or sad. It may be in sharing a moment with your partner in the sweet surrender of sexual intimacy. It may be an “aha” moment when a solution that has been escaping you suddenly presents itself. What happened to create that difference? It feels so good – how can we experience more of these exquisite moments? What is the essence of that soulful experience?

Several things that come to mind:

1 Time; take time to be present in the moments of our life. When we are too rushed to pay attention, we are unavailable to perceive the richness of the moment. Time pressures rob us of our ability to even NOTICE! All too often we set ourselves up to only skim the surface of life by taking on too much. Work is wonderful but when we are driven to excess, we must calculate the personal cost and decide what or how we are willing to pay.

The options we have within our grasp:

- Learn to choose carefully those projects that we actually have the time and energy to do.
- Establish healthy boundaries in our relationships so that we do not feel “used and abused.”
- Seek out the services that could help lighten our load. Otherwise we will just forge on; feeling compelled by messages from our childhood. In this newsletter, we will include a list of resources that can help us deal with these issues.

2 Be fully present. We spend many of our waking moments dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Mark Twain said it best, “I’ve seen many troubles in my time, only half of which ever came true.” Regret,

long held grief or holding onto anger can dominate our thoughts and cause us to miss what is important today. We can choose to deal with those issues and move on.

3 Value relationships. We often take for granted the relationships we should hold dear. We put off truly living until we have “time”. When will that time ever come? Will we be physically in shape to enjoy ourselves later? Judging ourself or others blinds us to what is precious and important in the moment. Do minor annoyances really matter? Is their conflict worth the damage to the relationship? Do we intentionally think of ways we can make our most intimate relationship the best it possibly can be? Do we make it precious? Or do our relationships die from lack of attention?

4 Physical shape. Living with pain is an awful, unwanted experience which greatly distracts us from being in the moment. Many people experience a chronic “bad back” or knee pain. They have simply accepted it as unfixable. Do you know that a lot of back pain can be eliminated by losing weight and by getting your core muscles including abdominal muscles in good shape? We are the fix-it generation. It is time to turn that approach on ourselves. Have you really explored all possible solutions to your aches and pains? Can more be done? Getting in top physical shape can give us more energy, not to mention other incredible health benefits, even a better sexual appetite!

5 Emotional rollercoaster. Recently, one of my patients described what it is like to live with a man going through treatment for prostate cancer. His emotions were all over the map – she didn’t know which husband she would be coming home to – deeply depressed, volatile or happy. She was afraid to have conversations because she was not sure what the reaction would be. He had hot flashes and night sweats that disturbed his sleep. One day he grabbed her arm and said “We don’t talk anymore!” She was as bewildered as the man who lives with a perimenopausal woman who

hasn't sought help. Have you explored your options? Sarah runs a "Hot and Bothered" women's discussion group to deal with these issues. There is help.

In this newsletter we list some organizations and resources to help you make your life precious. The list is not com-

plete and we welcome information from our readers of resources they have found helpful.

I hope I have piqued your interest to reflect on what is happening for you – it is up to you to take advantage of the resources available for making your life precious.

Are you ready to make some changes to improve your health?

by Sarah Nixon-Jackle

Here are some web resources that are full of practical information to help you look at options and make decisions on actions that you will keep!

1 The Road to Wellbeing www.roadtowellbeing.ca takes you on a journey to better mental and emotional health, interactive site.

2 Check Up From the Neck Up www.checkupfromtheneckup.ca helps with understanding anxiety, depression and other mood disorders.

3 Canadian Sleep Society www.css.to/sleep/index.htm ahhh, to sleep to dream...

4 Canada's Food Guide www.hc-sc.gc.ca lots of information on this site

5 Dietitians of Canada www.dietitians.ca check out the recipe analyzer and eatracker program to track your food and activity choices.

6 In motion www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca click on Smart Start link to take the "fit quiz".

7 Osteoporosis Canada www.osteoporosis.ca find the most up to date information about prevention of osteoporosis, calcium, vitamin D and more!

8 Canadian Cancer Society www.cancer.ca find out about the new Saskatchewan colorectal cancer screening program.

9 Diabetes Canada www.diabetes.ca review the information "Pre-diabetes: a chance to change the future"

10 Heart and Stroke Foundation www.heartandstroke.ca watch the healthy waist video.

Journaling as a Form of Self-Care

by Maria Badrock, BSW, Registered Social Worker, InnerSource Consulting

In caring for myself, I discovered writing has helped me heal. When I had no one to talk to about my fears or emotional issues, it seemed that my pen was my companion.

Writing has changed my life.

Journaling forces me to be mindful in the moment. It gives one a venue to grieve, to process difficult times or personal tragedy. Ten year ago, the death of my mother was a profound loss; journaling each day allowed me to dialogue with her, the conversations I had missed having with her while she was alive. Churning around the conversations in my head wasn't enough; I needed to let them out. Journaling allowed me to shift some perspectives of our relationship. I found that journaling helped me synthesize thought and feeling. It helped me understand how

feeling related to events in my life and vice versa.

In "Writing as a Way of Healing", DeSalvo shares a study by Arnold Ludwig, M.D. who established that many women who want to write, report changes in their emotional problems; "writing", he states, "can become a vital form of self-nurture as necessary as taking a daily medication". Engaging in the process of journaling is far easier than we think. Find a beautiful journal, a special pen someone gifted to you, make time in your daily schedule, possibly 15 minutes a day and devote yourself



You can journal using writing, images ... or both.

to yourself by journaling your thoughts. This quiets us, paradoxically, engaging us, whether one writes about pleasant moments or continuing pain.

The Family Caregiver

Did you know?

- Approximately one quarter of Canadians report having provided care for a family member or friend with a serious health problem in the last year. (*Canadian Caregiver Coalition, Feb 12, 08*)
- 73 is the average age of older caregivers looking after a spouse, friend or neighbour.
- 54 is the average age of an adult child looking after a parent.
- 25% of caregivers report that their employment situation has been affected by their caregiving responsibilities; lost productivity, absenteeism and loss of human capital within the workforce.
- 10% of family caregivers report health problems that result in physical and emotional burnout.

Tips for caregivers aiming for work/life balance:

- Decide what comes first in your life.
- Decide how much time needs to be paid employment. Learn to make do with less.
- Know your limits. Set boundaries.
- Delegate. Allow others the opportunity to be necessary and to contribute.
- Work at living in balance. Consciously separate work and home.

- Find work that is enjoyable, rewarding and flexible.
- Set goals: personal, family, professional.
- Be organized. There is security in routine.
- Don't sweat the small stuff. Give up the urge to catastrophize.
- Seek support, practical assistance and good listeners.
- Exercise to deal with stress.
- Enjoy life – celebrate every success, large or small.
- Breathe deeply, laugh often.
- Use your faith to help you with perspective.



Resources for practical information:

Saskatoon Caregiver Information Centre 306-652-4411
www.caregive.sasktelwebsite.net

Canadian Caregiver Coalition, Ottawa www.ccc-ccan.ca

Reference: *The 36 Hour Day* by Nancy Mace and Peter Rabins

Upcoming Events Mark your calendars!

March 31 “Hot & Bothered” Small Group Discussions

Are you interested in unravelling some of the mysteries of mid-life? Join this facilitated discussion group on mid-life topics of your choosing. Our next Session will be **Mondays from March 31 to May 5** (no session on Easter Monday) from **7- 9 pm** at **Forest Grove Community Church**, 502 Webster Street. **Cost is \$30 for the 6 sessions. To register, contact Sarah at 978-3886**

April 12 Women's Health Dinner & Art Auction

Join us for this very important fundraising event — a beautiful evening featuring highly desirable works of Canadian and Saskatchewan artists for auction. See the collection at Circle Centre Galleries starting March 30. Order your tickets today (\$85 each), available by calling 978-3888.

Anytime, Anywhere

Would you like us to bring our Wrist/Tibia Ultrasound to your workplace for bone strength assessments? Call us for details on how to book a clinic. **978-3888 or 978-3886**

Spring Workshop Taking Charge of Your Health

Join us for a Saturday morning workshop with Dr. Dean Kriellaars, and local speakers, to learn how you **can change** your eating habits, exercise and lifestyle choices, and **make significant improvements** in how you feel today and as you age. We're very pleased to present a dynamic speaker and expert, Dr. Kriellaars, who is a Professional Fitness and Lifestyle Consultant with the Canadian Society of Exercise Physiologists and internationally recognized teacher and researcher.

Workshop date, time and location are to be confirmed.

Bookmark www.menopausecentre.org and keep watching for more info.

September 26 Friend-raiser / Fund-raiser Dance

Remember the sock hops, socials, and cabarets of “just a few” years ago, when we danced our heads off and just had a blast? Come out to raise awareness and funds, celebrating the Women's Mid-Life Centre. Stay “tuned” ... details to come.

Viva Las Veggies Roasted vegetable gratin with tomatoes, zucchini, mushrooms and onions

When the stakes are high and you feel like adding some glitz and glamour to ordinary veggies, bake this *sinsational* side dish and get your dinner party swingin'! It makes *s/ots*, so there's enough to feed everyone. Just remember: What happens in the kitchen, stays in the kitchen.

- 4 medium tomatoes, cut into chunks
- 2 medium zucchini, chopped
- 2 large portobello mushrooms, chopped (scrape off and discard gills from the underside of the mushrooms before chopping)
- 1 medium red onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 1 tbsp each olive oil and balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh herbs, such as rosemary, basil, oregano, or thyme
- 1/4 tsp each salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup fresh whole wheat bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme

Spray a 9 x 13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Add tomatoes, zucchini, mushrooms, onion, and garlic. Mix well (using your hands works best). Add olive oil, vinegar, herbs, salt, and pepper. Mix again to coat vegetables with dressing.


Roast, uncovered, at 425F for 25 minutes. While vegetables are roasting, prepare topping. Combine bread crumbs, Parmesan cheese, and thyme in a small bowl and mix well.

Remove vegetables from oven. Sprinkle crumb mixture evenly over vegetables. Return to oven for 5 minutes, until cheese is melted and crumbs turn a light golden brown. Serve hot.

Per serving

139	calories
5.7 g	total fat
2 g	saturated fat
8 g	protein
18 g	carbohydrate
4.1 g	fibre
7 mg	cholesterol
323 mg	sodium

This recipe was taken, with permission, from **Eat, Shrink & Be Merry!** by Janet & Greta Podleski. Check out their Web site at eatshrinkandbemerry.com.



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Ovarian Imaging Study

Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences

We need to enroll 45 women in a study to characterize ovarian function.

Study includes:

- consultation
- transvaginal ultrasonography

Eligible women must:

- be between the ages of 18-45
- have regular menstrual cycles
- have had a physical exam performed within the past year
- have not taken hormonal contraception within 2 months of participating in the study

Honorarium provided

For more information, please contact Dr. Angela Baerwald at 966-8073.

Thanks to our Board of Directors

The Women's Mid-Life Health Centre is lead by a truly remarkable Board of Directors. These individuals are inspired *and* inspiring, engaged, connected and committed to helping our organization succeed. What a collaboration!

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Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Women's Mid-Life Health Centre of Saskatchewan.

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women's MID•LIFE health • • • • •
centre of saskatchewan

227 - 230 Avenue R South, Saskatoon, SK S7M 2Z1

P: (306) 978-3888

E: info@menopausecentre.org

F: (306) 978-7801

W: www.menopausecentre.org