



SeniorsBC

e-Newsletter

March 18, 2010
Volume 1, Issue 1

Welcome to the e-Newsletter

The SeniorsBC e-Newsletter, featuring current information on services and programs available to B.C. seniors, will be delivered to subscribers via e-mail several times a year. Readers can also look forward to feature stories on active seniors, healthy eating recipes and active aging tips.

We encourage you to share the e-Newsletter with friends, family and colleagues. You can subscribe to the e-Newsletter through the SeniorsBC website and have a copy delivered directly to your inbox!

Meet the Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat

In September of 2008, the Provincial government released *Seniors in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework* (Framework), an action plan designed to support British Columbia's aging population. The Framework introduces four cornerstones: Create Age-friendly Communities, Mobilize and Support Volunteerism, Promote Healthy Living, and Support Older Workers.

The Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat, housed within the [Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport](#), is leading implementation of the framework across the provincial government and with other key partners including local governments, the business community and community organizations.

Minister's Message



Welcome to the first edition of the SeniorsBC e-Newsletter. When Government launched *Seniors in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework* (Framework) in fall 2008, we committed to improving our information and outreach services for seniors. We've updated the popular *BC Seniors' Guide*, continue to support the Health and Seniors Information Line, and now we are pleased to launch the new [SeniorsBC website](#). Our goal is to ensure

that important information on government programs and services is readily available to B.C. seniors and their families, through as many different communication channels as possible.

Using an idea from our Seniors' Healthy Living Advisory Network, we've now developed this e-Newsletter, which will feature regular updates on new programs, initiatives and events. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Check out SeniorsBC.ca!

[SeniorsBC.ca](#) is a new website that provides information about government programs and services for older adults. Included on the website are sections on healthcare, finances, benefits, housing, transportation and more.

Users can find answers to timely questions in the "Frequently Asked Questions" section. Resources such as the *BC Seniors' Guide* and *Healthy Eating for Seniors* handbook can be found in PDF format on the website.

Check back regularly for up to date content, announcements of events, B.C. government programs and feature stories showcasing the achievements of older British Columbians.

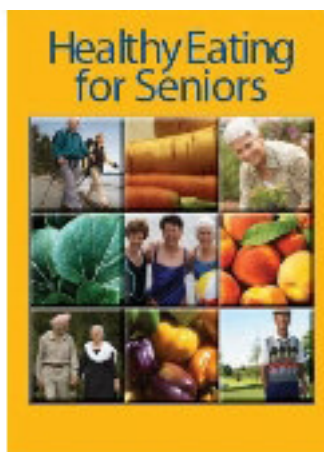
Click here to visit [SeniorsBC.ca](#)

“Physical activity is vital to a healthy life. It keeps you strong, reduces your risk of certain diseases and chronic conditions, and helps you maintain your health and independence. Try for a moderate amount of activity (30-60 minutes a day) on most days of the week for full benefits.”

ActNowBC

Herbed Lentil and Barley Soup

This soup is easy, healthy, colourful, delicious, and almost as thick as a stew. It’s a great source of fibre and protein, which makes it especially good for vegetarians. It is also inexpensive and freezes well. You can serve it with a slice of whole wheat bread, a small green salad and low-fat yogurt or fruit for dessert. This recipe and others like it can be found in the [Healthy Eating for Seniors](#) handbook.



Serves: 4

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 1½ hours

Per serving: Calories: 202, Protein: 8g, Fat: 7g,
Carbohydrate: 25g, Fibre: 5.2g, Sodium: 287mgs, Calcium: 78 mgs

Ingredients:

2 tbsp (25 mL) vegetable oil (canola)

½ medium onion, chopped

1 clove garlic

½ medium carrot, finely chopped

1 tbsp (15 mL) parsley flakes (or 2 tbsp fresh)

Promoting Healthy Living Through Lifelong Learning

The senior population across British Columbia is booming. In fact, adults 65+ now make up about 600,000 people across the province, with projections expected to reach 1.35 million by 2031.

But the news gets even better. Older adults are also living longer, healthier lives. According to Statistics Canada, the average male in the province can expect to live well into his late seventies, with the average woman reaching her early eighties. Indeed, this province enjoys one of the highest life expectancy rates across Canada. It seems that for most seniors, a growing commitment to physical exercise is already showing results. And the good news is, even if you start later in life, studies show you can still noticeably improve your flexibility, balance, strength and endurance.

But fewer people are aware of the many health benefits of lifelong learning. For decades, studies have shown that a person’s level of education is one of the strongest socio-economic predictors of self-perceived well-being. Advocates for lifelong learning see many other benefits. Educator Nancy Merz Nordstrom explains that third-age learning teaches us new things, while also providing a forum for meeting people and sharing ideas. She explains that socializing in groups “opens our minds and brings us to a whole new level of enlightenment.” Education can also be the key to unlocking your own self-discovery, says Nordstrom: “Understanding the whys and the whats of previous successes and failures...help us understand ourselves better,” she explains.

Gerontologist Sandra Cusack echoes these sentiments in her book, *Mental Fitness for Life: 7 Steps to Healthy Aging*. For Cusack, lifelong learning promotes adults’ creative thinking and self-confidence, while at the same time reducing people’s level of anxiety and sense of isolation. Like physical exercise, she argues that it is never too late to start your own learning journey. “We used to believe that mental abilities automatically decline with age; we now know that’s not true. We can actually improve our mental function and memory to the end of life,” Cusack explains.

For 35 years, the [Simon Fraser University Seniors Program](#) has been dedicated to providing intellectually stimulating and



Herbed Lentil and Barley Soup Continued...

½ cup (125 mL) green or brown lentils
2½ cups (625 mL) water
1 tsp (5 mL) dried oregano
1 tsp (5 mL) dried thyme
½ tsp (2 mL) dried sage
¼ cup (60 mL) pearl barley
14 oz (398 mL) tin chopped tomatoes, with juice
Lemon slices (optional)
Universal Seasoning ([see page 182](#)) to taste

Instructions:

1. In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat.
2. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and lightly browned.
3. Add garlic, carrots and parsley.
4. Cover and cook over low heat until carrots are tender.
5. Add lentils, water, oregano, thyme, sage, barley and tomatoes.
6. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook (partially covered) until the lentils are tender, about 1½ hours. If the soup is too thick, add more water.
7. Season and garnish with lemon slices.

Thanks to Mohinder Sidhu of Vancouver, B.C. for the recipe.

Our recommendation: Lentils come in three colours: red, green and brown. All are very high in fibre and folic acid (also called folate, a B vitamin). We recommend green or brown lentils for this recipe because they hold their shape better when cooked.

**HEALTH & SENIORS
INFORMATION LINE**
Victoria: 250-952-1742
Toll-free: 1-800-465-4911

**H1N1
Symptom
Checker**

 HealthLinkBC.ca



Promoting Healthy Living Through Lifelong Learning Continued...

academically oriented courses to adults 55 or better. Located at SFU's Harbour Centre campus in downtown Vancouver, the program now offers over 70 different 6-week courses annually, beginning in September, January and May. Topics span a wide variety of disciplines, including History, Philosophy, Political Science, Archaeology, Sociology, English Literature, Art History, Opera Studies, and more. Designed to suit the needs of a diverse public, courses are open to people of all educational backgrounds and aptitudes. The program now attracts over 2,500 lifelong learners annually, and continues to expand its course offerings each year.

For those unable to attend courses at Harbour Centre campus, the program also offers a series of informative roundtable discussion DVDs as part of its Outreach Project. The 1-hour DVDs cover a wide range of topics of interest to older adults, including titles such as: Perceptions of God in Heaven, Multiculturalism and the Canadian Identity, Grandparenting in the 21st century, Democracy: Intent and Reality, and Seniors Rights and Elder Abuse. The videos are available free of charge, and can be downloaded from the [Seniors Program website](#).

On March 18, 2010, the Outreach Project launched its 6th DVD in its series in partnership with the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. Entitled: *A Place for Everyone: Age-friendly Communities*, the video explores how communities across Canada are evolving to better meet the needs of older adults – with a special focus on building more accessible and affordable transportation systems and housing, as well as better public spaces. The moderator for this discussion will be CBC's Mark Forsythe, who you may know from his popular CBC radio program, BC Almanac. Panelists for the discussion include architect Lewis Villegas, City Program Director and former Vancouver City Councillor Gordon Price, and Gerontologist Dr. Elaine Gallagher. Over the next six months, the video will be distributed free of charge to over 250 community partners across BC and beyond. To learn more about the SFU Seniors Program or to view the video online, please visit our [website](#) or call 778.782.5212.

Julian Benedict, Coordinator, [SFU Seniors Program](#)

Meet Pamela Wray from Fort St. John BC!

Pamela Wray from Fort St. John in northern B.C. had been smoking for over half a century before she quit. We chose to feature Pam because she is living proof that you are never too old to make lifestyle changes. Since Pam gave up smoking she is walking more and is taking art classes.

Pam was 72 years old when she quit. She had wanted to give up smoking before, especially when her son Shane quit, but

Meet Pamela Wray from Fort St. John BC! Continued...

she finally decided to do so one chilly evening when it was 40 below. As she was about to go and warm up the car and was reaching for her coat, a television advertisement about the BC Lung Association's [QuitNow & WIN contest](#) came on. This was the added incentive Pam needed to quit. She decided to enter the contest there and then, but one of the contest rules was that she needed to enlist the help of a support buddy, someone she could call anytime she had cravings and who would help her overcome them. She called a friend and he immediately agreed to help. Pam threw away the rolling papers, and hid the ashtrays and anything else she thought might tempt her to change her mind. The next day, when she told her two best friends, they too decided to quit so that they could continue to spend time with her.



SeniorsBC: Pam, you had been smoking for 58 years. Tell us about your journey to becoming a non-smoker.

Pam: Last spring I started to work out at Curves. My doctor had sent me and the initial membership was paid for by someone or some organization. Working out led me to value my health more and I gained a sense of pride in my accomplishments as my blood pressure dropped and my stamina improved. Ailments that were not attributed to any other illness disappeared, like my terribly sore feet that had prevented me from walking any distance. I guess what I am saying is I had to learn to value myself and my health more in order to have the intention to quit. I also wanted to be an example to my family, friends and students.

SeniorsBC: How did you manage the difficulties of giving up smoking?

Pam: After I quit I managed my cravings by taking a deep breath and talking to myself. At first I had to keep my hands busy so I played games on the computer and did a lot of baking, cooking and cleaning. I also read lots of books on health and healing. I did not gain weight because I quit. I actually lost weight because I was more aware of the types of food I was eating and I was drinking more water, as well as working out. I was also meditating and feel that the extra strength that comes from that inner knowing place is an important aspect of my success.

SeniorsBC: How do you feel your health has improved since quitting?

Pam: My stamina has improved. I walk 2 km every other day and on opposite days I try to walk 1 km when I have time. I have also recently started using Wii Fit, so when it's too icy and slippery outside, I work out with the Wii. It's lots of fun. My sense of balance is much better.

SeniorsBC: What is the greatest benefit to you, now that you've quit?

Pam: My body feels different now: I don't wake up with a toxic taste in my mouth and I enjoy a level of activity I didn't know was possible. I am proud of myself and I want to continue feeling good about myself. I never want to be a slave to any addiction again, nor do I want to feel as sluggish as I did before.

SeniorsBC: What do you have to say to other long-term smokers who are trying to quit?

Pam: It is never too late to quit! Regardless of your age you will greatly benefit by quitting: financially, physically and psychologically. No matter what your health situation is, not smoking will ultimately make you feel better, smell better, look better and there will be more money in your wallet!

Pam also asked her doctor for help and she suggests telling your doctor about your decision to quit, and having him or her offer support before and after quitting. Pam was the inspiration for the new [Its Never too Late to Quit website](#) and [brochure](#) to help older and long-time smokers quit. It was developed in partnership with the QuitNow contest from the [BC Lung Association](#) and [BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport](#).