

Prescriptions for Healthy Living: User Guide

Vascular diseases are the major cause of death and disability in Alberta and in Canada. Vascular diseases (including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, vascular dementia, kidney and peripheral vascular disease) affect the lives of more than 300,000 people in Alberta. Over 90% of Canadians have one or more common vascular risk factor. Those at risk of vascular disease are often unaware, untreated, or not treated optimally.

The risk factors of vascular disease are known and can be prevented or controlled. Vascular disease is the result of:

- high blood pressure,
- high cholesterol,
- detrimental nutrition or alcohol use,
- physical inactivity,
- obesity
- tobacco use

A healthy lifestyle can reduce risk of heart disease, heart attacks, and stroke. Conditions that lead to vascular disease, including high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, and Type 2 diabetes can all be influenced by an individual's diet and lifestyle.

In Alberta, the Vascular Risk Reduction (VRR) project was established with the long-term goal to reduce deaths from vascular disease. VRR is led by the Alberta Health Services Cardiovascular Health and Stroke Strategic Clinical Network. It includes a series of projects involving various health professionals, stakeholders and healthcare organizations.

Purpose

The purpose of this Prescription for Healthy Living is to promote healthy eating, physical activity, and reduction of tobacco use. The prescription is designed to be filled out by you, the health care provider, along with the active involvement of your patients in your practice setting. The intent of this resource is to stimulate a short focused conversation between a patient and his/her trusted healthcare professional regarding implementation of healthy living behaviours.

This prescription has been developed by health professionals on an inter-professional committee.

1 Generic Prescription:

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PRESCRIPTIONS FOR HEALTHY LIVING

Name: _____ Date: _____
 Provider: _____
 Clinic: _____

Your doctor or healthcare provider would like to help you improve your overall health. You have set a goal today as the first step in making changes for your health.

VEGETABLES & FRUITS (Recommend 7-10 servings a day)

- Eat _____ servings of vegetables and fruit every day.
- Have 2 or more servings at each meal and snack.
- Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit.
- Add fruit to breakfast.
- Pack vegetables and fruit to eat with lunch.
- Write down what you eat and drink.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

This program is for people who need to be more active, don't have medical restrictions, and don't need to be supervised during the activity.

- Child / Teen – Work up to at least 60 minutes of aerobic activity daily
- Adult – Work up to at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity weekly, in bouts of 10 minutes or more

Start slowly by adding activities you enjoy into your life. Aerobic activities work your heart and lungs (e.g., walking, cycling, and swimming).

TOBACCO REDUCTION (Become tobacco-free)

- Reduce/quit tobacco use: Goal/quit date: _____
- Talk to a Cessation Counsellor at 1-866-710-QUIT (7848) or a healthcare provider (e.g., doctor, nurse practitioner, pharmacist).
- Join a support group (e.g., QuitCore). For offerings in your community visit AlbertaQuits.ca.

Visit www.prescriptionsforhealthyliving.ca for more information and support to get started!

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OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

HEALTHY EATING:
One serving of vegetable and fruit is:

FOOD	AMOUNT	ESTIMATED SIZE
Leafy salad	1 cup (250 mL)	Baseball
Whole vegetable or fruit, medium size	¾ cup (175 mL)	Tennis ball
Fresh, frozen, canned vegetables and fruit	½ cup (125 mL)	Hockey puck
Dried fruit	¼ cup (125 mL)	2 golf balls

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:
 Try to work at a moderate to vigorous intensity: This means that you'll sweat lightly and breathe faster and deeper.

CHILDREN AND TEENS
Try a variety of activities with your children, such as:

- Walk, bike, rollerblade or skateboard to school.
- Register in minor sport programs each season. Try something new!

ADULTS
Schedule activity into your day:

- Be active every day! Take walking breaks at work. Walk or cycle to work or to do your errands.
- Be active with others! Go for a walk with family or a friend.
- Join a recreation centre. Take classes like yoga, dance, swimming.

How to use the Prescription:

Generic Prescription:

1. Using this prescription provides the opportunity to discuss with your patient their vegetable and fruit intake, their physical activity, and tobacco use. This discussion can be done quickly if time is limited, but can still have an impact.
2. There is a designated area to fill out the patient's name. This personalizes the prescription and demonstrates that it is customized for the patient.
3. Not all the areas have to be completed. For example, your patient's vegetable and fruit intake is adequate, they do not smoke, but they are not physically active. In this case you would only complete the physical activity section.
4. The prescription can be supplemented with additional counselling, resources and referrals. Please see www.prescriptionsforhealthyliving.ca for additional tools that may assist you.
5. There is also space to add additional comments; this could include the need for a follow up appointment or additional areas of healthy living concern (e.g. alcohol use).
6. Additional information on serving sizes and physical activity are provided for your patient.

Customized Prescription:

- Clinicians, including Primary Care Networks, are encouraged to tailor the prescription to specific local needs and support resources. The generic prescription provides a template from which content can be revised as needed.
- Essential components and content to include in each section of the Prescription for Healthy Living are identified in **red text** in the proceeding generic prescription sample.
 - Users may choose which section(s) to include in the modified resource but are asked to ensure essential content is included when that section of the resource is used.
 - Essential content and recommended optional content are identified in the enclosed "Prescriptions for Healthy Living: Content" document to assist users in modifying this resource.
- Users are encouraged to establish linkages/partnerships with community partners (for example, recreation facilities, food/grocery suppliers) who may offer support to clients implementing healthy living behaviours. Discounts for products or services may be given by nutrition or physical activity partners with presentation of the prescription to support healthy living habits.
- The prescription can be supplemented with additional counselling, resources and referrals. Please see www.prescriptionsforhealthyliving.ca for additional tools that may assist you.