

Hot Flashes Newsletter

Produced by Women's Mid-Life Health Program

Is Marijuana a Friend of Menopause?

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In this Issue

Is Marijuana a Friend of Menopause?

Making Peace with Your Changing Body

The Skinny on Skin Care

Cholesterol and Your Heart

Moon Time Sisters

Web Resources to Share

Marijuana, cannabis, THC, CBD: what does it all mean? Essentially, cannabis is a type of plant; marijuana historically refers to the dried leaves, flowers, stems and seeds extracted from the cannabis plant.¹ However, the names cannabis and marijuana are often used interchangeably and refer to the same thing.

In order to understand how cannabis works, it is important to understand where cannabis works. Cannabis works on the endocannabinoid system. The endocannabinoid system is a system in our body. Much like our digestive system is responsible for digesting the food we eat, the endocannabinoid system is responsible for many different functions in the body. The endocannabinoid system wasn't discovered until the late 1980's and early 1990's, so we are still learning about what it is and how it works. There are cannabinoids that naturally occur in the body. Cannabinoids can also come from plants or be made in a lab. In the cannabis plant, over 120 cannabinoids have been identified.² The most well-known of these are THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) and CBD (cannabidiol).¹ THC and CBD have been shown to have many effects in the body, however there is still much to be learned.

The studies about the usefulness of cannabis that have been done have some limitations especially when compared to the types of studies that are done for other medications.³ Despite all the curiosity around the benefits of cannabis, the potential harms are rarely discussed. Cannabis is commonly misunderstood as harmless because "plants are natural". Cannabis is not without side effects and many have been reported such as drowsiness, dizziness, impaired memory, feelings of anxiety and paranoia and trouble with coordination and speech, just to name a few.³

Because there have been a wide variety of health claims associated with cannabis, it can be tempting to turn to cannabis for all conditions, bringing us to the burning question of does cannabis have a role in menopause? Common complaints of menopause include trouble sleeping, mood changes (anxiety and depression), hot flashes and night sweats.⁴ Cannabis has not been studied in the treatment of hot flashes and night sweats but there is some available information on the role of cannabis in sleep and mood.

There have been few studies that have actually directly looked at cannabinoids for sleep; most of what we know is from studies that have been done

for other symptoms and sleep was included as an extra measurement.⁵ A review of several of these studies suggests that cannabinoids, may improve sleep quality and sleep disturbance.⁵ Looking more specifically at THC and CBD, studies have shown that although THC may have a short term sleep benefit, this effect wears off with long term use. CBD studies show that effectiveness may be based on dose.⁶ Although cannabis may help for sleep, there is not enough information about what product to use, how much of it to use, and the other potential side effects it may cause to actually consider trading in your bedtime tea and book.

Cannabis has been reported to improve mood and cause feelings of relaxation.⁷ Alternatively, it is possible for people to experience anxiety, panic and delusions after consuming cannabis.⁷ The fact that there can be different responses suggests cannabis acts on a complex system in the body and the role of cannabis in anxiety is unclear.⁷

We do not have evidence to tell us whether cannabis works for depression or not.⁸ The endocannabinoid system is known to play a role in regulating mood.² When receptors in the *continued on back page...*

Making Peace with Your Changing Body

by Kayly Yablonski and Erin Redekop, Nourish YXE



Women in North America are taught from childhood that our bodies are judged to be "good", "healthy", and "beautiful". When you think about it, what body shapes and sizes have you learned are "okay" or "not okay"? What messages have family and friends shared about what it means to be healthy and attractive? These types of messages are common in our society today. Commercials and advertisements directed at women focus on diet and weight loss, anti-aging products, make-up, and more. The message we get is that we need to be something different from what we are.

As women age and go through various changes in their lives, their bodies change as well. There is pressure for women to look young, or to look like models or movie stars, and to "get back" to the body weight/shape they had before having babies, illness, stress, and other life changes. The reality is that these goals are not realistic, and can hurt us. They often create feelings of shame and guilt, which can lead to issues like feeling depressed or anxious. We avoid going out in public or seeing friends or family and develop an unhealthy relationship with food or exercise.

What if I told you that your weight and body shape doesn't indicate whether or not you are healthy or attractive? What if you were able to think of your body in a way that lets you treat yourself with respect instead of feeling like you're not good enough? The principles of Health at Every Size (HAES) promote just that.

Here are some practical ways you can begin your journey toward having a better relationship with your body based on the principles of HAES:

1. Learn to accept bodies of all shapes and sizes, including your own. Despite what you may have been told, ALL bodies are good bodies. So no matter what size, shape, race, or ability, everyone is deserving of respect and kindness. If you struggle with feelings of self-worth about your body shape/weight you may want to start a daily practice of self-compassion. Self-compassion means showing yourself the kindness, forgiveness, and appreciation that you would give to a good friend, or someone you really care about.

Some ideas might include:

- Write down things that you like about yourself that have nothing to do with your appearance. You can post these as positive affirmations on your wall or mirror, or write them in a journal.

- Think about compliments you have received about who you are, or things you have achieved that have nothing to do with what you look like. Celebrate those!

2. Did you know that weight alone does not show if someone is healthy? Many other factors are important, so work with health care providers who are respectful in the care they give you and don't blame all your health concerns on weight. If you feel pressured to change your body in any way, it may be worth having a conversation about how you feel or find a new health provider. You might ask, "How would you treat this problem if weight was not an issue?"

3. Eat in a way that feels good for your body, mind, and spirit. To do this, you must learn to think of food differently. Humans are social creatures, and all over the world, holidays and celebrations include special foods that are just there for fun! Think of birthday cake or wedding cake. There is no such thing as "good food" and "bad food". Using these labels to describe food can make us feel shame and guilt around certain types of food. When we've eaten a food we label as "bad", we may feel pressure to do harmful things like exercising too much, or not eating the next meal. This isn't good for our bodies or our minds. Instead, try to stop labelling food as good, bad, healthy, or unhealthy. Listen to your body and eat what you feel like eating without feeling like you are on a diet. Pay attention to how you feel while you are eating and when you're done eating. This takes practice, but in time it gets easier.

4. Move your body in ways that feel good! If you don't like going to the gym, don't go. Movement shouldn't have to be about burning calories or changing our shape or size. Think about what kind of movement brings you joy and do more of that. Some examples might include yoga, taking your grandchildren to the park, joining a walking group, or gardening.

Changing how we think about our bodies can be a challenge and takes work. It's worth the effort to be able to feel good about ourselves and be at peace with our bodies. Reach out for support by joining our online community at <https://www.facebook.com/NourishStoon/>.

The Skinny on Skin Care

by Bonnie Davies



Many years ago I had the opportunity and pleasure to do the makeup on a photoshoot for a delightful woman named Edith. Her daughters had given her the photoshoot and makeup application for her 80th birthday. When I commented on how thoughtful her daughters were she corrected me. She thought that it was so they would have a good obituary picture of her. She had a twinkle in her eyes, giggled a little and proceeded to advise me that there is no such thing as growing old gracefully - you go kicking and screaming. We laughed and had a lovely visit, and I'm sure she appreciated her daughters' kind gesture.

I've never forgotten Edith's "kicking and screaming" comment, but I have a different plan. Educating myself as situations determine I do, gathering as many helpful hints as possible, and keeping a smile on my face with every day and decade that passes. I hope to pass some of these ideas on to you.

Change is constant. It's in our everyday life and routine. It's easy to miss among our lives, families, work, friends, and activities. Then tomorrow happens and things change again. So do you, my friend. That reflection in the mirror shows us a life lived. She's alive! Let's attend to her needs, today, and each day that follows. It's her turn for love, attention, compassion, forgiveness and attention. She deserves it, especially at this time of her life!

As we become of a more interesting age, the differences in appearance from our youth are quite obvious. We need to adapt, but that's okay because we're good at it. As our estrogen dwindles, many changes occur. Estrogen feeds the collagen in our skin which acts as

"mortar" that keeps our skin cells together, like bricks and mortar that are used to create a wall. Less estrogen causes visual signs of a weakening in our skin cell structure, making our skin less firm. Fine lines, a thinner skin tone, and a crepe-like quality to our skin's overall appearance will show. Now, throw in a lifetime of sun exposure and you'll notice more damage. The accumulation of time spent in the sun's harmful rays show up with a "baked" look, and on some skin, as sun spots, which can be pre-cancerous. Be sure to get those spots looked at by a health care provider, especially if they're new or if they have changed in any way. Skin cancer is the most preventable cancer. Avoid sun exposure between 10 a.m.-2 p.m., since this is when the harmful rays are the strongest. Wear sunscreen with an SPF of no lower than 30 when outdoors.

Let's not forget the role that gravity has played. The longer we stand on this planet the closer to the ground some things fall. You win some, you lose some! Let's start winning this new stage in life with a few helpful hints, beginning with the most important routine of skin care. As Canadian women, we notice the weather is complicating our skin's texture. Start by using a gentle cleanser twice a day, followed by a nourishing, balanced moisturizer. Soap and water leave an alkaline residue on your face, making your skin feel dryer and rougher. This makes your skin look parched and more lined. Besides, smiling is harder with a tight face. We're going for a "dewy" look, a balance of smooth and silky, not parched dry or oily. Every 28 days the top layer of your skin dies and falls off, leaving your younger, plumper, more moisture laden skin cells exposed. When you don't follow a regular skin care routine, dead skin cells create

flakes on your skin and no amount of moisturizer will resurrect them. There are skin supplements that will help with your skin's appearance. These can be added to a good skin care routine, such as exfoliators, eye creams, and Vitamin C serums. I highly recommend them. However the fountain of Youth is not in just one bottle. It is a series of steps that should be personalized to your specific set of circumstances, wants, and desires. Age, diet, lifestyle, overall health and the climate you live in will all be determining factors to your skin care routine.

Chap sticks are a personal peeve of mine, as the more you use them, the more damaged your lips become. When you apply a wax stick to your lips, you are stretching (ripping) the delicate lip tissue causing an irritation that makes you reach for more, but the problem lips persist and the vicious cycle continues. It would be better to apply a soft hydrating lipstick, lip gloss, or balm to take care of chapped lips, one that easily glides on. Colours and tints are a personal choice, but you can go colour free, too.

As we accumulate the number of days we live, we notice our skin losing colour more lines appear in our reflection as our skin becomes thinner, is there any hope of looking and feeling younger? My answer is, of course! By adapting to change we can use a better moisturizer, foundation, sunscreen, and makeup techniques designed for who we are today and not the women we once were. Defy the look of aging by making small changes such as a better skin care routine, a softer makeup application, adding bright colours to your wardrobe, changing the cut and/or colour of your hair, and my personal favourite, smiling more. No kicking and screaming, just more smiling because you know how to live the good life!

Until we meet again, I smile back at you!
Bonnie Davies
Personal Care Technician Salon Grea

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Cholesterol and Your Heart

by Nikole Tattrie, RD

Turkey and Bean Rice Wraps

From <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/get-healthy/recipes/poultry/turkey-and-bean-rice-wraps>

6 servings / 25 min
Prep 15 min / Cook 10 min

- ½ cup long grain brown rice (125 ml)
- 1 cup no salt added chicken broth (250 ml)
- ½ lb turkey cutlets or scalloppini (500g)
- 2 tsp canola oil (10ml)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp chili powder (5ml)
- ½ tsp grated lime rind (2ml)
- 2 tbsp lime Juice (25ml)
- ¾ cup salsa (175ml)
- 1 cup corn kernels (250ml)
- 1 cup canned cooked black beans, drained and rinsed (250ml)
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh coriander (25ml)
- 1 head Boston lettuce, leaves separated

1. In saucepan, bring rice and broth to boil. Cover and reduce heat to low and cook for 25 minutes or until tender and liquid is absorbed.

2. Meanwhile, cut turkey cutlets into strips crosswise; place in bowl. Add 5 mL (1 tsp) of the oil, garlic, chili powder, lime rind and juice; stir until well coated.

3. In large non-stick skillet, heat remaining oil over medium high heat and cook turkey, stirring for about 5 minutes or until no longer pink inside. Add cooked rice and salsa; stir to coat.

4. Stir in corn and beans and cook for about 2 minutes or until warmed through. Stir in coriander and spoon on to lettuce leaves and roll up to enjoy.



Those who have received the dreaded high cholesterol diagnosis may cringe at the thought of making dietary changes to improve their heart health. But even those highly motivated to improve cholesterol levels through diet may face challenges in doing so. Maybe you've already changed your diet to lower your cholesterol, but still had to start taking medication.

Test yourself: Which of the following meals or snacks is cholesterol free?

- A. Stir-fried shrimp with broccoli, served over rice
- B. Potato chips and a pop
- C. A spinach and cheese egg white omelette
- D. A strawberry and banana fruit and yogurt smoothie

Are you surprised to find out that the answer is B? Could this mean that chips and pop are a better option than the other three choices if you have high cholesterol?

The answer is clearly no, so read on to gain more perspective on this issue.

Cholesterol is found in foods of animal origin. Therefore, shrimp, eggs, cheese, and yogurt, despite their richness in protein and other nutrients, are all sources of dietary cholesterol. Our bodies actually do need some cholesterol, and our liver is programmed to make it, regardless of whether we are or are not eating high cholesterol foods. For this reason, our blood cholesterol levels are influenced by far more than simply how much cholesterol is in the food we eat. Too much cholesterol in the blood can result in the formation of plaque in your arteries.

This can lead to coronary artery disease and put you at higher risk of having a heart attack.

New research has shown that the strategy of reducing or eliminating cholesterol-containing foods is not as effective in managing cholesterol as it was once thought to be. We instead are pointed in the direction of adding more heart-healthy foods into our diet, rather than focusing our energy on trying to eliminate potentially heart-harming foods. The process of elimination may occur naturally - as you increase certain foods, others will inevitably decrease.

The following are some dietary additions to help reduce total blood cholesterol:

1. Reach for monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats more often than saturated and trans fats. Put in simple terms, use canola, olive, and soybean oil more often than butter, lard, and other animal fats. If you use margarine, read the label to look for the term "non-hydrogenated". New research is showing that diets containing healthier fats are more beneficial than low-fat diets (keeping in mind that the principle of "everything in moderation" still applies).

***Tip:** Specialty olive oil stores offer great flavours and varieties of oil that can be used as salad dressings, drizzled over meat and vegetables, ingredients in marinades, or dips for bread instead of butter.

2. Try to add fatty fish to your diet 2-3 times per week, and small amounts of nuts to your diet daily. These foods contain the types of fat mentioned above that will make your heart happy. *continued on next page...*

Moon Time Sisters

Nicole White founded Moon Time Sisters on January 31st, 2017 as a response to a CBC story explaining young women were not going to school because they did not have access to menstrual products. Prohibitive cost is not unusual for many supplies in the north. If one is experiencing poverty, this is the first thing to drop off the needs list. Our collective started to create a space to both celebrate and support young women in the north but also to let them know they are not alone. Hundreds of women across the province gathered together to create collections, donation hubs. People from across the country heard our story and donated.

Our two Saskatchewan drives in 2017 and 2018 have seen nearly 200K of product heading to over 25 different northern communities. Our drive focused on the full spectrum of menstrual products: pads, tampons, menstrual cups, and cloth pads.

Our Moon Time Sisters Ontario chapter has been in full swing and has sent over 800K of product to their northern communities. February 2019, both Moon Time chapters joined True North Aid organization, to better

amplify other projects serving the north. We are excited to be a True North project and work in collaboration with their team.

How you can help?

- Organize a collection at your workplace/ school/church.
- Most needed items are: tampons, pads, menstrual cups, and cloth pads.
- Donate funds. 100% of funds go to transportation or product. There is no overhead; this is a complete volunteer effort.
- Spread the word. Follow our fb page and tell your friends, family, and community!

Moon Time: defines and honours the time of month when a young woman is menstruating. Many believe that women are most powerful at this time. The Moon Time Ceremony is a two to four day ceremony celebrated and recognized throughout North America and is when the women in a young woman's community and family surround her and teach her about becoming a woman. Our project embodies Cree values such as *wahkotahwin* (we are all family or share relations), and *wichitowin* (taking care of each other.)



**moon
time
sisters**

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WMLH Program Welcomes Kayla Howat



I was raised in a small town as my parents have a family farm near Lanigan, SK. In 2012, I moved to Saskatoon to work for the Saskatchewan Health Authority (previously Saskatoon Health Region). My first position was at RUH Emergency where I worked for multiple years and very much enjoyed! I am now pleased to be working as the Medical Office Assistant for Women's Mid-Life Health Program. When given the chance, I enjoy traveling, spending time with family & friends and also taking care of our two dogs and senior cat.

Cholesterol and Your Heart - *continued*

***Tip:** Use herbs and lemon juice to season fish and add delicious flavour without relying on a breaded coating or deep-fried cooking method.

3. Increase your intake of soluble fibre, which has been shown to reduce blood cholesterol. Foods that contain soluble fibre include barley, pears, apples, nuts, and legumes. If you aren't used to eating these foods regularly, try incorporating them in small amounts at first. You may be surprised at how simple and flavourful they can be. Other good, easy sources of soluble fibre include bran cereals containing psyllium fibre; add some to your favourite cereal or yogurt, and your heart will thank you.

***Tip:** Try substituting half your ground beef with cooked lentils in any recipe you are making. You may be surprised to not notice any difference in flavour or texture!

There are still some people who are more sensitive to dietary cholesterol and need more careful control of their cholesterol intake. Furthermore, some will still require cholesterol-lowering medication to achieve target levels, despite diet and lifestyle changes. That emphasizes the need for a team approach, involving physicians, dietitians, pharmacists, physiotherapists, exercise therapists, and others.

Overall, you can feel a sense of freedom to know it is not necessarily what you give up, but rather what you add in, that will help improve cholesterol levels. Adding more plant-based fats, fatty fish and nuts, and soluble fibre to your diet, in addition to regular exercise, are promising ways to make your heart happy - an outcome guaranteed to make you feel a sense of control and satisfaction over your health and well-being.

Is Marijuana a Friend of Menopause?

continued from page 1

Mid-Life Matters Series

Watch for Dr. Renee Morissette on CTV News at Noon with Jeff Rogstad. A series of short segments, Midlife Matters, on women's health topics will be presented on some Tuesdays during the noon show. Each topic will have a handout which will be on our website www.womensmidlifehealth.ca.

endocannabinoid system are blocked, depressive and anxious symptoms may arise.⁹ This has led some researchers to believe that cannabis may be a future option for treating depression,^{7,9} but we need to learn more before using it for this purpose.

If you have considered cannabis for a medical reason, you may be wondering which product to use and how much to take. There is not enough known about cannabis to recommend particular products and doses. Further, it is important to consider that some medications may interact with cannabis, and cannabis may not be a good choice for people with certain medical conditions. Due to potential risks, cannabis should be avoided in people with a history of psychosis/schizophrenia, those under the age of 21-25, during pregnancy or breastfeeding, or in those who have a

substance misuse history.³ It is important to discuss your medical history with a health care professional if you are considering the use of cannabis.

Cannabis is not a miracle to cure the symptoms of menopause but it may become an option worth considering as we continue to learn more through further research. If you are considering cannabis, talk to someone on your healthcare team and you can decide together if it is the right choice for you.

*References available upon request.
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Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Women's Mid-Life Health Program ISSN 1705-9593 (Print) ISSN 1705-9607 (Online)

Web Resources to Share

The new **Canada's Food Guide 2019** has been released providing practical recommendations to eat in a healthy way. Lots of great information is on the website - colorful pictures and resources. <https://food-guide.canada.ca>

Smoker's Helpline provides great new information for those who are intending to quit or who are needing support to quit using tobacco products. <https://smokershelpline.ca>

The Women's Brain Health Initiative website is a wealth of information about keeping our brains healthy! <https://womensbrainhealth.org>

Do you know the **ABC's of Dementia**? The possibility of Alzheimer disease or any of the many other dementias cause fear in our hearts every time we forget something! Resources for determining if you are at risk for dementia or if a loved one is showing signs of dementia, support for caregivers and those living with dementia is available from the Alzheimer Society of Canada. <https://www.alzheimer.ca>

Hair Loss can be a very distressing condition for women and men. The Canadian Hair Loss Foundation has excellent information about the types of hair loss, assessment, diagnosis and treatment options. www.canadianhairlossfoundation.org

Check out the information videos on the **North American Menopause Society** website. www.menopause.org
The NAMS Video Series is intended to provide practical information on current topics of interest. New videos are posted monthly.

Consider this....

Happiness isn't about getting what you want all the time. It's about loving what you have and being grateful for it. - Daily Health Post (Facebook)

Don't cling to a mistake just because you spent a lot of time making it. (Facebook)