

# WELLNESS QUARTERLY

well-being news, advice, and opinions from christie gardens staff and residents

Fall 2023



## Virus Prevention during Cold and Flu Season

'Tis the season, and no, I'm not talking about Christmas!

Fall brings the promise of change beginning with the colourful leaves and the arrival of cooler temperatures. It is also at this time of year that we prepare for annual vaccinations against the flu and now COVID.

We are expecting delivery of our vaccines any day now. Our registered team will deliver and administer these shots at your suite doors.

**Vaccines are scheduled to be administered on October 23rd and 24th, please refer to our October 16th memo for the schedule.**

While you wait, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the healthy practices outlined on the back side of this newsletter.

As always, if you should experience a change in health status, please call the Wellness Centre and speak to one of our nurses. They will provide the best advice as to next steps and possibly visit you in your suite should your situation warrant it.

Our collective priority should be consideration of the community and respecting one another's choices.

Happy Fall!

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## Allison Cooper: What is a Death Doula?

As an Advocate and Chair of the Christie Gardens Palliative Care Committee, I always seek learning opportunities around End-of-Life care. In April, I started taking a Death Doula course through the Home Hospice Association.

### What is a Death Doula?

The loose definition of 'doula' is helper. Just as a birthing doula helps you bring life into the world, a death doula helps you prepare to leave. Think of it as an end-of-life project manager!

As part of the interdisciplinary team we provide non-medical care to the dying person and their loved ones focusing on four areas: Planning; Legacy Work; Vigil; and Grief and Bereavement.

### Planning:

Something I hear often is "I don't want to be a burden to my family." Having your affairs in order is a gift to your loved ones. It is never too early to have a Will and to start thinking about what you'd like your death to look like.

For example, I would like to die surrounded by my art, listening to David Bowie, and cuddling my dog. I'd like to be cremated and my ashes taken by my friends on their world travels so I can go too!



**Allison Cooper**  
Annex Advocate  
Palliative Committee Chair



A Death Doula who knows you well can advocate on your behalf to fulfill your wishes to the best of their ability. Why not take some time in a non-crisis moment to think about your wishes? A good place to start is defining your values, beliefs, and what gives your life meaning.

### Legacy:

How would you like to be remembered? Maybe it's something public like a donation of art to a museum, or money to a cause you support. Maybe it's something personal like letters or videos to your children or a book of recipes to pass on to the grandkids. A Death Doula can help you and your family brainstorm and execute a legacy plan tailored to you.

### Vigil:

When you are actively dying a Death Doula can walk you and your loved ones through the process. This can include educating the family on what to expect or sitting with you while your loved ones take a break. This is when all the things you planned will be executed and the Death Doula can help oversee that plan.

### Grief and Bereavement:

Families can often feel untethered as they deal with the reality of the loss. We are there to help support the transition. We can provide resources to help deal with grief. Thanks to the internet there are a multitude of support groups, webinars and reading material available for everyone to use at their own pace.

Death Doulas can also lead Death Cafes. I've attended them in person and online. They are discussion groups, not support groups. Their objective is *to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives*. Check out [deathcafe.com](http://deathcafe.com) for more information.

What this course has shown me is that Advocates at Christie Gardens are already Death Doulas to a degree for our residents in the Courtyard. We help them live full lives until they die. It's also shown me that our Palliative Care/Palliative End-of-Life Care plan that the Committee has been working on for 10 years+ is excellent. And it's only going to get better the more we learn and grow!

## A Note from Dr. Sean To

I would like to thank you all for welcoming me as your new doctor in the Wellness Centre at Christie Gardens. It will be an honour and a privilege to meet each and every one of you.

### **I first started my career in 2015 as a registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator.**

Growing up in Montreal, it's no surprise that I developed a great love for food. For two years, I shared my passion for food and nutrition, helping people meet their goals, whether it be weight loss, optimizing their diabetes control, or maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

From 2017 to 2021, I studied medicine at the Université de Sherbrooke, then completed my family medicine training at the University of Ottawa from 2021 until June 2023.

### **What I love most about family medicine is the capacity to provide comprehensive care.**

I mean comprehensive in the sense that I can take care of a person from all aspects of their health; I can care for someone in all stages of their life; and, I can contribute to the well-being of the community as a whole.

#### **Why Christie Gardens?**

Caring for the elderly speaks to me for a variety of reasons. It is impactful, as I'll have the privilege of caring for residents who are transitioning or have transitioned into a new phase of their lives.

These transitions may bring with them with unique health, functional, social, and familial challenges. It requires a comprehensive approach as mentioned above, as well as a delicate touch, and I look forward to working together with the multidisciplinary team we have at Christie Gardens.

### **Most of all, I am excited to build meaningful and lasting relationships with members of the community, their families, and the entire team.**

When I am not at work, I enjoy trying out new recipes, especially baking bread and making pizzas. I also love being outdoors, whether it is for racquet sports like badminton and tennis or hiking with my partner.

I am super excited to explore what Toronto has to offer and am open to any recommendations you have.

### **Once again, thank you for opening your doors to me and I can't wait to meet you!**



**Dr. Sean To, MD**  
Wellness Centre

## Fall Prevention Tips

### **Exercise regularly**

Regular, moderate physical activity increases your muscle strength and balance.

### **Follow a sensible, balanced diet**

Good nutrition results in higher energy. And for stronger bones, consider calcium and vitamin D.

### **Do a home safety inspection**

Eliminate obvious hazards (such as poor lighting, throw rugs and clutter). Add safety modifications (such as grab bars nonslip mats and night lights).

### **Take extra care**

Take your time and think ahead, especially in new or unfamiliar places.

When you rise from your chair, stand for a few seconds before walking.

### **Wear the right shoes**

Select sturdy, lowheeled shoes with rubber soles for traction. Make sure they are fitted properly.

### **Have your healthcare providers review your medications**

Be sure to report all medications you are taking, both prescription and over the counter, so that your doctor can assess the benefits and risks of each drug.

### **Discuss your fears with your healthcare provider**

Tell your doctor if you've experienced a fall, or if you're having dizziness, balance problems or impaired vision.

Balance classes, physical therapy or occupational therapy may be recommended to help you walk more safely and to get up correctly if you do fall.

### **Have a medical alert service**

Knowing that prompt help is available can give you the confidence to be as active as possible.

Consider using a trusted medical alert service to gain peace of mind.

*Excerpted from "Fall Prevention Resources For Seniors", Lifeline*

# How to Protect Yourself and Others from Respiratory Viruses

## Get vaccinated

- Being vaccinated against COVID-19 and influenza helps to protect you from severe disease and hospitalization.
- Remember to get your seasonal influenza vaccine every year and ensure you are up-to-date with all COVID-19 boosters for which you are eligible.



## Stay home when sick

- Stay home when you are sick. For example, if you have a fever, new or increased cough, or are experiencing vomiting and or diarrhea.
- If you have to go out:
  - Practice physical distancing and avoid crowded spaces.
  - Consider wearing a well-fitting mask in public.



## Spend time outdoors or in well-ventilated indoor spaces

- Ensure your ventilation system is in good working order. If you don't have a ventilation system, open windows to increase fresh air flow if possible.



## Practice respiratory etiquette and keep things clean

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Wear a mask when ill with a respiratory infection.
- Clean high-touch surfaces regularly.



source: "How to Protect Yourself and Others from Respiratory Viruses", Public Health Ontario, September 2023

## Body Mechanics: The Single-Legged Half Squat

Another essential exercise for good knee health, the single-legged half squat is designed to focus primarily on the Vastus Medialis muscle of the quads. If you regularly attend the fitness classes, you will already be familiar with this muscle; it helps to provide stability and strength to the knee cap and allow for proper knee movement when standing up or squatting.

I encourage you to make this a part of your daily exercise practice with 2 sets of 15 reps.



- ① Standing behind a chair, place one foot back, ensuring that all of your weight is on the front leg.
- ② Bend the front knee as you come down into a mild half squat. If the knee gives you pain, reduce depth of movement.
- ③ Exhale and return to neutral position.

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