



# POWER UP YOUR HEALTH

ALBERTA HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAM- CALGARY ZONE NEWSLETTER



Live your Best Life

## Let's take a moment.

December is a month that may be filled with family gatherings, joy, caroling, or the promise of an upcoming and a well-earned vacation. It is a colourful and festive time of year. It is easy to get lost in the hustle and bustle of preparing for holidays or special events and gatherings.

We believe that to give the best of yourself to others, you first need to *be* the best version of yourself. This means taking stock of your needs and giving yourself the same level of care that you would to a best friend or loved one. It also means pacing yourself, managing stressful situations, and staying mindful of your mental health and wellness. Join us for these classes to learn more:

- [Living Well with Stress](#) (in-person at the Montgomery Community Association) – Wednesday, December 4 from 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- [Try a Little Self-Kindness: Motivating with Self-Compassion](#) (in-person at Bowness Library) – Thursday, December 5 from 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- [Try a Little Self-Kindness: Motivating with Self-Compassion](#) (online) – Tuesday, December 10 from 9:30 a.m. – noon

During this time, we would also like to acknowledge those family members and loved ones who are no longer at the dinner table. Grief is not linear – it is a rollercoaster. We cannot remove the feelings that come with grief, but we can give you tools to help you cope. Our *Understanding the Experience of Grief* class is being offered a few times in December in both online and in-person formats. [See our class schedule](#) to find a time that works best for you.



Let's Get Moving

## A thousand-mile journey starts with a single step

Just as a thousand-mile journey would ultimately start with a single step, effective chronic disease management should also be tackled in the same way: one step at a time.

Exercise is important in a healthy lifestyle. With every step closer to that regular exercise routine, you may find that you'll be better able to manage pain, climb the stairs, balance on icy surfaces, and, in general, do the things that are most important to you. As we move toward the end of 2024, we invite you to envision yourself at your healthiest. What does this look like, and what steps do you need to take to get there?

Our exercise professionals are here to help you break your health management goals into smaller and more manageable chunks. They can teach you how to exercise safely with a health condition and how to pace yourself for success. Learn about how our supervised exercise program can help support you in your exercise journey by [watching this video](#). If you do not live in the Calgary Zone, visit our [supervised exercise website](#) to learn about programs in your area.



## Healthy eating over the holidays

If you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, or another holiday or special occasion, chances are your December will bring with it delicious-smelling baked goods and treats, family dinners and potlucks. Here are some tips to help you make healthy food choices while enjoying holiday celebrations:

1. Plan to eat regularly. Skipping meals can make you very hungry making it hard to make healthy food choices.
2. Many holiday drinks are high in calories, fat and sugar. Enjoy an herbal tea or water flavoured with spices or fruit, such as adding a cinnamon stick and cranberries to iced water.
3. Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit. They are high in fibre, vitamins and other nutrients.
4. Be mindful of what you are eating and eat without judgment. We want you to have a positive relationship with food, and we recognize that during the holidays, there may be foods that are less healthy but important to you. Instead of avoiding food and feeling like you are missing out, take a smaller portion, eat slowly, and take the time to savour it.

Join our [Eating Away from Home](#) class on Thursday, December 12 from 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. to learn more.

## A message from our Program Manager

This is a wonderful time of year to reflect on past accomplishments, plan for the future, and cherish family and friends. I always think about how grateful I am for the simple things in life, and for being able to ride my bike at any time in the year – even in the winter! I know it's not for everyone!!! I wanted to take the time to share the Alberta Healthy Living Program's plans for 2025.

**Supervised Exercise:** In 2022 we created and delivered a new virtual exercise class called PACE (Pacing, Active Changes, and Exercise). We have had a positive response to this class and received feedback that some participants would prefer to attend this option in person. In 2025, we will be piloting this class at East Calgary Health Centre to see if there is demand for an in-person class of this nature. This exercise class is designed to meet the needs of those who need to progress at a slow pace due to chronic pain and/or considerable fatigue. If this pilot is successful, we will look at increasing the number of in person offerings of PACE in 2025

**Health Education:** Over the past few years, we have made significant changes to our health education services. These include simplifying how to find class information on our website, rolling out a new online registration system, and partnering with the Calgary Public Library to offer a small selection of our classes at library branches around the city. We look forward to taking the time in 2025 to focus on smoothing out these behind-the-scenes processes and exploring new partnerships to bring our classes to a wider audience.

**Self-Management Workshops:** For years, our free and interactive [self-management workshops](#) have guided Albertans toward healthier lives. In addition to offering Better Choices, Better Health® - Chronic Disease and Better Choices, Better Health® - Chronic Pain, we will also be offering a weight management edition of the program in 2025. We will also be offering private workshops to groups of 8-12 people.

Happy Holidays, everyone! ~Teresa

