

## The Role of a Physician Assistant

Over the last several months, Stonechurch has welcomed a new health care role onto their Family Health Team - Physician Assistants.

Physician Assistants (PAs) are skilled health professionals who support physicians in a range of health care settings. They work alongside physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, and other members of the inter-professional health care team. The PA role is currently being introduced to the Ontario health care system through a two-year demonstration project taking place in selected hospitals, community health centres, community-based diabetes care clinics, and long-term care homes. In Canada, PAs have been employed by the Canadian Forces for many years to deliver health care services to members of the military and their families. PAs have been a part of the health care system in the United States since the 1960s.

The specific duties of the PA vary depending on their area of practice. For example, in family medicine duties include:

- Conducting patient interviews and taking medical histories;
- Performing physical examinations;

- Performing controlled acts delegated to them by a physician;
- Preventive health care.

Here at Stonechurch, Team C has two



physician assistants on board. Deniece O'Leary (on right) is a faculty member at McMaster University which recently launched Ontario's first civilian PA education program. Graduates of this two-year program will have the skills and competencies necessary to meet Canadian standards

and to practice as PAs in Ontario. Deniece spends one day a week at Stonechurch seeing patients.

Erika Brown (on left) is an American-trained PA who is part of the two-year demonstration project and is working full time at the clinic. Both of these PAs have had several years of experience in family medicine prior to working at Stonechurch and look forward to meeting you and your families!

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### Lab Closed

The laboratory at Stonechurch is now closed. Please check the Stonechurch Website ([www.stonechurchclinic.ca](http://www.stonechurchclinic.ca)) for a list of community-based laboratories.

## Folate or Folic Acid

**F**olate or folic acid is a B vitamin found in many foods. It is used by the body to prevent anemia (low iron), maintain a healthy heart and is important for cell growth.

To make sure you get enough folate each day, choose foods rich in folate such as:

- Cooked dried lentils, peas, beans;
- Sunflower seeds, peanut butter;
- Oranges, orange juice, cantaloupe, grapefruit, banana, strawberries, raspberries;
- Leafy green vegetables (spinach, bok choy, romaine lettuce), asparagus, Brussels sprouts;
- Enriched breads, pastas, cereals; whole grain cereals, and breads.



Since folic acid is needed for growing cells, folic acid is very important before pregnancy begins, and during the first three months of pregnancy. Adequate amounts may prevent birth defects.

People who have higher needs for folate, should see their family doctor or dietitian to discuss their requirements. These individuals include:

- Women of childbearing age;
- Individuals with diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcerative colitis or seizures, on dialysis, or high alcohol intake.

## Shingles Vaccine – Now Available

**Z**ostavax vaccine is now available at Stonechurch for patients 60 years of age and older.

Zostavax is a vaccine that can reduce your chances of getting shingles (also known as herpes zoster). Shingles is a painful condition caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. Once you have had chickenpox, the virus can stay in your nervous system for many years. The virus may become active again, causing shingles. Age and problems with the immune system, may increase your chances of getting shingles.

This vaccine reduces the occurrence of shingles and its complications by approximately 60%. Because the vaccine has to be kept frozen until it is administered, it is not available by prescription through the pharmacy. Stonechurch Family Health Centre will keep a supply of Zostavax which can be administered to our patients. OHIP covers the cost of the visit as well as administration of the vaccine, but the actual cost of the vaccine, is not publicly funded. The cost to patients is \$180 and you will be provided with a receipt for payment received. Some drug plans may cover the cost of this vaccine. If you are interested in the Zostavax vaccine, please discuss this with your family doctor and they will ensure there are no contraindications to you receiving the vaccine. A staff member will then call you to arrange an appointment.



## Prevention Reminder

Keep your children's **Immunizations** up to date. You can contact our office if you are unsure of the immunization schedule. Parents should notify Public Health at (905) 540-5250 each time your child receives an immunization.

- If you are female, 35 years and older, and have not had a **Pap test** in the last two years, please call to book an appointment.
- If you are female, 50 years and older, and have not had a **Mammogram** in the past two years, please call the Ontario Breast Screening Program directly at 1 (800) 668-9304 for a location near you or call Hamilton directly at (905) 389-0101.
- If you are 50 years or older, male or female, a simple stool test to rule out colon cancer is advised. Ask for a **FOBT kit** from our office.

## Groups Offered at Stonechurch

• Depression	• Living Well and Eating Well with Diabetes
• Social Anxiety	• Healthy Living for Your Heart
• Living with Anxiety	• Weight Management/Vitality Management
• Smoking Cessation	• Self Esteem
• Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Treatment	• Chronic Disease Self-Management

For more information on any of these groups, go to our website at [www.stonechurchclinic.ca](http://www.stonechurchclinic.ca) or to register for one of the above groups, please contact your team receptionist.

## Stonechurch Counsellors



From left to right: Irene Glavac Petric, Miriam Wolfson, Lynn Dykeman

Individual and group sessions are available at Stonechurch. Our psychiatry consultant provides assessment and guidance with respect to diagnosis and choosing the best treatment options. Our counsellors can provide connection with other community resources when appropriate.

Our counsellors have advanced training to provide assistance with emotional health concerns, such as:

- Mood problems
- Anxiety and stress
- Relationship issues
- Trouble coping with life events
- Addictions

## Smoking Cessation

Patients of Stonechurch Family Health Centre who are interested in quitting smoking, are struggling with quitting smoking, or who have quit smoking and are trying to continue to not smoke, may pre-book individual appointments through their clinic receptionist. Interested patients who would like to join a monthly smoking cessation drop-in group at Stonechurch, may notify the clinic receptionists to pass their names along to Lynn Dykeman, Social Worker and Heather Frey, Nurse Practitioner.

## A Big Thank You to Our Patients

**D**id you know that on July 1st another fourteen new family doctors are graduating from their residency training at Stonechurch, and heading out to start their new careers? As well, a large handful of other healthcare professionals such as pharmacists, social workers, nurses, and midwives also have Stonechurch patients to thank for their training.

We are very grateful to you! We hope you feel proud of this important service to our larger community. Your feedback is always appreciated.



### Closure Dates Due to Holidays

**Monday, May 24<sup>th</sup> Victoria Day**  
**Thursday, July 1<sup>st</sup> Canada Day**  
**Monday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> Civic Holiday**  
**Monday, September 6<sup>th</sup> Labour Day**  
**Monday, October 11<sup>th</sup> Thanksgiving Day**  
**Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Day**

**There is an on-call clinic on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

**The receptionist is available starting at 9:00 a.m. to book your appointment.**

**Please call 905-574-1444 (or your doctor's number) and select the weekend clinic.**

### SFHC Recipe Book

**A** Stonechurch Family Health Centre Recipe Book is now available for sale at the front reception. It is full of our staff members' favourite recipes. Proceeds from the sales will be donated to patient families in need. Only \$15.00. Taxes included.



Other fundraising events at Stonechurch include plant sales, 50/50 draws, raffles and 'Pajama Days' in support of associations such as the Heart and Stroke Foundation and McMaster Children's Hospital.

A big thank you to our Fundraising Committee for all of their hard work and the staff for their generous contributions!

**SAVE TREES!** To receive future issues of the Stonechurch Family Health Centre Newsletter electronically, please e-mail a request to [sfhcnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:sfhcnewsletter@gmail.com)

