

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*.

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Healthy Moving – Arthritis

Everyone knows that exercise is good for you, but what if you have arthritic aches that discourage you from moving?

Current research shows that **gentle exercise** is an essential tool in managing your arthritis, and walking is an ideal way to start. Not only is walking free, it's also an activity that most people can do safely and regularly with family, friends, co-workers, or pets. (For those who enjoy "keeping score," track your steps with a pedometer – available at Howe Sound Pharmacy.)

Can something so simple really make a difference? Absolutely. Moderate, regular walking will reduce pain and stiffness in your joints, strengthen muscle around your joints, and will also improve your flexibility and endurance. Of course, walking offers many other health benefits, too.

Laurel Lightbourn, Howe Sound Pharmacy's fitness consultant, is available by appointment to assist you in creating an easy-to-follow, gentle walking program. Working in consultation with your healthcare professionals, she will design a routine to suit your interests and overall health condition. (Please ask our pharmacists for full details.)

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Walking with friends and family what better way to socialize and get outdoors, all while enjoying early spring on the beautiful Sunshine Coast. Our pharmacists welcome your questions about arthritis and exercise.

Online, visit www.arthritis.ca

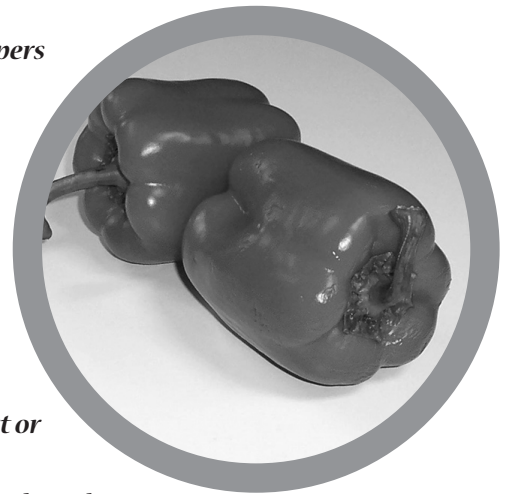
Healthy Eating – Tapas

Snacks are hard to resist, so why not make a proper meal of them? As long as what you're grazing on is healthy, balanced, and appropriately portioned, a selection of finger foods and other portable treats can easily turn an everyday supper in to a festive tapas party!

Roasted Red Pepper Hummus

Quick and easy to make, hummus is an all-round favorite with exotic flair. Roasted red peppers and tahini are available at local grocery stores.

- 1 cup roasted red peppers, drained*
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled (some jars of red peppers contain garlic cloves)*
- 1540 ml can chick peas, rinsed and drained (or cook your own chick peas for less sodium content)*
- 2 tablespoons tahini (sesame paste)*
- 2 tablespoons lime juice*
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin (or to taste)*
- dash of sea salt (optional)*
- 2 or more tablespoons olive oil, plain yogurt or water (optional)*



Add ingredients to food processor and blend until smooth. Add olive oil (or yogurt or water) for a smoother dip.

Serve with cut vegetables or home-made whole-wheat pita chips. (Visit www.howesndrx.com for recipe)

Variation: Balsamic-Sweet Onion Hummus

Omit red peppers. Replace with 1 cup gently sauted Walla Walla onion, and one teaspoon good quality balsamic vinegar. (Visit www.howesndrx.com for more variations)

Yield: approximately 2 cups – enjoy some now, and freeze the remainder for another day.

Recipes inspired by Julie Van Rosendaal's latest book, Grazing, a low-fat cookbook published in Canada by One Smart Cookie Inc. www.onesmartcookie.ca

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