

Health Spotlight – Home Test Kits

Advances in self-test products in the last ten years have made at-home kits affordable, easy to use and increasingly reliable. Not only are they convenient, home test kits are also discreet, and allow all of us to be a powerful force in managing our own health.

Today's kits detect changes earlier than ever, and in many cases, bring us happy news – be it an improvement in our health condition or perhaps a long-awaited addition to our family.

At-home kits are designed to either monitor or diagnose certain conditions. Common test kits include blood glucose monitors, blood pressure monitors, and home pregnancy tests.

One of the main benefits of “monitoring” kits is that **patients can play an active role**, along with their healthcare team, in keeping track of, and ideally, improving their health condition.

How do you know which kits are safe and reliable? In Canada, personal test kits must be approved and licensed by Health Canada **www.healthcanada.ca**, the federal government department responsible for the health

of all Canadians, before they can be made available for sale. Furthermore, in British Columbia, home test kits can be sold only by licensed pharmacies. (You may find test kits for sale on the Internet. Generally, it would not be advisable to purchase these kits, as they may be counterfeit product and/or not approved by Health Canada.)

Important: At-home kits are not intended to replace professional healthcare, and should only be used with the guidance of your healthcare professional.

You'll find a full range of home test kits and supplies at Howe Sound Pharmacy. Our pharmacists will provide you with complete information about the kits, including correct usage and precautions.

For handy at-home info about at-home kits, refer to the BC Health Guide, available free of charge at Howe Sound Pharmacy. (It's also online on the BC Ministry of Health website **www.bchealthguide.org**)



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Healthy Living – Winter Escapes

There's nothing like heading to sunnier climes to escape the last few weeks of winter. Before you leave, visit Health Canada's website for the latest travel health advisories and much more to keep you healthy before, during, and after your trip. Remember to see your pharmacist, too, for travel medications and packing tips. Proper labeling of all medicines is essential, so ask about **Howe Sound Pharmacy's new strip-pouch medicine packaging**, perfect for travelers of all ages.

www.healthcanada.ca, click *healthy living* then *travel health*.

HOURS

Monday to Friday

8:30AM – 5:30PM

Late clinic, Tuesdays until 7PM

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An Ounce of Prevention

For men and women

- Physical: An annual. Preventive exam can catch medical problems before they become serious.
- Blood pressure: After age 20, at least every two years.
- Cholesterol: Annually for men 40 and over, 50 and over for women.
- Digital rectal exam: Annually after age 50.
- Colorectal cancer screening: Every two years after age 50, earlier if there is a family history of colon cancer.
- Osteoporosis: Assessment for risk factor at 50, bone-mineral density test at 65.
- Skin exam: Monthly self-examination for irregular-shaped moles. Annually by a doctor after age 40.
- Fasting blood glucose: Every three years after age 40, if you have risk factors for diabetes.
- Vaccination: An annual flu shot helps to prevent or reduce the severity of influenza.

For women

- Pap test: Beginning at 18, or annually when sexually active.
- Mammogram: Every two years between age 50 and 69, earlier if family history of breast cancer.
- Breast self-exam: Monthly.

For men

- Protein Specific Antigen (PSA): Doctors recommend the check for prostate cancer annually after age 50.
- Testicular self-exam: Monthly

Regular checkups once one reaches a particular age can lead to early diagnosis and cures

Healthy Eating – Hearty Corn Chowder

A quick, easy way to warm up winter. Soups and chowders make wholesome suppers when served with salad and whole wheat rolls.

It's prime citrus season right now, so how about greens tossed gently with avocado and pink grapefruit sections topped with a splash of balsamic vinaigrette or poppy-seed dressing.

Cooking tip: milk-based chowders scorch easily. After adding milk, use med-low heat, stir constantly. Don't overcook.

Ingredients

- 1 cup diced onion
- 6 strips uncooked bacon cut in to 1" pieces
- 2 cups cubed peeled potatoes, like Yukon Gold (if organic, do not peel)
- 2 cups milk (creamo, whole, 2%, 1% or skim)
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 tbsp flour whisked into 1/4 cup water, as a thickener
- 2 cups corn kernels (frozen-thawed, fresh, or canned)
- Salt and pepper to taste.

Directions

Cook potatoes in water til done. Drain and set aside. In separate pot, sauté bacon and onion til golden. Meanwhile, whisk the white flour in to 1/4 cup water and set aside. Add stock and milk to bacon-onion pot. Whisk flour-water thickener into the stock-milk. Quickly add corn, potatoes and stir until thickened and bubbly. Garnish with chopped parsley or chives and serve.

Variations

- Gluten-free: substitute 1 tsp cornstarch in place of wheat flour thickener.
- Vegetarian: omit bacon. Sauté onion in 2 tbsp canola oil. Use low-sodium vegetable-stock instead of chicken stock.
- Busy evening: Sauté onions then add a family-size can of Campbell's condensed mushroom soup. Add the 2 cups milk, but omit the flour-water thickener and substitute water for the stock.
- Add protein: top chowder with cooked diced chicken, cooked peeled shrimp or crab meat, or your favorite cooked fish (salmon, halibut)
- Encourage young chefs by having them help you chop, stir, garnish and serve. The youngest will enjoy washing the cutting board and other utensils (no knives) in a sink full of bubbles! Adult supervision in the kitchen is a must.



Did you know? You don't even need to leave home to have your prescriptions refilled*. **Call us with your order, and we'll deliver right to your door, for free!**

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*Delivery available Monday to Friday, Port Mellon to Redrooffs. Certain prescription refills may require a doctor visit. Please call us for further details.