

Wellness Articles

Attached are weekly health and wellness articles provided by Alberta Health Services. As a way to help all Albertans live a healthy life, we welcome and encourage weekly newspapers, community newsletters and other publications to reproduce this information free of charge. Credit to Alberta Health Services or the identified content provider would be appreciated.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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Alberta Health Services (AHS) knows that wellness matters, and this year AHS has been asking our people and Albertans, ‘What’s your balance?’ Throughout the year of wellness and finding balance, AHS is highlighting four areas of wellness including, healthy eating, mental wellness, physical activity and sleep & fatigue.

Over the next couple months, AHS is bringing Mental Wellness to the forefront, and this April the theme is ‘Take care of you’.

Get by with a little help from your friends

Your social circle can add health and happiness to your life

Good friends influence our lives, shaping how we feel, think and act. They know our dreams and fears. They cheered when we won that school race and rallied when we lost a high school sweetheart. They toasted our first promotion and flew back for our wedding.

It’s our friends—the ones we turn to when we need a favour, a shoulder to lean on, some advice or well-earned praise—who benefit our health the most. Caring friends not only help us cope better emotionally, but evidence shows these strong bonds help us manage anxiety or grief by lowering our blood pressure and heart rate and decreasing the stress hormone cortisol.

Janet Halberg, who moved several times because of her husband’s job, learned how to meet people and make friends. “It’s not easy putting yourself out there, but you have to remember that you’re not the only one (looking).”

As a gardener and self-described dog person, Halberg always found a local gardening group or dog club to join. She also volunteered for various groups and made a point of meeting her neighbours. After her divorce at 55, Halberg joined a gym, took up golf and began playing bridge with colleagues from work.

Beyond personal interests, your community centre, local library, place of worship or favourite charity are other places to meet people. There is no prescribed quota on friends. Some prefer



one or two close friends to confide in, while others enjoy more casual connections with a diverse group of friends.

Making friends may seem daunting, but those new friendships could be a source of health and happiness for decades to come.

Read the full story in Apple magazine's winter 2014 issue on applemaq.ca

To find out more about 'What's your balance?' visit ahs.ca/whatsyourbalance. You can also join the conversation on social media by using the hashtag #AHSwhatsyourbalance