



## HEALTHY LIVING

### Ah-Choo!

#### Natural Remedies for Allergies

The blooming flowers coupled with the increasingly warmer and possibly wetter weather conditions suggest that spring is quickly upon us. For some people, spring isn't necessarily a welcomed season as it also brings a host of allergies, including the common itchy eyes, sneezing and congestion. In fact, one in six Canadians suffer from hay fever (CBC News).

While severe spring allergy sufferers may require care from a health care professional, those who experience milder symptoms might be able to find relief using the following natural remedies, courtesy of *Home Magazine*.

- **Neti pots** – Mix salt with warm boiled or distilled water and fill the solution in the pot. Next pour the solution in one nostril and let it flow out of the other. Now repeat, starting with the other nostril. This treatment may sound messy but may be worth a try as it can help flush out pollen and loosen mucus.
- **Shower** – We know that a steaming, hot shower can provide temporary relief to your sinus by opening up the nasal passage but did you know

that a shower also washes away any allergens you may have collected on your hair and skin from being outside. This is certainly an effective way to reduce allergens from spreading to a variety of surfaces, which could trigger an allergy attack.

- **Eucalyptus oil** – Yes, eucalyptus is strong and piney-smelling but it does the job to clear your sinus with its anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties. Adding just a few drops of oil to a steaming bowl of water or on the floor of the shower before hopping in will do the trick.
- **Tea** – When you hold a hot cup of tea over your face, your nose will thank you for it. For example, if you fancy peppermint tea, the menthol ingredient and the steam can help you decongest. Another good choice is green tea as it's known to contain the antioxidants that prevent allergic reactions.

**ONE in SIX**  
Canadians suffer from hay fever.

Source: CBC News

**TRG**  
GROUP BENEFITS

## HEALTHY HEART

### Stroke Affects Young and Old People

#### Dispelling the Age Myth on Stroke Occurrence

A stroke knows no boundaries. Neither age, nor gender matters. It could happen to anyone of any age at any time.

Dr. Michael Hill, director of the Stroke Unit for the Calgary Stroke Program at Alberta Health Services, agrees and further explains that it's a big misconception to believe strokes only happen to people who are older. While it's true that people age 65 or older are more prone to having a stroke, those who are younger are not 100% out of the woods. In fact, the occurrence of stroke in people aged 20 to 64 has spiked by a quarter between 1990 and 2010, according to a finding published in the *Lancet* in 2013.

The rise of stroke in young people can be attributed to the surge of obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes seen in this group of people. However, Dr. Hill argues that the improvement in diagnostic technology is also a key contributor.

A suspicion that something isn't right should not be ignored regardless of how old you are. About 25 to 30% of people who have suffered a stroke report having experienced some inconsistent warning signs in the hours or even days before the stroke.

Courtesy of the Heart and Stroke Foundation's current stroke awareness campaign, called "FAST", here are some signs to look out for:

- **Face:** Is it drooping?
- **Arms:** Can you raise both?
- **Speech:** Is it slurred or jumbled?
- **Time:** To call 911 right away.

People of all age groups should not dismiss the "FAST" signs, because the faster a stroke victim is treated, the better the chance for recovery.

## HEALTHY MIND

### Eat Mindfully

#### March is Nutrition Month

We're all guilty of this – grabbing a pre-packaged snack before rushing out to work every morning. For lunch, we may skip it in order to meet a looming deadline. By the time we get home, we may resort to a frozen TV dinner. Understandably, old habits are hard to change, but not impossible to improve.

Seeing that March is nutrition month, there's no better time to review your diet than now. This year's theme is "*Take a 100 Meal Journey – Make Small Changes, One Meal at a Time*". The goal is to improve our diet quality and decrease portion quantity in the 100 meals we eat in a month.

We all know that food plays a crucial role in our mental and physical health. This is why nutrition awareness should be raised at home and supported in the workplace.

To help get this journey started, the Dietitians of Canada has created five fact sheets that feature the following weekly topics:

- **Week 1:** Pledge to make one small change, one meal at a time.
- **Week 2:** Quality counts. The focus is on making food decisions that result in nutrient-rich foods and substituting ingredients.
- **Week 3:** Prioritize portion size and getting realistic about it. Correct portion sizes are outlined.
- **Week 4:** Try something new by introducing new and creative cooking strategies to enhance the taste of food.
- **Week 5:** Make it stick in spite of the challenges that can detour our food plan.

For more information, go to:  
<http://www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Nutrition-A-Z/Nutrition-Month/NM2016-Factsheets.aspx>