

JANUARY 2008

This issue ▶ Brighten Your Mood ▶ Financial Gains ▶ Men and Doctors ▶ Hotel Safety ▶ Fibre for the Whole Family

## 7 Signs of Wellness

**W**hy should we care about wellness? The concept goes beyond lack of illness – wellness is pivotal to helping us protect our mental health, stay physically sound, and maintain balance in daily living. Ultimately, wellness is the ability to live life to the fullest and maximize your personal potential.

Wellness involves continually learning and making changes that enhance your well-being in 7 traditional areas. Here are some practical ways to focus on each dimension:

**Physical – Nourish your body.** This includes balanced nutrition, daily exercise and proper rest. Get regular provider checkups and immunizations. Keep yourself and others safe, such as driving defensively.

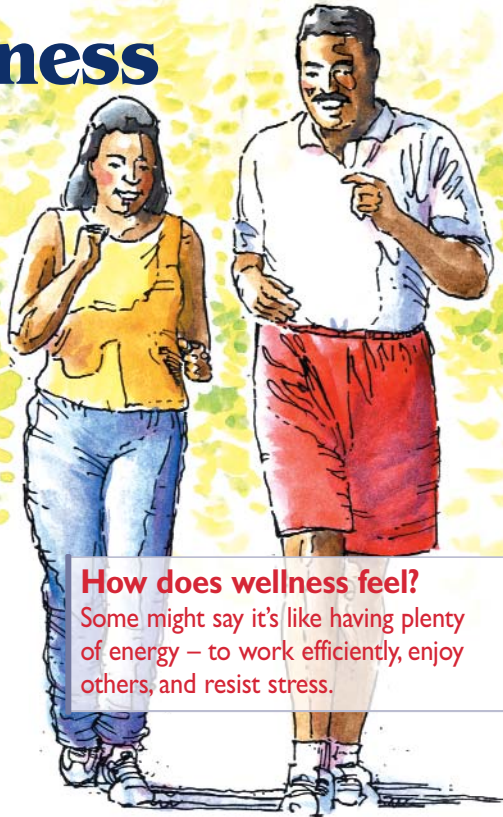
**Emotional – Understand your feelings.** Give yourself a mental health check now and then. Journal writing may help defuse stress. Find quiet time – relax your mind and your body will follow.

**Spiritual – Find purpose in life.** Identify and live by your personal beliefs and morals. Stay connected to yourself and find meaning in the little things you do everyday.

### Stay warm this winter to prevent frostbite or serious exposure:

- ▶ Wear loose, layered clothing under water-repellent outerwear.
- ▶ Keep your head, hands and feet covered to avoid loss of precious heat.
- ▶ Stay dry – wet garb insulates poorly and chills you.
- ▶ Stay hydrated with warm beverages, and avoid caffeine, alcohol and nicotine.

When you're outdoors for a long time, periodically check for frostbite. If you start to feel numb, go indoors immediately.



**How does wellness feel?**  
Some might say it's like having plenty of energy – to work efficiently, enjoy others, and resist stress.

**Intellectual – Keep learning.** Tune into opportunities that present different experiences and stimulate thinking.

**Occupational – Make the most of your professional skills.** We gain personal satisfaction through our work. The key is to successfully integrate a commitment to your job into your total lifestyle.

**Social – Build healthy relationships.** Interacting with others can be rewarding and challenging; learn to express your needs and opinions appropriately. Make time for friends, or join groups where you can meet others with similar interests.

**Environmental – Respect nature.** Do your part to preserve and improve environmental conditions – reduce noise, pollution and unnecessary consumption of natural resources.

**What are your wellness goals this year?**

### HEALTH Notes

#### ■ How's your cell phone etiquette?

Taking calls in the middle of a meeting or conversation is annoying and rude. It conveys a message that the caller is more important than the people in front of you. If you must take the call, excuse yourself and stay on the phone only long enough to either put the caller on hold or say you'll call back later. Unless you are expecting an urgent message, put the phone away and mute its ringer.

■ **What are you worried about?** When stress and negative thoughts bear down, ease up with these simple techniques – all serve the purpose of helping you shut out obsessive worries or anxiety. Take several deep breaths and meditate. Get away from the noise; a few moments of quiet can improve mood and aid relaxation. Before going to sleep, mentally list 2-3 things you did today that make you feel positive.

■ **Cooking oils best suited for hot stir-frying** include refined canola, peanut and safflower because of their high smoke points. Unrefined oils are less suitable because they begin to smoke and taste bitter at high temperatures; they are okay for sautéing on medium heat. The rich flavours of olive and walnut oils make them good choices for salad dressings, marinades and sauces.

■ **Whooping cough – it's not just kids' stuff.** Teenagers and adults account for 31% of all cases, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada. Whooping cough is extremely contagious and potentially fatal. **Best prevention:** a combined tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis booster shot for high school teens.

# Financial Gains in 2008

## Security in Your Future

**S**tart your new year on the right foot financially. The following steps can help you establish a fiscal plan that will make the most of your money – whether your goal is to downsize debt, save more, or manage your resources better.

### STEP 1: Get organized.

- Gather all financial account statements.
- Total your assets, including real estate, cars, investments, bank and retirement accounts; then deduct your liabilities, including mortgage, loans and credit card debt – the difference is your net worth.
- Update this accounting every year and view your progress.

### STEP 2: Build a workable budget.

- Itemize your fixed and variable monthly expenses and income.
- Include a monthly allotment for savings, an emergency fund, education account, or debt reduction.
- Set up a filing and recordkeeping system to monitor spending and savings; check it monthly at bill-paying time.

### STEP 3: Reduce debt.

- Study the extent of your debt and identify any urgent problems.
- Pay off debt and loans with the highest interest rates first.
- Eliminate all but essential expenses until your income exceeds your monthly spending.



**STEP 4: Cut variable expenses.** This is spending you can avoid on items such as expensive gifts, a gym membership you don't use, or gas for unnecessary driving. The savings can be significant.

**STEP 5: Plan for retirement.** Maximize any tax-deferred savings plans, such as retirement savings plans.

**STEP 6: Review your investments.** In a volatile economy, you may want to adjust your mix of cash, stocks, bonds or mutual funds to improve performance in the coming year. Enlisting the help of a reputable financial advisor is time and money well spent.

**STEP 7: Keep your affairs in order.** At tax time in April, plan to update your estate records and wills, check your latest credit report ([www.strategis.gc.ca/epic/site/oca-bc.nsf/en/ca02197e.html](http://www.strategis.gc.ca/epic/site/oca-bc.nsf/en/ca02197e.html)), and review insurance needs, taxes and financial goals.

If these steps seem daunting, start with just one and set a timeline for the others during the coming year. With a little planning and routine management, you can make your hard-earned dollars work better for you.

**National Non-Smoking Week, January 20-26, 2008**  
**Weedless Wednesday, January 23, 2008**

## STILL SMOKING?

**P**ick a quit date. How about marking January 23 – Weedless Wednesday – on your calendar as your first tobacco-free day? Weedless Wednesday, sponsored by the Canadian Council for Tobacco Control, encourages smokers to use a “one day at a time” approach to quitting cigarettes. If you're trying to quit or considering it, enlist the support of family, friends, and your health care provider, who can advise you about quitting aids. Counselling, nicotine replacement therapy and medication can ease withdrawal symptoms and raise your odds of staying smoke-free.

### Tobacco Facts from Health Canada:

- About 5 million Canadians smoke.
- 37,000 Canadians die annually due to tobacco.
- Smoking's price tag – more than \$17 billion a year, including \$4.4 billion in direct health care costs.

**MORE INFO** ► National Non-Smoking Week Quitting Help: [www.nnsw.ca/quitting.html](http://www.nnsw.ca/quitting.html)



## Bright Ideas for Dark Moods

For some people, winter's long nights and short days spell S-A-D, or seasonal affective disorder. Scientists believe SAD may be caused by a lack of sunlight, which triggers a chemical imbalance in the brain.

Depression is the primary symptom, along with fatigue, oversleeping, social withdrawal, craving carbohydrates and weight gain.

SAD is diagnosed when depression occurs during 2 consecutive winters followed by symptom-free springs and summers. It is more common in northern latitudes, where days shorten dramatically in winter.

### To feel better on those all-too-brief winter days, try these ideas:

A half hour or more of daily exposure to a light box (light therapy) can be helpful, especially for severe SAD symptoms. Choose a broad-spectrum light device that has a UV filter and is CSA-approved. Staying near windows during daylight and using bright lamps also help.

Exercising outdoors in daylight offers additional relief. **Bonus:** 30 minutes of daily exercise helps you manage your weight and boost energy and morale.

If symptoms persist, consult your provider who may prescribe antidepressants and/or counselling, which can help you change behaviour and thoughts contributing to SAD.

**Beat winter blahs:** Use light and bright colours to boost your mood. Make some fun – hang a crystal in a south-facing window to capture sunshine and produce a colourful light show in your room.

# Why **MEN** Dodge Doctor Visits

**M**en make half as many visits to their health care providers as women do.

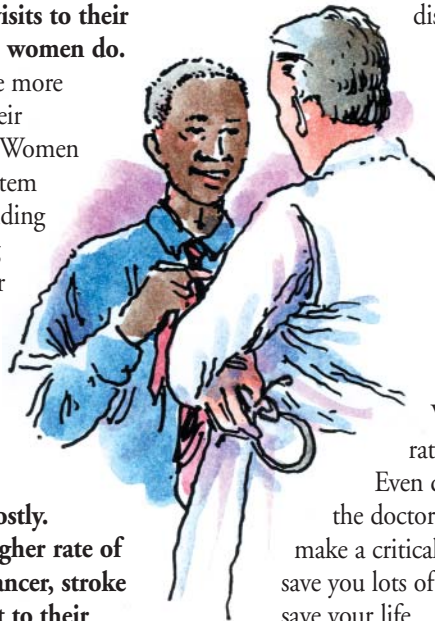
Is it because women have more ailments or worry more about their symptoms? One possible reason: Women are exposed to the health care system early and often for issues surrounding reproduction. By contrast, young men rarely see a doctor except for a sports injury.

Many men are unaware of preventive care, or that simple screening tests and basic health habits can dramatically improve their quality of life.

**That inattention may be costly. Evidence suggests that men's higher rate of mortality from heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes is due in large part to their delay in seeking care.**

What's reasonable care for men? It's not complicated: If you're under 50, get a general health review every 5 years and add cholesterol screening after 40. After age 50, checkups are recommended more frequently, along with a discussion of screening for diabetes, colorectal cancer and prostate cancer.

The first step is selecting your primary provider. Sure, you may find it embarrassing to



discuss private issues, such as genital problems, alcohol use, sexual difficulties, stress or depression – so do women – but it gets easier with practice.

Men and women both complain about the time it takes for provider visits, according to a study in the *American Journal of Public Health*. We all have things we'd rather do than visit a clinic.

Even doctors don't like going to the doctor. But an early diagnosis can make a critical difference – one that could save you lots of time in recovery, and even save your life.

Whatever your reason for avoiding medical care – forgetfulness, anxiety, embarrassment, lack of time, or just plain apathy – by age 45-50, it's time to get acquainted with your doctor. Make it a habit.

## Jump Start the Year with a **NEW** Workout

**H**as your exercise routine become too routine, with too little pleasure? When your enthusiasm fades, your commitment and fitness results may fall off too. Diversify your activities to add fun and challenge your body by using new muscles.

**Start an activity you've always wanted to try**, such as tai chi, tennis, dance lessons, or cross-country skiing. Or join a class offered at your gym or recreational center.

**Recharge your current workout.** For example, hop off your treadmill and head outdoors – walk through a mall or new neighbourhood a few times a week. Set new goals for added time, intensity or distance. Add stretching or strength training.

**Exercise to entertainment.** Watching your favourite show or listening to upbeat music reduces the boredom of aerobic and weight workouts.



**Get your provider's okay before significantly increasing your activity level.**

**Find an exercise buddy.** Maybe you're ready to enjoy the company of people with similar goals. There's nothing like friendly persuasion and conversation to keep you motivated.

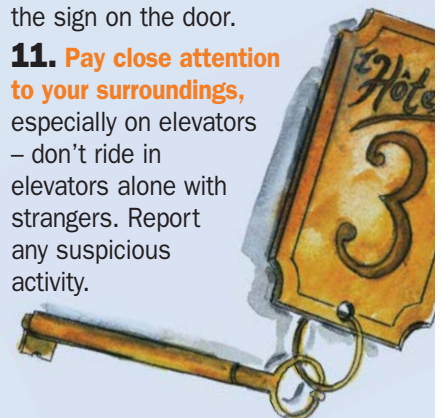
**Play sports with family members** – the winning combination of exercise and family time.

**Maintain a positive attitude as you exercise.** Imagine the progress you're making toward a leaner, stronger body. You're on your way to a healthier year and a healthier you!

## Hotel **SAFETY** Tips

**Travellers are easy targets for criminal activity.** They are often distracted in unfamiliar surroundings and forget about personal safety. Hotels attract criminals, so don't fall victim to theft or worse. Remember these safeguards:

- 1. Check out the hotel floor plan at check-in.** Learn the safest routes and emergency exits.
- 2. Perform a security check.** And ask the bellman to wait until you're finished.
- 3. Make your name and room number inaccessible.** Instruct hotel staff not to release your identity or location. Remove your luggage nametags.
- 4. Ask the hotel staff about sites you plan to visit.** Be sure you have directions so you don't get lost.
- 5. Avoid meeting strangers in your room.** Choose a public place instead.
- 6. Always keep your door locked,** even if you leave for a moment.
- 7. Don't answer your door without knowing the person's identity.** If you're unsure, call the front desk and inquire about the visitor.
- 8. Make sure sliding glass doors or windows** and any connecting room doors are locked.
- 9. Don't stay in a hotel that is not equipped with automatic fire sprinklers** throughout and guest room smoke detectors. Study the fire exit from your room and know what to do in an emergency.
- 10. Use the "do not disturb" sign** even when you're not in your room. Instruct maid service to leave the sign on the door.
- 11. Pay close attention to your surroundings,** especially on elevators – don't ride in elevators alone with strangers. Report any suspicious activity.



Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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# Fibre for the **WHOLE** Family

**W**hy eat more fibre? Studies strongly support fibre's role in reducing heart disease risk.

In addition to improving blood pressure and cholesterol levels, getting your daily fibre can help you prevent or control diabetes, weight gain, constipation and bowel disorders.

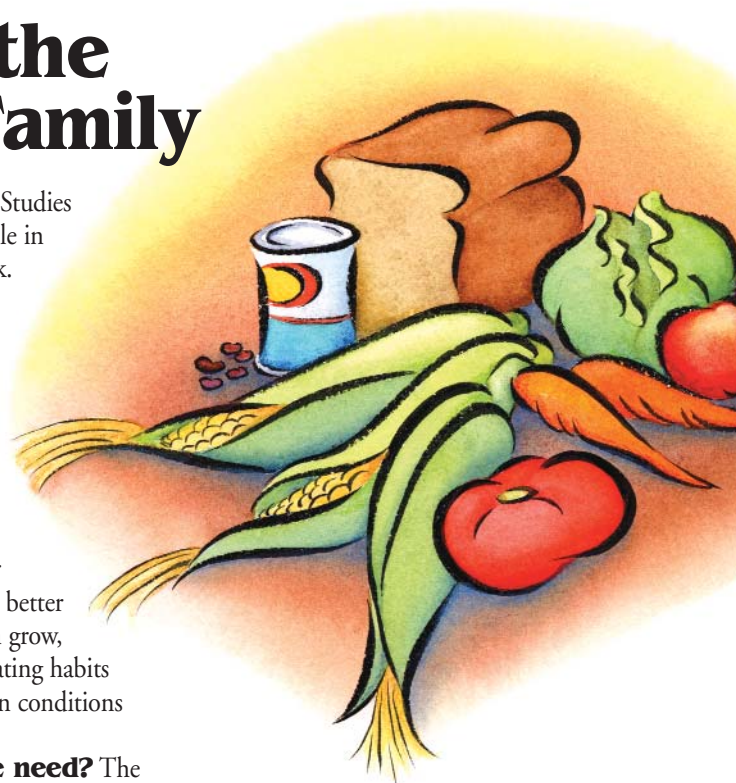
**Do children need fibre?** Experts are just starting to understand the benefits of fibre for young children. While it promotes better digestion and regularity as children grow, it also helps them establish good eating habits that may reduce their risk of certain conditions later in life.

**How much fibre do we need?** The recommended intake for adults is 25-35 grams each day, although individual needs may vary. For children, the "age plus five" rule applies; for example, a 7-year-old should have 12 grams of fibre per day (5+7=12).

**What's the easiest way to add more fibre daily?** Your best sources are produce, legumes and whole grains. Try these ideas:

**Start with breakfast.** It offers many options that everyone in the family will enjoy – a growing selection of whole-grain cereals, breads and muffins; choose products that contain at least 3 grams of fibre per serving. Always include fruit – fresh, frozen or canned.

**Whole grains are rich in dietary fibre.** You can find a wide selection of whole grains in many



packaged cereals, breads, buns, crackers and pasta.

**Children favour basic fruits and veggies.** Serve these daily: carrots, corn, beans, peas, apples, oranges, raisins, bananas and melon.

**Experiment.** Switch to brown rice. Try easy-to-cook barley or bulgur side dishes. Add fibre-rich beans to homemade burritos, salads and soups (see recipe at right).

**Tip:** As you increase your fibre intake, drink plenty of fluids. Fibre acts as a bulking agent by absorbing some of the fluid in your body. Extra fluids will prevent you from becoming dehydrated, and most important, help that bulk to move merrily on its way.

## Recipe of the Month

# Black Bean Chili

This is a steamy winter warm-up the whole family will enjoy.

### Seasoning Mix:

- 1 tsp/3g chili powder    1 tsp/2g red pepper
- 1 tsp/2g paprika        1 tsp/2g oregano
- 1 tsp/2g black pepper   1 tsp/2g cumin

- 1 lb/455g lean ground beef
- 1 28-oz/800ml can crushed tomatoes
- 1 28-oz/800ml can tomato sauce
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, cored and seeded, finely minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 16-oz/3 341ml cans corn, drained
- 2 16-oz/3 341ml cans black beans, drained and rinsed

① Mix seasonings together. ② In a large non-stick pot, sauté beef until browned. Place in a colander and rinse with hot water to remove excess fat; return to pot. ③ Add seasoning mix and all other ingredients except corn and beans. Simmer for 2 hours. ④ Add beans and corn during last 20 minutes of cooking. **Options:** Try other beans or substitute ground turkey breast for beef.

## Nutrition Facts

Makes 1 1/2 cups/2,875ml.

Amount Per Cup/250ml	Calories	200
	Total Fat	2.5g
	Sodium	510mg
	Total Carb	32g
	Fibre	8g
	Protein	14g

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