

THE SASKATCHEWAN BLUE CROSS

wellness guide

TWENTY

25

ISSUE 5

HARVEST YOUR
inner calm

FALL FOODS THAT
SUPPORT
immunity

EXPLORE THE
true north

5 WAYS TO FIND
PEACE ON
busy days



Invested in our communities.

\$179M

recirculated yearly
into our local
economy

139+

SK communities
supported in
2024

22

partnerships for
Health Literacy
initiatives in 2024

Empowering healthy lives.



Total invested in
Saskatchewan in 2024:

\$828,479

Learn more: sk.bluecross.ca/community



fall into wellness

As the crisp air of autumn settles over Saskatchewan and the leaves turn brilliant shades of amber and crimson, we're reminded that change — like the seasons — is both natural and necessary. Fall invites us to slow down, reflect and reconnect with what matters most: our health, loved ones and communities, and the world around us.



This year's issue of the Saskatchewan Blue Cross Wellness Guide is your companion for embracing this season with intention and vitality. Whether you're planning a weekend escape to one of Canada's breathtaking travel destinations, preparing nourishing meals with seasonal produce, or cultivating wellness right in your backyard, this guide is designed to inspire and support your journey.

Inside, you'll find practical resources like curated packing lists for autumn adventures, nutrition tips to fuel your body and mind and gardening advice to help you make the most of the harvest season. We've also included stories and insights that celebrate the beauty of travel — both near and far — and the restorative power of nature.

Wellness isn't just about physical health; it's about creating balance, finding joy and making space for what rejuvenates you. Whether you're hiking through golden forests, sipping warm cider after a day of exploring, or simply taking a moment to breathe deeply in the cool fall air, we hope this guide encourages you to embrace the season with curiosity and care.

Here's to an autumn filled with vibrant health, meaningful adventures and life's simple pleasures. **Your journey to whole health and well-being begins here.**

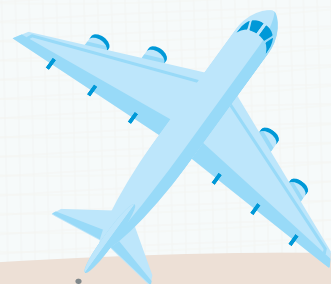
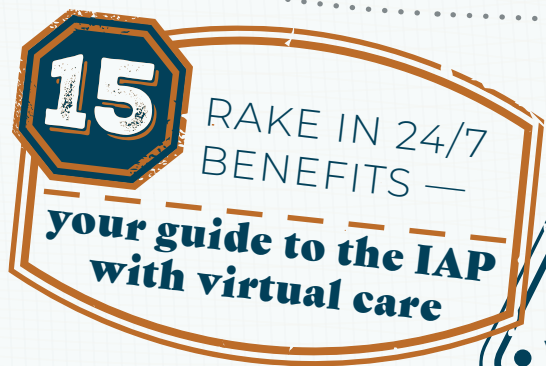


*your partner
in wellness,*



what's on the itinerary?

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HARVEST YOUR INNER CALM

mindfulness moment



As the leaves turn and the air begins to crisp, fall arrives as a quiet invitation to slow down, take stock and begin again. While January often gets credit as the start of a new year, many of us feel that fall carries its own sense of renewal. After the expansiveness of summer — full schedules, late nights and spontaneous plans — autumn brings a gentle return to rhythm. Children head back to school, routines resume, and a new season of intention begins.

This makes fall the perfect time to anchor yourself in the present moment through mindfulness.

what is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention, on purpose, to the present moment and without judgment. It's about becoming aware of your thoughts, surroundings, body and emotions so you can meet them with calm awareness rather than reactivity. It doesn't require a meditation cushion or hours of silence. Mindfulness can meet you in a quiet cup of coffee, a crisp walk through the leaves, or a single deep breath before starting your day.

In Saskatchewan, where the seasons change with noticeable beauty and boldness, fall offers us a stunning reminder that change is natural and can be grounding.

When we bring mindfulness into our daily lives, especially during seasonal transitions, we:

- Build resilience in times of change
- Cultivate gratitude for small, everyday moments
- Reduce stress by calming the nervous system
- Improve focus and mental clarity
- Support emotional balance and self-awareness

These are all essential components of whole health and well-being, beginning with just a few moments of presence.

a guided practice: grounding in the season

This practice takes just five to seven minutes and is perfect to begin or end your day.

STEP 1: GET COMFORTABLE

Find a cozy chair, wrap yourself in a blanket, or step outside in a warm sweater. Let your body settle.

STEP 2: SOFTEN INTO STILLNESS

Close your eyes or gently soften your gaze. Take a slow, full breath in through your nose... and exhale slowly through your mouth. Do this three times. Let your shoulders drop. Release any tension in your jaw, your hands and your belly.

STEP 3: TUNE IN TO YOUR SENSES

Now, open your awareness to your surroundings, one sense at a time.

- **Sight (if your eyes are open or gaze is softened):** What colours or textures do you notice? Is the light warm or soft? Are there signs of fall — leaves, trees or early frost?
- **Sound:** Can you hear the wind, distant voices or the hum of your home?
- **Touch:** Can you feel the weight of your body in the chair, the temperature on your skin, the texture of your clothing?
- **Smell:** Is there a hint of earthiness in the air, something baking or the scent of the outdoors lingering in your space?
- **Taste:** If you're sipping something warm, bring your full attention to the flavour and sensation.

There's no need to rush or label anything. Simply notice. Let this moment be enough.

STEP 4: RETURN WITH INTENTION

After a minute or two, gently return to your breath. Take three full, grounding breaths. As you inhale, imagine drawing in clarity. As you exhale, release any heaviness or resistance.

Before ending, ask yourself: "What do I need to feel supported this season?"

this fall, give yourself permission to begin again — gently, intentionally and mindfully.

Whether you're navigating change, returning to structure or simply looking to feel more connected, mindfulness offers a steady path forward. Presence is powerful, and it's always available to you, one breath at a time.



WITH LARISSA BAYET

Organizational Mindfulness Facilitator, Twello
Product Trainer, Saskatchewan Blue Cross



5 ways to find peace ON BUSY DAYS



BY
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Whether you're going back to school, preparing for longer work hours, or closing up the cabin, the first days of fall can feel hurried and hectic. Especially in Saskatchewan, where summer feels short, transitioning to structured fall routines doesn't always feel comfortable. To ease the overwhelm, here are five minimalist ways to carry the energy of summer into fall while doing less for more joy.

1. Curate daily pockets of calm

This can feel like a lofty goal, so start small. Micro-rituals throughout your day provide grounding and balance and are less overwhelming than trying the latest productivity trends.

Even five minutes can be enough to reduce cortisol levels and reset your mind: a short meditation, doodling in a journal, mindfully preparing your morning coffee instead of defaulting to takeout or spending an unplugged moment outside. Whatever it is, keep it short and simple.

2. Protect space for nothing

Vera of *Simple Happy Zen* defines the Dutch word *niksen* as "the art of purposefully doing nothing." As fall busyness takes over, setting aside one or two hours each week with no plans becomes more important than ever. This isn't a time for cleaning, catching up on work or meal planning. It's a time to simply be.

Let go of obligations, experience your space, and free up some mental energy. You don't even have to read a book or watch TV. It might feel indulgent at first, but these weekly pauses can help prevent burnout and give permission to shed the rigid expectations we constantly face in our day-to-day.

3. Carry summer energy into fall

Society tells us to save our fun for summer. On the prairies, this is especially difficult, as “summer” often doesn’t even last a full two months. It’s tempting to cling to a moment that society deems the peak of enjoyment in your year, but you’re not missing out as you move into fall. There are moments of joy in every season, so stay present and appreciate what each one has to offer.

If you want to bring some of the spontaneity and lightness of summer into these cooler days, enjoy playful activities like last-minute walks by the river, hosting friends for a backyard BBQ, taking your kids for ice cream, or playing a round of mini-golf. Focus on building connections with loved ones, rather than the particular setting or environment in which they happen.

4. Simplify your day-to-day

A new season is a perfect time to declutter your space and make room for the things that truly add value to your life. Store away summer clothing and fill your closet with fall and winter garments. Or reevaluate your kitchen gadgets to see what you’re ready to let go of as you shift toward baking and slow cooker meals. Even clearing off a desk or tidying digital files can make a noticeable difference.

Wherever you choose to start, begin with small steps and prioritize the value something brings to your life now, rather than its potential future value.

While it may seem counterintuitive, setting aside time each week to plan meals, write to-do lists, organize outfits, or block off work tasks can simplify your days more than you might expect. Structure doesn’t have to feel restrictive; it’s about freeing mental space for what truly matters.

5. Become a tourist in your own town

You don’t need a plane ticket to feel the thrill of discovery. Fall is a perfect time to look at your own community with fresh eyes.

Try a new museum, attend a local concert, explore a nearby trail or visit a café you’ve never stepped into. Even something as simple as walking to the grocery store instead of driving can spark a sense of novelty.

The key is to choose experiences that feel high-value rather than high-cost. These intentional acts of exploration can recharge your energy, spark creativity and remind you that joy isn’t reserved for vacations and special occasions.



When rest, play and structure come together, the season begins to feel not only manageable but meaningful. By letting go of the non-essential and focusing on what truly brings joy, you can move through the season with more ease and presence and start to savour the small pleasures in everyday life.

fall foods that support immunity

Cozy sweaters, shorter days and crisp air — fall is here! But with it comes the start of cold and flu season. The good news? Seasonal produce and staples are packed with nutrients to help your body stay strong.

Challenge yourself:

Choose at least one food from each nutrient category below when planning your meals this week. Lean into a mix of colourful vegetables, quality protein sources, and probiotic-rich ingredients, using this article as a starting point to cook up immunity ahead of winter.

Vitamin A helps to keep your skin and mucous membranes — the body's first defence against pathogens — healthy.

- **Plant-based (beta-carotene):** Orange vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, squash and peppers
- **Animal-based (retinol):** Liver, egg yolks and dairy

Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that protects immune cells from damage.

Sources: Tomatoes (fresh or canned), bell peppers, broccoli, brussels sprouts, kale, spinach, cauliflower and clementines.

Vitamin D influences immune cell activity; deficiency is linked to increased susceptibility to respiratory infections.

- **Natural sources:** Eggs, salmon and sardines
- **Fortified sources:** Dairy and plant-based milk

From November to March, the sun's angle in Saskatchewan is too low for your skin to synthesize vitamin D — even on sunny days! It is recommended that Canadians supplement with at least 400IU of vitamin D during the fall and winter months. Talk to your doctor or dietitian about adding vitamin D supplements to your routine!



Zinc

Zinc deficiency can impair immune function, making individuals more susceptible to pathogens.

Sources: Oysters (one of the best sources), meat, pumpkin seeds, chicken, lentils, sardines, shrimp, Greek yogurt and milk.

Protein is the building block of immunity, as antibodies, immune cells and signalling molecules are all made from protein. Adequate intake supports repair, recovery and defence!

Sources: Meat, poultry, fish, seafood, dairy, eggs, soy, beans, lentils, nuts and seeds.

About 70% of the immune system resides in the gut. Probiotics help maintain a healthy balance of gut bacteria, which supports the immune response!

Sources: Yogurt, kefir, fermented vegetables (e.g., sauerkraut or kimchi) and kombucha.



Protein

Probiotics



WITH
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TRAVEL WITHOUT TENSION:



stretches for a healthier journey

Travel days can be exciting, paving the way to new destinations and adventures, but they can also leave your body stiff, sore and stressed. Whether sitting in a car for hours or navigating long flights, being in one position for too long can strain your muscles and joints.

With a few simple stretches, you can boost circulation, release tension and help yourself arrive feeling more energized. We've rounded up some easy, travel-friendly stretches you can try next time you're on the move.

1 Neck rolls

Sitting for long periods can cause your neck and shoulders to tighten up, especially if you're reading, looking at your phone or trying to nap in an awkward position.

To loosen things up, slowly roll your head in a circular motion, first clockwise, then counterclockwise. Keep the movement gentle and controlled. This stretch can help reduce tension headaches and improve blood flow to your upper body.

2 Seated spinal twist

This stretch is perfect to do in your seat on a plane or in a car. Sit up tall, place your right hand on your left knee and gently twist your torso to the left, keeping your hips facing forward. Hold for a few breaths, then switch sides. Doing this stretch helps to release stiffness in your lower back and improve spinal mobility.

3 Ankle circles

Long travel days can lead to swollen feet and ankles, especially when circulation slows. Lift one foot off the floor and slowly rotate your ankle in clockwise and counterclockwise circles. Repeat on the other foot. Not only does this keep your joints moving, but it also helps encourage healthy blood flow — which is vital for preventing discomfort during travel.

4 Forward fold

When you are able, stand up and gently fold forward, letting your arms dangle toward the floor. This movement stretches your hamstrings and lower back while encouraging blood to flow toward your head. If you're tight on space or unable to get up, you can do a mini version by bending forward while seated.

5 Wrist and finger extensions

Extend one arm in front of you with your palm facing up. Use your opposite hand to gently pull back on your fingers, feeling a stretch through your wrist and forearm. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds, then switch sides. This exercise is especially beneficial for easing tension from typing, pulling luggage or gripping the steering wheel.

Keep moving!

If possible, try to move every hour. Even just standing up and walking a few steps can make a difference. Small movements add up and can help you feel better during and after your journey.

Travelling doesn't have to mean arriving at your destination with aches and pains. Adding a few of these easy stretches into your travel routine allows you to keep your body feeling comfortable, reduce stress and enjoy your trip from start to finish.

travel the true north:



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FIVE CANADIAN DESTINATIONS WORTH ADDING TO YOUR TRAVEL BUCKET LIST

Canada's geographical size means you can travel for weeks and barely scratch the surface. But thankfully, you don't actually have to go far to find incredible places. There are cities, regions, small towns and parks that offer a mix of culture, nature and memorable experiences.

Here are five of my favourite destinations I've visited, explored and fallen in love with — each with a tip or two for your own trip.

1 Road-trip Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland offers incredible coastal scenery: lighthouses, icebergs and colourful saltbox homes. But it's the people and traditions that make it special. Which is how I ended up becoming an honorary Newfoundlander in a "screeching in" ceremony. I donned a sou'wester rain hat, kissed a codfish, took a shot of 80-proof screech (rum) and dutifully recited "deed I is, me old cock and long may your big jib draw." Yes, it's touristy — but it's iconic, and a fun way to meet other travellers and connect with the locals.



Trinity, Newfoundland and Labrador

But my most memorable stop was in the 200-member community of Red Bay in Labrador, home to the UNESCO-designated Basque Whaling Station. Our guide at the historic site also served us dinner later that night at the only restaurant in town. It was a perfect example of how life here blends history, resilience and hospitality.

TRAVEL TIP: Newfoundlanders are a friendly bunch. Leave extra time to chat and learn about island life.



Red Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador

2 Learn Mi'kmaq History and Culture on Cape Breton Island

On Cape Breton Island (Unama'ki), I took part in a 2.4 km guided walk on Goat Island with Eskasoni Cultural Journeys. This is home to the world's largest Mi'kmaq community, at 4000 members strong. Along the trail, community members shared stories about hunting and fishing and demonstrated a ko'jua dance and drumming performance. I learned the first steps to basket weaving and took part in a smudging ceremony.

This wasn't just sightseeing — it was learning, connecting to and understanding a culture that has shaped Cape Breton for thousands of years. These experiences were educational and meaningful, and they remind us why it matters to learn about Indigenous cultures.

TRAVEL TIP: Don't miss driving the Cabot Trail on Cape Breton Island. The 298-kilometre loop winds along dramatic coastal cliffs, through fishing villages, and into Cape Breton Highlands National Park. Give yourself at least a full day to stop at lookouts, hike a short trail or two and dine on seafood along the way.



Eskasoni Mi'kmaq Nation,
Unama'ki, Nova Scotia

3 Enjoy Food and Culture in Winnipeg

Winnipeg offers a variety of world-class experiences. At Assiniboine Park Zoo, I was excited to see rescued polar bears up close at the Journey to Churchill exhibit — one of the only places in the world. A newer highlight nearby is The Leaf, where the warm, humid air of the indoor botanical gardens and the roar of Canada's largest indoor waterfall provide a perfect escape from the cold.

Downtown, The Forks is a lively hub with food halls, patios, markets, and riverfront trails all in one. It's also home to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, where interactive exhibits explore the past, present and future of human rights within one of the city's most striking architectural landmarks.

TRAVEL TIP: Summer is festival season in Winnipeg. If you visit in July or August, plan around the Winnipeg Folk Festival, Fringe Theatre Festival and Folklorama for food and musical entertainment.



Winnipeg, Manitoba

4 Get Outdoors in Waterton National Park, Alberta

Waterton borders Glacier National Park in Montana, forming the world's first International Peace Park. The transition in scenery here is striking — rolling prairie suddenly gives way to the sharp peaks and glacial-blue lakes signature of the Rocky Mountains.

At the heart of it all is Waterton Village, a walkable central hub where you can step from your hotel to the water's edge in minutes. In town, Cameron Falls is a beautiful photo stop. But one of my favourite hikes is the 2.8-kilometre round-trip Bear's Hump — a steep but short climb with sweeping views over the townscape.

While you can take a boat ride across Upper Waterton Lake, overlooking it all is the iconic Prince of Wales Hotel. Even if you're not staying overnight, it's worth stepping inside to admire the historic architecture. Another must-do is the scenic drive to Red Rock Canyon, where wildflowers often line the road and rushing water has carved striking formations in the red and green rock.

TRAVEL TIP: Get up early for the best chance to spot wildlife — I watched bighorn sheep playing beside the road and also saw a grizzly bear and black bear with cubs.



Waterton National Park, Alberta

5 Adventure in Cranbrook and Kimberley, British Columbia

Cranbrook, in southeastern B.C.'s East Kootenays, is a great base for both outdoor adventure and history. A highlight is the NorthStar Rails to Trails, a 25-kilometre paved path that connects Cranbrook with the nearby mountain town of Kimberley. The route passes through farmland and forest with impressive views of the Purcell and Rocky Mountains, making it great for a bike ride.

About 15 minutes outside Cranbrook, Fort Steele Heritage Town offers wagon rides, blacksmith demonstrations and even a working steam train. A visit here is a great day out for families. For a big adrenaline rush, book a helicopter tour over the peaks and glacier fed valleys of the Rockies. I had a front-row seat to the soaring ridgelines and deep valleys carved by ice. It is one of those moments where the scale of the mountains really hits you. It's the kind of view and experience you won't forget.



St. Mary Lake, Cranbrook, British Columbia

TRAVEL TIP: Stop at one of Kimberley's several breweries after a day of biking. It's a great way to refuel and get a taste of the local craft scene.

Whether it's cuisine, mountains, history or ocean views, the variety we have across Canada reminds me why exploring our own country is as rewarding as travelling abroad.



East Kootenays, British Columbia

Q&A

WITH
DR. ATA STATIONWALA, B.Sc., D.Ch.
Podiatrist, Moose Jaw Podiatry Clinic
President of the Saskatchewan College
of Podiatrists



Tell us about yourself...

I'm Ata Stationwala, a podiatrist with 27 years of experience — 25 of those spent practicing in Saskatchewan, where I operate a clinic in Moose Jaw. I studied Biochemistry and Chemistry at the University of Western Ontario and completed my podiatry training at the Michener Institute in Toronto. I've served as President of the Saskatchewan College of Podiatrists for over 20 years.

Outside of work, I enjoy hockey, tennis and long-distance running, including marathons and ultramarathons. I'm also a proud husband and father of two daughters.

What exactly does a podiatrist do?

Podiatrists are regulated health professionals trained to diagnose and treat foot and ankle conditions, including those linked to systemic diseases.

We perform soft-tissue surgeries, prescribe medications, order imaging and lab tests and manage everything from biomechanical issues to infections and wounds.

What services do podiatrists offer?

We treat thick nails, calluses, corns, warts and fungal infections and provide care for diabetic wounds. We also address biomechanical dysfunctions using orthotics, braces, footwear advice and therapeutic modalities.

While Saskatchewan Health doesn't cover podiatry, many private plans do, and coverage is available through Supplementary Health and NIHB.

Why is foot health so important?

Your feet are your foundation. Poor foot health can affect mobility, independence and overall well-being. Preventive care helps catch issues early before they impact your quality of life

Do I need a referral to see a podiatrist?

No referral is needed, and patients can self-refer. Since not all clinics offer the same services, it's a good idea to check before booking.

Your feet are your foundation.

Preventive care helps catch issues early before they impact your quality of life.





How has podiatry evolved?

Podiatry has come a long way in the past few decades. We've seen major strides in soft-tissue injury management, wound care technologies and diagnostic imaging.

Orthotic design has become more precise thanks to digital scanning and 3D printing, and new therapeutic tools are helping us treat chronic conditions more effectively.

What excites me most is how these innovations improve patient outcomes and make care more accessible. As the field continues to evolve, podiatrists are better equipped than ever to support mobility, independence and overall health and well-being.

How often should I see a podiatrist?

At least once a year for a general checkup. Diabetics should have annual screenings even without symptoms. Depending on their condition, some patients may need monthly visits.

What are some common foot problems you treat?

We see everything from ingrown toenails and bunions to heel pain, sprains and diabetic complications. We also treat skin and nail conditions like athlete's foot and perform minor surgeries when needed.

How do podiatrists collaborate with other healthcare providers?

We work closely with family doctors, nurse practitioners, chiropractors and rehab specialists. While we currently refer to specialists through primary care providers, we're advocating for direct referral privileges.

What can I do at home to maintain foot health?

- Check your feet regularly
- Treat minor scrapes with antiseptics and bandages
- Use foot files or pumice stones for calluses
- Avoid walking barefoot in public places
- Trim nails straight across
- Wear supportive footwear
- Moisturize your feet
- Soak feet briefly for aches – but no more than 15 minutes
- Seek care for persistent redness, lumps or unusual changes



gear up and go:

The essential carry-on packing list

Packing and preparing are the worst parts of travelling – or at least, that’s how we feel. However, there are many ways to optimize the process to make it more manageable and less stressful, including packing the perfect carry-on. We’re sharing our favourite tips and must-haves to make your travels a little easier. Whether you’re jetting off on a business trip to Montréal, heading for a month-long adventure in Europe or anywhere in between, you can keep calm and *carry-on*.



COMFORT > STYLE

A good travel pillow, layers of clothing and an eye mask are all you need for a decent nap on a long flight or car ride. Finding a comfortable pillow can save your neck, make your trip far more enjoyable and help you manage time changes on a long journey.



ADVENTURE WITHIN

In the hustle of everyday life, we don’t always have much time to read. Travelling is a perfect liminal space to dig into literature, whether it’s an audiobook biography of someone you admire, a travel essay, the latest fiction your friend recommended or a paperback of local prose.



CHARGE AHEAD

Sometimes, it feels like our phones are literally attached to our hands, but what if you forget your charger? There’s nothing worse than running out of battery halfway through a travel day. Power banks are a great option to boost your electronics on the go and can be small enough to fit in your wallet.

Don’t forget a universal power adapter for your overseas trips! Ensure you download your favourite shows, movies and music before your trip to access them in an area with little to no service or in airplane mode.

If you are travelling by plane with checked bags, we recommend putting a small bag of toiletries in your carry-on. There's nothing more refreshing than brushing your teeth after a long red-eye flight, spritzing some dry shampoo to add volume to airport hair or applying deodorant after a bout of turbulence. A compact toiletry bag can be a lifesaver if your flight is delayed or your luggage is lost — just remember to abide by airline liquid and gel restrictions.

- Travel toothbrush, toothpaste and floss
- Hand sanitizer or disinfecting wipes
- Sunscreen and moisturizer
- Deodorant
- Simple makeup — *mascara and a tinted multi-stick go a long way!*
- Unscented dry shampoo and travel-sized brush
- Sheet facemask and face wipes for long flights



Packing a small number of essential medicines can avoid many travel woes, from an allergic reaction to motion sickness. Consult with the local regulations of your destination regarding medications and keep your prescriptions in their original packaging. Travel-sized over-the-counter items are perfect for any emergency that arises.

- NSAIDs such as ibuprofen (Advil) or naproxen (Aleve)
- Dramamine, such as Gravol, for motion sickness
- Antihistamines like Benadryl, if you are allergy-prone
- A few assorted bandages for minor injuries



Get a quote or apply today at www.sk.bluecross.ca/travel.

24/7 WELLNESS SUPPORT

On-demand, comprehensive support for you and your family.

The Homewood Health Individual Assistance Program with virtual care powered by Cleveland Clinic Canada is now included in all Saskatchewan Blue Cross personal health plans!

What is the Individual Assistance Program (IAP)?

Homewood Health's IAP provides confidential, professional services for a broad range of personal and family challenges by telephone, in person and online.

Counselling and coaching sessions are provided on a short-term, solution-focused model. When you seek out support from Homewood Health, they'll open a confidential case on your behalf. For each case, individuals receive an average of four counselling sessions per issue, with no limit to the number of cases for which you can seek support.

Plan members have round-the-clock access to:

Professional counselling services

- Expert support for various mental health and addictions challenges, like depression and anxiety, stress, grief and bereavement and more
- Enhanced Mental Health Care for mid- to longer-term mental health support, providing up to 20 sessions of specialized counselling, determined on a case-by-case basis by Homewood Health
- Life Smart wellness coaching for life balance, health concerns, finances and career changes

Online resources and tools:

- Health risk assessments and check-ins
- e-Learning courses and webinars
- Child and elder care locators
- Health and wellness articles

Sentio Internet-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (iCBT):

- Sentio iCBT is a program designed to provide support for mild to moderate depression, anxiety and other mental health challenges

Access three different streams:

- Self-directed — An entirely self-guided online experience
- Counsellor-assisted — An online CBT platform supported by unlimited chat with a counsellor for up to 12 weeks
- Integrated — An online CBT platform supported by video or phone sessions with a counsellor for up to 12 weeks



What is virtual care?

Express Care Online is a virtual care platform that lets you see a Cleveland Clinic Canada nurse practitioner virtually for medical advice, diagnosis and prescriptions sent to your preferred pharmacy — all from the comfort of your home, work or anywhere else in Canada. Whether you have the flu, a rash or any non-emergency medical issue, Express Care Online can help you get care in minutes so you can feel better faster.

Express Care Online is secure and easy to use — with no appointment needed. This service is available 24/7 across Canada.*

With Express Care Online, you can receive the following virtual care services at the discretion of your provider:

- Diagnoses for a variety of non-emergency conditions
- Prescriptions (new and refills)
- Referrals to specialists
- Requisitions for blood work and imaging, such as X-rays, ultrasounds and CT scans

Get the support you need — when you need it.

✓ **SKIP THE WAITING ROOM**
Access unparalleled health and wellness resources and virtual care any time, anywhere across Canada, with no appointment needed!

✓ **PERSONALIZED SOLUTIONS**
The comprehensive Homeweb digital health platform offers interactive wellness resources and programs tailored to each user.

✓ **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**
Get professional counselling and support for various concerns, gain new self-help strategies and find peace in having an expert team on your side. Access wellness solutions that promote integrated mental, physical, financial and social well-being.

140 years

Homewood
Health

Experience
the power
of care



Cleveland Clinic
Canada

fall garden chores for zone 3:

SETTING UP FOR WINTER SUCCESS

Summer was great, but now it's time to prepare your garden for the colder months. While not every chore you might think of needs to get done, here are some simple garden tasks for autumn that will set your garden up for success next season.

what is “zone 3”?

Most of Saskatchewan falls in plant hardiness zone 3, as defined by Natural Resources Canada. This geographic index was developed using several climatic parameters and the lowest recorded temperatures in a given year for locations across Canada. Zone 3 refers to extreme minimum temperatures between -40°C and -34.4°C . It is used as a guide for gardeners, landscapers and farmers alike across the country to determine plant survival rates and which plants are best suited for any particular area.

For more information about Canada's plant hardiness zones, visit planthardiness.gc.ca.

If you're burnt out, you have permission to take a break!

In the past, it was popular to cut down everything in the yard by the Labour Day long weekend. While you can still choose that neat-and-tidy approach, it is often best to leave all that plant material alone, as it provides a perfect home and diet for pollinators. You can just let your garden go to the snow.

You don't have to rake all your leaves

That said, if your soil health is lacking, spreading leaves directly onto your garden soil instead of bagging them can give it the boost it needs. In the spring, you can rototill or leave the leaves on top to suppress weeds and improve soil health.

The plant material you leave behind also traps snow, adding moisture in the soil when it melts and improving water retention throughout the season. Any roots that remain in the soil will slowly decompose through fall and, as the weather warms again after winter, add nutrients back to the earth.

Get to planting your spring bulbs

If you want spring blooms like daffodils, alliums or tulips, you'll want to purchase bulbs in the fall and plant them late September through October (even into November if the soil hasn't frozen yet).

Mid-to-late September is preferred because it's generally cold enough, but not so cold that it's unenjoyable to plant. Some gardeners might worry about bulbs starting to grow prematurely and dying off when winter comes, but that hasn't been a problem in my garden, so do what you will!

Remember that spring bulbs need a period of cold in order to bloom, so they must be planted in the fall. Bulbs planted in spring won't flower, and stores won't have the best selection then anyway.

In Zone 3, garlic should also be planted in the fall for the best summer harvest. Spring planting will still result in garlic; you'll get one larger bulb, and the garlic won't have enough time to clove up.

Special care for raised planters

Because the soil is typically warmer in raised garden beds, they can be ready to be planted in sooner. You can clear out raised beds in the fall, add manure or compost, then cover them with leaves. This is optional for regular-season gardening, but if you'd like to experiment with early plantings, you must do this to sow your seeds as soon as the snow melts.

Because of our short growing season, you need those extra days if you want early plants!





WITH
KRISTEN RANEY

Cold Climate Gardening Expert
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Bring tender plants indoors

If you have some especially nice pots on your deck, look around at your plants, as some can be taken indoors over winter as houseplants! Many vining and tropical plants can be taken indoors, and you can also take cuttings off those for next year's garden. Zonal geraniums may also be cut back and stored indoors. If you grow dahlias or gladioli, you can dig those up after the frost and store them in your cold room to plant again next spring!

Just like your body takes time to adjust as warmer temperatures cool down, plants that double as houseplants need time to adjust to the differing amount of light they will get indoors. Putting these plants in the shade before moving them indoors is ideal.

You'll also want to look for bugs in the plants you bring inside. A little rinse down in the shower is a good option. It won't be perfect, but it can help with some problems. Make sure to have some yellow sticky tape on hand, as well. As a preventative measure, you can put the sticky traps directly in your pots when you bring them indoors.

Save seeds for next year

The last thing to do to wrap up your garden for the fall and prepare for winter is to save seeds. Tomatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins and lettuce are reliable choices, as are flowers like zinnias, cosmos, marigolds and nasturtiums.

You can start saving seeds as early as August every year. Just wrap some green painter's tape around the stems of the plants you like best and record the variety with a waterproof permanent marker. It's a low-fuss way to track varieties you don't want to miss that also doesn't ruin the look of your garden!

take care,
and
happy
gardening!



smooth travels

NUTRITION STRATEGIES FOR THE AIRPORT



BY
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A little planning goes a long way when it comes to flying! Packing your own snacks not only saves money but also keeps energy steady, moods balanced and hunger at bay.

Here's how to stay fueled and hydrated on your next trip.

1. Know the rules — what you can bring

Before filling your carry-on with food, it helps to understand airport security guidelines:

- **Liquids:** Anything over 100 mL is a no-go. This includes water and gel textures, such as yogurt, nut butters, soups, dips and drinks.
- **Packaged foods:** Most packaged snacks (e.g., protein bars, crackers, nuts, trail mix) are fine for both domestic and international flights. Powdered supplements (e.g., electrolytes or protein powder) are allowed but must be under 350 g.
- **Fruits and vegetables:** Domestic flights within Canada allow fruits and vegetables. On international flights, you can bring fresh food for the plane, but you must finish it before landing and entering customs!
- **Homemade meals:** Like fresh produce, you can enjoy your homemade meals in the air, but you must finish them before entering another country.

Tip: Airline and security rules can vary. Double-check your carrier's guidelines before packing!

2. Smart snacks for the whole family

Travel days are unpredictable. Flight delays, long lines and odd mealtimes mean it's best to be prepared with your own food. Balanced snacks that include protein, healthy fats and carbohydrates will keep energy levels steady!

Travel-friendly snack combos:

- Jerky + apple + cheese
- Chickpeas + cashews + dried mango
- Tuna pouch + crackers + hummus
- Popcorn + nuts + dark chocolate
- Oatmeal + protein powder + nuts

Tip: These mix-and-match combinations work for both kids and adults, offering a more balanced and satisfying choice than the typical carb-only snacks served on flights.



Protein options:

- Protein bars (e.g., RXBARs)
- Beef or turkey jerky
- Roasted chickpeas or edamame
- Cheese portions or Babybel (if kept cool)
- Hard-boiled eggs (if kept cool)
- Single-serve tuna or salmon pouches
- Protein powder (mixed with water or oatmeal)

Carbohydrate options:

- Dried fruit (mango, dates, raisins, figs)
- Fresh fruit
- Whole grain crackers or rice cakes (Mary's, Wasa, Triscuits)
- Popcorn
- Oatmeal packets (add hot water and protein powder for a quick meal)
- Homemade muffins
- Fruit bars

Healthy fat options:

- Nuts (almonds, cashews, pistachios)
- Nut bars (e.g., Kind or Lärabar)
- Individual nut butter packets
- Dark chocolate (70%+)
- Unsweetened coconut chips
- Hummus or guacamole cups (if kept cool)

3. Packable meals for the plane

If your flight spans a mealtime, bringing your own meal can save money and provide better nourishment than airport options. Some meal ideas for airline travel:

- **Wraps:** Whole-grain tortilla with chicken, vegetables and hummus or cheese.
- **Protein salads:** Greens with chickpeas, chicken, quinoa, feta, vegetables, olive oil, etc.
- **Bento boxes:** Hard-boiled eggs, crackers, fruit, roasted chickpeas and dip.
- **Breakfast boxes:** Egg, fruit slices, a homemade muffin and cheese.

Tip: If purchasing food at the airport, look for high-protein, fresh options like egg bites, breakfast sandwiches, yogurt, wraps, salads, jerky, nuts, hard-boiled eggs or fruit. These options can often be found at convenience stores, restaurants or coffee chains.

Remember, if you are flying internationally, finish your meal and fresh produce before landing!

4. Hydration is key

Low humidity, recycled air and changing air pressure makes flying especially dehydrating. Bring an empty water bottle through security and fill it up at a water station before boarding. You'll save money, reduce waste and avoid relying on small in-flight cups!

5. Don't forget electrolytes

Electrolytes (like sodium, potassium, calcium and magnesium) help your body stay hydrated and can ease travel-related fatigue, headaches, muscle cramps and fluid retention.

- **Natural electrolyte sources:** Salt, fruit, vegetables, dairy and coconut water.
- **Supplemental electrolyte sources:** Low-sugar mixes like Nuun, LMNT, Organika or Relyte.

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Bottom line

A little preparation makes travel days smoother, healthier and much more enjoyable. Whether you're flying solo, with kids or with a partner, having balanced snacks and meals on hand helps you stay energized, avoid unnecessary costs and feel ready for the adventures ahead!





INVESTING IN YOUR
wellness

A Saskatchewan Blue Cross personal health plan makes it easy to prioritize your wellness without putting a strain on your finances. Check out our breakdown below and see how spending out of pocket compares to having your wellness covered by your personal health plan*!

Wellness Benefit	Out-of-Pocket	Personal Health Plan
60-minute deep tissue massage	\$90.00	COVERED
Assessment by a physiotherapist	\$120.00	COVERED
Consultation with a naturopath	\$200.00	COVERED
Chiropractic adjustment	\$55.00	COVERED
	TOTAL \$465.00	MONTHLY COST starting at \$32

**Out-of-pocket expenses are estimates only. Personal Health Plan cost based on Blue Choice® plan, under 35 single policyholder with core health benefits only as of February 1, 2026. Plan prices are subject to change and coverage is subject to plan maximums. Terms and Conditions apply.*

Take the next step on your journey to whole health and wellness with a **personal health plan.**

Life is constantly changing — and your health insurance should change along with it. Customize our plans to fit your lifestyle and unique needs. You'll find support in making your health insurance choices, whatever your stage in life or occupation. As a Saskatchewan Blue Cross personal health plan member, you'll have access to many benefits, services, tools and resources that will help you live your best life.

Choose from four plan design options:

BLUE CHOICE®

Whether you're an individual, a couple or a family, Blue Choice® plans are designed with you in mind.

- Comprehensive coverage
- Plans are fully customizable to your specific needs
- Medical questionnaire required

CONVERSION

Leaving an employer benefits plan? Take advantage of the opportunity to convert your coverage.

- Apply within 90 days of leaving a group benefits plan for guaranteed coverage
- No waiting period
- No medical questionnaire

GUARANTEED ACCEPTANCE

Comprehensive coverage for everyone, regardless of health history.

- Guaranteed total health and wellness coverage
- No waiting period
- No medical questionnaire

NEW! RETIREE

Offering guaranteed coverage with no medical questions, the Retiree plan can offer you peace of mind that your health is protected as you enter your retirement years.

- Secure guaranteed coverage with no waiting period by ensuring your Retiree plan is in effect within 90 days of the date that your group benefits coverage ends
- Choose from three levels of coverage and various options to create a personalized plan that best suits your needs — all Retiree plans include health, travel and prescription drug coverage

Questions? We have answers.

Can I add my partner and children to my policy?

You can apply to add your dependent children and/or partner to your policy by completing a personal health plan application.

How long do I have to submit claims?

All plans have a submission deadline of 12 months from the date of service/purchase for their claims to be assessed. Your plan must have been active at the time of the service.

Can I add other options to my plan?

Yes, you can add optional coverage for hospital cash, prescription drugs, dental and VIP Travel to your plan. Learn more about available options by visiting sk.bluecross.ca/health.

Ready to get your free, no-obligation quote?

Scan here
to get started!





Empowering *healthy lives.*



GET IN TOUCH

Our business hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., M – F.
In-person service hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., M – F.

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Contact your local insurance advisor

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