

SPRING 2018 ISSUE 11

# HealthMatters

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An illustration on a blue background showing a family of four and a female doctor. The doctor, on the right, wears a white lab coat, glasses, and a stethoscope, and is examining a baby held by the father. The mother stands to the left, with a young girl in front of her. The father is in the center, holding the baby. The background features faint outlines of medical equipment like a stethoscope and a gurney.

**WHO'S WHO  
IN YOUR  
MEDICAL  
HOME**

PrimaryCare  
**Networks**  
CALGARY AND AREA

# ▶ Your **Health Matters**

Health Matters is published by Calgary and area Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to give you information about the programs, services and health teams available to you through your family doctor. PCNs in the Calgary area were established about 10 years ago to provide people with health services and programs through their family doctors.

Today, PCNs work with teams of other healthcare professionals, as well as offer programs such as Prescription to Get Active and Find-a-Doctor.

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We appreciate your feedback and article suggestions. Contact our editorial team at [communications@mypcn.ca](mailto:communications@mypcn.ca).

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# Who's Who in Your Medical Home

Your family doctor's clinic is your medical home—a place of care that you turn to first for health support. It's where your doctor connects you to the care you need, when you need it.

Through Primary Care Networks, your medical home is backed by a team of healthcare professionals. Depending on the support you need, your doctor can provide access to a dietitian, social worker, kinesiologist and other healthcare providers. Speaking with your doctor is the best way to find out what supports are available and determine your course of care.

Plus, by visiting your family doctor regularly, you're more likely to have better health overall, receive better care, make fewer visits to the emergency room and be hospitalized less often.



**FOLLOW** the various routes of care to see who can help support your health.

## Family primary health care

Visiting your family doctor is the first step to good health, whether it's for a regular checkup or to talk about a particular concern. By getting to know you and your medical history, your doctor can give you informed medical advice and treatment. As well, your doctor can connect you to other healthcare professionals if you need them. They can also help you proactively manage your health in order to prevent illnesses and diseases.

### Primary care health professionals can include:

Registered nurses, dietitians, dental hygienists, pharmacists, mental health therapists, kinesiologists, occupational therapists and social workers.



There is a bit of a weird background on here, is it possible to check all the illustrations?



### How a registered nurse can help you

Registered nurses (RNs) work closely with family doctors and other health professionals to support you through all stages of growth and development, and degrees of wellness and illness. They help with assessing, screening and determining health concerns, as well as setting achievable health goals. RNs can answer your health questions, offer support for treatment and make it easier to manage a chronic disease.

## Maternity & newborn care

Having a baby means big changes to your life. Maternity care helps parents through the pregnancy journey, even before conception. It includes all aspects of pre- and postnatal care, as well as nutritional guidance and mental health support for moms, dads and

babies. Health professionals, such as registered nurses, help you learn about caring for your newborn; many are also certified lactation consultants, ready to assist with breastfeeding. Dietitians help with healthy food choices for both parents and baby.

The health professionals you can connect with through your medical home are ready to help with the care you need. Talk to your doctor to find out about the support available to you, and get on the path to your best health.



## Chronic disease management

A chronic disease is a long-term illness and understanding it is essential to living with it. If you have a chronic disease such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, asthma or obesity, you play the most important role in managing it. Your healthcare providers play strong supporting roles. Along with your doctor, a team of registered nurses, dietitians, kinesiologists, pharmacists, occupational therapists and social workers can work with you to create a tailored treatment plan, and help you stick to that plan.

### How a pharmacist can help you

Pharmacists help by explaining what your specific medications do and how to take them. They can also help with monitoring blood sugar and blood pressure, and interpreting the readings. Pharmacists also ensure that your medications work effectively for you, and advise on side effects and drug interactions. For instance, they can determine what's safe for you to take for a cold or a stomach ache—including natural remedies—that won't interact with your insulin or blood pressure medication.

### How a dietitian can help you

Dietitians create healthy meal programs to fit your lifestyle and foods you like to eat. They help you learn which foods have important nutrients, understand portion sizes, read food labels and shop for healthy foods. By helping you better manage what you eat, dietitians can help reduce the risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and malnutrition. They can even help prevent Type 2 diabetes through diet and exercise.





## Nutrition & active living

Making healthy eating and activity part of your daily life improves overall health and prevents disease. Healthy eating for the whole family begins at home, but needs to also extend to work, school and play. Same goes for physical activity. Dietitians help you develop meal plans that provide nutrition, but also fit into your lifestyle. They can also help you understand food labels and learn how to choose healthier foods. Kinesiologists and occupational therapists teach you exercises that focus on improving overall physical function throughout your life. They can help you overcome and prevent injury, and self-manage physical health and wellness.



## How a kinesiologist can help you

Kinesiologists (may also be called exercise or fitness specialists) are movement experts who help prevent and manage injury and chronic disease. They can also help you reach your physical health goals. They create exercise and strength-training programs for you to get and stay fit. Kinesiologists also help reduce time lost after an injury.

## Mental health

Mental health is made up of your physical, mental and social well-being. Like physical health, mental health is fluid and changeable. We all go through times of stress and how we cope during those times varies. Mental health therapists, social workers, counsellors, psychologists and pharmacists are some of the professionals available to support your mental health. These professionals help you to better cope when it comes to stress, anxiety, depression, poor sleep and grief.

## How a mental health therapist can help you

A mental health therapist (who could be a psychologist, counsellor or behavioural health consultant) listens and discusses issues with you to help deal with life's challenges. These challenges include relationship issues, parenting, depression, stress, anxiety, pain management, trauma and substance abuse. Mental health therapists focus on improving your overall health, and help you cope emotionally when living with a disease or caring for a loved one. They also help with methods for sticking to treatment plans.

## How a social worker can help you

Social workers help you solve problems by helping you get the information and resources you need, such as community support programs. They provide assistance for seniors, family dynamics, respite, grief, mobility, living arrangements, in-home supports and more. A social worker can act as your advocate and help you to navigate the healthcare system.



## Need help finding a family doctor?

Your family doctor is the key to accessing the health supports you need. If you don't have a family doctor, visit [calgaryareadocs.com](http://calgaryareadocs.com) to find a doctor in the Calgary area who is currently accepting new patients.

# Primary Objective

WRITTEN BY JACQUELINE LOUIE

PHOTOS ©TRUDIE LEE

Many people hesitate to get oral health care because of cost, accessibility and not knowing where to go. That's precisely why the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile™ (RMCM) travels to underserved Calgary communities to provide free dental hygiene assessment for kids up to age five, as well as nutritional and health education. The RMCM is a proud partnership between the Ronald McDonald House Charities® Southern & Central Alberta and Mosaic PCN.

Brittany Siry, an RMCM dental hygienist (pictured here) worked with four-year-old Livia Pontarollo and her mother, Stephanie. Livia needed major dental surgery because of tooth decay, a common problem in young children.

## Health goal

Stephanie says: I want Livia to be happy, healthy and confident. I want her teeth to not be an issue for her. I met with the dental hygienist, Brittany, and she suggested a new dentist for us. She also did an application for a funding grant to help with the cost of the dental surgery. I couldn't have done any of this without her.

## How Livia feels now

Stephanie says: The surgery was great. Livia is in high spirits and excelling at school. She doesn't feel self-conscious anymore.

Livia says: I feel better. Not hurting, and that's a good thing.

## Working together

Brittany says: Working with Livia, her family and community partners, we helped Livia get the treatment she needed to be pain-free and confident entering kindergarten. Livia was so excited to show me her new smile and tell me about the positive changes she'd made to her oral health routine.

We help families to feel confident in caring for their children's teeth. Even though baby teeth fall out, they are extremely important to prevent bigger, more expensive and more painful problems.

Find out more at [mosaicpcn.ca](http://mosaicpcn.ca), [rmhcsca.org](http://rmhcsca.org) or call 403-250-5066.

