

Inspire

Monthly newsletter | March 2021

Ideas to inspire better health.

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Connecting Indigenous communities to healthcare and technology.

In 2020, TELUS connected 10 Indigenous communities in remote locations to its PureFibre network, for a total of 61 Indigenous communities connected to date.

In partnership with All Nations Trust Company, we also completed a two-year Cariboo-Chilcotin project to provide critical access to healthcare and online health services, education, economic development and emergency response services to more than 2600 people. In 2021, we will provide connectivity to at least 18 First Nations and 38 reserve lands.

[Learn more about TELUS Health for Good](#)



Four healthy home office improvements you can make right now.

By Brittany Gadzosa, Kinesiologist, TELUS Health Care Centres

With many of us still working from home, our office spaces can vary daily. But whether you're working from an actual desk, the kitchen counter or the couch, it's important to set up your work space to allow for proper posture and body alignment — and to avoid uncomfortable symptoms like back or neck pain, carpal tunnel and tennis elbow.

Here are 4 things you can do right now to improve your home office setup:

1. Optimize your standing desk or counter-top work space.

Using a standing desk or standing at your kitchen counter are great ways to reduce sitting time and increase movement throughout the day. If this setup is working well for you:

- Make sure that your wrists are positioned slightly lower than, or right in line with, your elbows. If your wrists are too far below your elbows, raise your keyboard or laptop up with books until you achieve the right height.
- If the surface you stand on doesn't have any cushioning, consider buying an anti-fatigue mat to provide additional support and help reduce leg discomfort from a long day on your feet. For even greater support, wear supportive shoes while working.



2. Fix your screen or monitor setup.

Whether you're working from a sitting or standing position, having your screen at the right height promotes good posture and helps to prevent neck strains. Here's how to evaluate your setup:

- Your screen should be directly in front of you and about an arm's length away. When your neck is in a neutral position, your line of sight should fall at the top third of the screen.
- If your monitor or laptop height is too low, try elevating it by putting a sturdy book or two underneath it. If you're working from your couch, place a large book on your knees and rest your laptop on it.

3. Optimize your chair setup.

It's important that your feet rest flat on the ground — no matter where you sit while working — and that your spine stays tall with your ribcage stacked on top of your hips. Maintaining this posture helps to prevent lower back and neck discomfort. To improve your chair setup:

- Use a large book or yoga block to make up the space between your feet and the floor.
- Place a small pillow or rolled up hand towel between your back and your seat to cue you to keep your ribcage stacked on top of your hips.

4. Establish a daily stretching routine.

Creating a short but effective daily stretching routine can help combat the stiffness and soreness you may experience as a result of sitting for much of the day.

A good daily routine includes stretching your hip flexors, quadriceps, gluts, hamstrings and back for a minimum of 30 seconds per muscle group, multiple times throughout the day.

TELUS Health Care Centres' kinesiologists are available for virtual or in-person consultations to help optimize your home office setup, establish a personalized daily stretching routine and more.

**Learn more about our personalized care
or occupational health services**

How to make wholesome grain bowls.



Prep time: 5 minutes | Makes 1 serving

Often seen on menus at pricey, health-conscious restaurants, whole grain bowls are very simple to make at home for lunch or dinner. They're also nutrient-dense, delicious, and very quick to assemble. A perfect meal to celebrate nutrition month.

Just follow this basic guide, and make yours as simple or elaborate as you wish.

Hint: prepare your favourite cooked grains and proteins in large quantities, then store them in the freezer for future grain bowls.

Ingredients

Cooked whole grains - ½ cup

- Take your pick of brown rice, quinoa, barley, or a combination of them all

Chopped veggies - 2 cups

- Try a combination of textures (chopped, grated, julienned) and cooking methods (raw, steamed, sautéed, roasted)

Protein - ½ cup

- Choose a plant-based or meat protein source (or a combination) like chickpeas, kidney beans, navy beans, black beans, lentils, tofu, tempeh, or eggs, chicken, fish or beef

Dressing - 2 tbsp

- Dress your meal with a simple mixture of olive oil, lemon juice, and a splash of soy sauce

Toppings - 2 tbsp

- Sprinkle with toasted nuts, seeds, chopped green onions, herbs, or feta cheese

Method

Put it all together:

1. Spoon grains into a bowl and toss with a tablespoon of dressing.
2. Load on veggies and protein.
3. Drizzle on another tablespoon of dressing and sprinkle with toppings.

[Learn more about our nutrition services](#)



The truth about alcohol and women.

By Dr. Kathee Andrews, MD, MCFP, NCMP, Physician,
TELUS Health Care Centres

As we continue to understand the enormous physical, economic and emotional outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are learning more about the increased use of alcohol as a coping mechanism. Studies show that women in particular have increased their consumption of alcohol by up to 50 per cent.^{1,2}

Let's consider the burden women are carrying.

Financial insecurity is heightened for women, who generally earn less and hold less secure jobs to begin with.³

Unpaid care work has increased during the pandemic, with children home from school in many regions and increased care needs of older family members.⁴

Gender-based violence has increased exponentially, with many women forced into lockdown with their abusers. At the same time, the social services they may normally rely on may have been disrupted or made inaccessible.⁵

Being a female frontline worker is a risk factor for certain types of psychological distress associated with caring for COVID-19 patients.⁶

Of course, there are also fewer sources of entertainment, fewer options for socializing with friends, and fewer ways to unwind after an intense day of working from home while home-schooling kids in a confined space. Women often bear the bulk of the burden of household responsibilities, too.



The 50% uptake in drinking often happens slowly.

For many women, this may look like having a single glass of wine on most nights, or drinking more heavily just once weekly. But women have a lower threshold for safe consumption of alcohol than men: Canadian guidelines recommend consuming a maximum of 10, and ideally less than seven, drinks per week for women.⁷ Binge drinking — consuming four or more drinks over a two-hour period — is even more dangerous.

The long-term effects of women over-consuming alcohol are wide-reaching.

Several cancers such as colon, liver, esophageal, mouth and certain types of breast are associated with increased alcohol consumption.⁸ There is also an increased risk of liver failure, heart disease, osteoporosis and menopausal symptoms in women who over-consume alcohol.^{9,10}

Alcohol consumption is often an indicator of mental health.

Women are facing higher levels of anxiety and loneliness than men during the COVID-19 pandemic,¹¹ and many of the women I see in practice are reaching for alcohol to self-medicate for anxiety, sleep disorders and for depressed mood.

Paradoxically, alcohol is a depressant that actually lowers mood and causes more sleep interruption. The vicious cycle of anxiety, low mood and poor sleep — followed by alcohol consumption — is the current pattern for many.



How can we help break the cycle?

- Try to limit alcohol consumption to weekends, or at least initially skipping a few days mid-week
- Make a rule to never drink alone
- Keep a schedule every day, even if work doesn't require one or if you're not working
- Exercise every day, even if only for 10 minutes at a time
- Go outside every day
- Only look at the news for brief updates regarding the pandemic
- Try some type of quiet relaxation that takes you offline, like meditation, reading, painting or listening to music
- Explore resources like [Akira by TELUS Health](#), [Espri](#), [Bounce Back Ontario](#), [Mood Gym](#) and [MoodFX](#)

If you are worried about your alcohol consumption, stress levels or your ability to cope with challenges, get instant support from Canadian clinicians any time of day or night using [Akira by TELUS Health](#).

It's important that you do not delay your healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that you get a full picture of the current state of your health and wellness.

**Book your preventive
health assessment today**

¹Pollard MS et al. 2020. "Changes in Adult Alcohol Use and Consequences During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the US." JAMA Network Open. ²Jacob L et al. 2020. "Alcohol use and mental health during COVID-19 lockdown: A cross-sectional study in a sample of UK adults." Drug and Alcohol Dependence. ³United Nations. 2020. "Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women." ⁴United Nations. 2020. "Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women." ⁵United Nations. 2020. "Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women." ⁶Cooch, N. 2020. "COVID-19: Impact on Frontline Workers' Mental Health." Practiceupdate.com ⁷Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. 2018. "Canada's Low-risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines." Camh.ca ⁸Canadian Cancer Society. "Some sobering facts about alcohol and cancer risk." Cancer.ca. Accessed in 2021. ⁹Osteoporosis Canada. "How to Minimize the Harmful Effects." Osteoporosis.ca. Accessed in 2021. ¹⁰The North American Menopause Society. "Drink to Your Health at Menopause, or Not?" Menopause.org. Accessed in 2021. ¹¹Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. 2020. "COVID-19 pandemic adversely affecting mental health of women and people with children." Camh.ca



March break guide for kids.

Create some structure to the week by planning a few indoor and outdoor activities. Make mealtime fun with some new approaches and plan for daily physical activity.

Have an indoor picnic.

Clear a space on your living room floor and set up a picnic blanket, complete with paper plates or outdoor dishware, and enjoy summer lunch favourites. Older children can assist with making sandwiches, baking a treat and setting up.

Enjoy multicultural meals.

Explore different countries directly from your dining table! The following are ideas for a culinary tour of 5 countries in 5 days:

- Russia — beef stroganoff
- France — crepes
- India — butter chicken
- Thailand — pad Thai
- Mexico — empanadas, beans and rice

Invite your children to look up a fun or interesting fact about each country.

Bake up a treat.

Baking with kids can be fun but requires guidance. The following are tips to help young bakers:

- Let kids pick the recipe
- Have kids first measure into a smaller bowl before adding to the mixing bowl
- Use tools like ice cream scoops to help kids distribute dough evenly into muffin tins
- For younger children, try a no-bake recipe that sets in the fridge or freezer

What's happening: Programs and events to nurture wellbeing.



Complimentary webinar | One year of COVID-19: Tools for parents.



Parents have been managing the new realities and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic for over a year. The coping strategies they developed may be difficult to maintain in the face of burnout, and mental health at home (parents' and children's) is a concern for many.

During this one-hour webinar, Dr. Susan Siklos, TELUS Health Care Centres' child and youth mental health team lead, will share an updated toolkit for parents navigating challenges related to the pandemic.

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

11:30 am PT / 12:30 pm MT / 2:30 pm ET

[Learn more or register](#)

Ten week virtual course: Intuitive eating.



Are you ready to stop dieting, ditch food rules and make peace with food for good? Would you like to improve your body image and start supporting your wellbeing through food?

Join registered dietitians Sara Friedrich and Britney Lentz for a 10-week virtual course including weekly live sessions, breakout groups, recommended readings and resources, and practical exercises for applying the 10 guiding principles of intuitive eating in your life.

Thursdays from April 15, to June 17, 2021.

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm PT

Cost: \$450 + tax, including a copy the book,
Intuitive Eating by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch

[Learn more or register](#)

Virtual conference: The mental health gap.



[Learn more or register](#)

This unprecedented time in history requires organizations to move from being aware of the importance of mental health to taking specific action for building psychologically safe workplaces. During The Conference Board of Canada's upcoming conference, TELUS' Chief Neuroscience Officer, Dr. Diane McIntosh, will join other Canadian mental health leaders in an interactive session about the importance of mental health in the workplace.

Thursday April 1, 2021

2:00 - 2:45 pm ET

Mindfulness and meditation for beginners.



Cost: \$200.00 plus tax per person

[Learn more or register](#)

Mindfulness teaches us how to focus our attention on the present moment and observe, without judgement, what is taking place in our minds and our bodies. Led by registered dietitian and mindfulness coach Heather Feldmann, this 4-week virtual program covers various breath and mindfulness meditation exercises. Practicing mindfulness techniques daily can help you:

- Improve focus and concentration
- Build healthy stress management skills
- Enhance empathy and compassion

Mondays - April 6 to 27, 2021

10:00 am - 11:00 am PT / 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
MT / 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm ET

Virtual osteoarthritis support.



Cost: \$500.00 plus tax per person

[Learn more or register](#)

Our cutting-edge Good Life with osteoArthritis (GLA:D™) rehabilitation program has gone virtual.

The program runs for 7.5 weeks and consists of three education sessions and 12 group exercise sessions designed for individuals with hip or knee osteoarthritis. Those with early to late stages of osteoarthritis can participate, and may experience a reduction in pain, an increase in lasting physical activity and an improvement in quality of life as a result of the program.

Mondays and Wednesdays - Begins Monday April 12, 2021

7:00 am PST / 8:00 am MST / 10:00 am EST

Tuesday and Thursdays - Begins Tuesday April 13, 2021

10:00 am PST / 11:00 am MST / 1:00 pm EST -

TELUS Health Care Centres: Powered by incredible women.



We asked some of them what International Women's Day means to them:



"It acknowledges the ongoing efforts of women around the world, both young and old, who continue to fight for equal rights in educational endeavours, employment opportunities and pay."

Dr. Rhonda Low, MD, family physician, TELUS Health Care Centres (British Columbia)



"It's a time to continue to recognize ongoing challenges and to strategize for growth and progress."

Cristy Andres, clinic manager, TELUS Health Care Centres (Manitoba)



"It means opportunity: to have our voices heard, to show our support for our sisters and to push for equality for women."

Lindsey Oliver, clinical operations manager, TELUS Health Care Centres (Newfoundland)



"It is an opportunity to shine the light on women worldwide and recognize their importance in creating a strong, empowered and compassionate future together."

Dr. Tracy Thomson, MD, HBSc, CCFP, CYT, CMedAc., physician and brain health specialist, TELUS Health Care Centres (Alberta)



"Especially this year, it is a time to acknowledge the mothers, sisters, daughters and friends who have kept families together during such difficult times."

Dr. Kathee Andrews, MD, MCFP, NCMP, physician, TELUS Health Care Centres (Ontario)



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