

Spring 2011 Newsletter from the Menen Centre for Optimum Health and the Canadian Integrative Cancer Centre

It's Almost Spring!

Get Active!

There's nothing like warmer temperatures to make people feel like getting out and getting active! Exercise increases the oxygenation of our cells and promotes energy, increases circulation, improves cardiovascular health, immune function, and lifts mood!



The biggest challenge in spring that we see in our patients is an over-ambitious workout schedule that can lead to sprains, strains and injuries of joints, muscles or tendons. So remember to take things easily as you first start to enjoy the warmer and brighter days. A good stretching routine before any workout will help prevent injuries. Drink lots of water to help your body keep hydrated as you lose fluids from perspiration, and get adequate sleep to get the best benefit from your workouts as this is the time the body heals from the day's activities.



Of course it's pretty appropriate that as we're writing this, we are anticipating Valentine's Day, and we're thinking about our heart health, right?!

Having just attended a CPR-refresher course this weekend, we are once again reminded that heart disease is still one of the number one killers in North America. This includes high cholesterol, high blood pressure, stroke, angina, and heart attacks.

So this newsletter is dedicated to teaching you some information about your heart and how to improve or maintain great heart health.

Healthy Heart Facts and Tips

FACT: The number of heart attacks among middle-aged women is rising. This is believed to be due to declining levels of estrogen, increased levels of cytokines (which travel to the liver, triggering the formation of C-reactive protein, a marker for inflammation throughout the body, including the arteries), and often linked with high calories and low exercise. **TIP:** Increase exercise and decrease caloric intake!

FACT: Acute chest pressure and tightness are still the most common symptoms of a heart attack, signaling a complete blockage to one or more of the heart's arteries. However, compared to men, women tend to also have more atypical symptoms of coronary artery disease or heart attack — including excessive fatigue, shortness of breath while walking or climbing stairs, nausea, indigestion and back pain. These can all occur either prior to a heart attack or as symptoms of the heart attack itself.

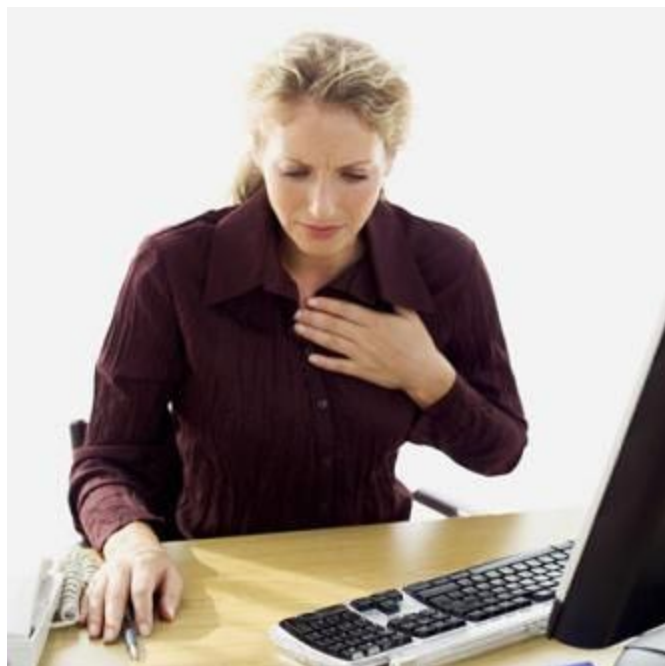
TIP: Do not ignore warning signs! See a health care professional as soon as possible for proper assessment.



FACT: Dental hygiene helps heart health. It's not clear why, but people who have periodontal disease (a chronic bacterial infection that affects the gums and the bone supporting the teeth) are almost *twice* as likely to suffer from heart disease compared to those without it. It is believed that the same inflammation that makes the gums swell can also inflame arteries. **TIP:** get regular dental cleanings and floss regularly too!

FACT: Cholesterol buildup in arteries that leads to cardiovascular emergencies can be reversed.

TIP: make sure your diet is low in sodium, avoid trans-fatty acids and saturated fats, increase good cholesterol with essential fatty acids like Omega 3 fish oils, and of course, exercise!



FACT: A few simple tests can determine if you are at risk for heart disease. **TIP:** check blood pressure and weight occasionally (preferably at a doctor's office), ask for blood work showing your HDL/LDL cholesterol and C-reactive protein (CRP) at least once a year. A higher risk of heart disease is associated with higher abnormal readings of these measurements. C-reactive protein (CRP) is not currently part of the official heart health screening recommendations but elevated CRPs indicate inflammation throughout the body, and inflammation is closely linked with heart disease and heart attacks.



Remember that exercise can be either Yin-forms (relaxing/gentle) or Yang-forms (energizing/active). Take care of your mind, body and soul as you begin the spring season ahead. A good balance of Yin and Yang exercises (unique to your own individual needs) is best for your long term health. In Chinese Medicine, the heart-channel is related to anxiety, so remember to make time to de-stress from your daily anxieties through calming exercises such as deep breathing or meditation – we can all use this regular Yin-exercise in our Yang-energy lifestyles!



Menen Centre News and Reminders:

It's that time of the year again to remind you that if you have not had a physical examination with us for over one year, it's time to book one in. We do want to stay on top of your overall health to give you our best care.

We have modified our look on the Menen Centre website, so if you haven't visited the site lately, see www.menencentre.com. You'll also notice that our Oakville clinic is now the second location of the Menen Centre for Optimum Health, which also still includes the Canadian Integrative Cancer Centre (CICC). We want to make sure our Oakville patients know that we are still working with optimum health in each of our patients at both of our clinics! For cancer-related information we will be keeping our website www.cancercareforall.com which also has a new look! Do check here often for new cancer information or for events happening in our Oakville clinic.

Laughter Yoga

Yes, we are still Laughter Yoga Leaders holding free Laughter Yoga sessions in our Oakville clinic. Anyone and everyone who would like to benefit from this therapeutic exercise is invited and welcome to join us! Our next session will be on Fridays through the month of March from 1-2pm.

If you are interested in joining us, do e-mail us at info@menencentre.com or call (905)827-7696 to leave us a message to let us know how many people to expect. For more information about Laughter Yoga at the Menen Centre in Oakville, click this link:

<http://www.cancercareforall.com/laughteryoga.html>

Laughter Yoga International lists 5 benefits of Laughter Yoga which are:

1. Improves your mood and encourages more laughter throughout your day (and probably those around you as well!).
2. Healthy exercise to beat stress: reduces physical, mental and emotional stress simultaneously.
3. Strengthens immune system which then supports healthy function of other systems in the body.
4. Improves your quality of life through positivity.
5. Promotes a positive attitude in difficult situations.



Wishing you all a happy and healthy spring season ahead! Dr. Hanifa Menen, BSc, ND and Dr. Jeff Appelmann, BSc, ND