

HEALTH CARE

Expert advice Vestibular disorders can be treated

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Each year many people complain of dizziness, unsteadiness, vertigo, and balance problems. There are numerous causes of these symptoms. However, a large percentage originate from a problem with the part of the inner ear and the brain that helps control balance and eye movement. This is known as the vestibular system. If disease or injury damages this system, a vestibular disorder can result.

Symptoms of a vestibular disorder range from mild dizziness, unsteadiness to severe vertigo lasting from a few seconds to months to years. Some other symptoms include: a spinning sensation, difficulty reading or concentrating, poor balance, disorientation, nausea and vomiting, headache, sensitivity to bright lights and noises, and poor tolerance of crowds.

Vestibular disorders are common and can affect people of all ages and all walks of life. They are often caused by: head trauma (car accidents, falls, impact sports), ear infections, aging, illness or disease, medications, or stroke and brain injuries.

Vestibular disorders can be treated.

Treatment for vestibular disorders varies according to the diagnosis. Vestibular Rehabilitation is a drug-free approach involving specific exercises to improve balance function, decrease dizziness symptoms and increase general activity levels. The program may include one or more of the following: balance re-training exercises, specific vestibular exercises, supervised therapy sessions to monitor progress and continually challenge the vestibular, visual and balance systems, or repositioning manoeuvre for B.P.P.V. (Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo), a condition where crystals are caught in the inner ear.

One common treatment is using medication to numb the vestibular system, leaving many people drowsy and increasing their recovery time. Symptoms can become chronic often lasting for periods of months or years. Vestibular Rehabilitation is drug-free approach with none of these negative side effects.

Dizziness and balance problems affect approximately 50 per cent of all adults at sometime and account for 5-10 per cent of all physician visits.

Balance can be improved, dizziness can be reduced or eliminated and the risk of falling can be lowered.

If you think you might benefit from Vestibular Rehabilitation discuss it with your physician, if he/she agrees they may refer you to a physiotherapist who treats vestibular rehabilitation.

Information based on Vestibular Rehabilitation Practical Approach by Bernard Tonks and Elizabeth Thompson.

Take your last puff!

Sign up for the 2006 Driven to Quit Challenge

A new year, a new goal... a new car? If this is appealing to you, the 2006 Driven to Quit Challenge may be just what you need to kick the smoking habit. Smokers who successfully quit for the month of April become eligible to win the grand prize of a Honda Civic Hybrid or one of seven Sony 32" widescreen LCD HDTVs.

The contest is geared towards daily smokers who are thinking "it's time to quit", says Cathy Thompson, chairperson of the Halton Council on Smoking or Health. Last year, over 600 smokers in Halton entered the contest. This year, the council is aiming to help at least 800 smokers in Halton quit for the month and hopefully even longer.

"Quitting isn't easy," said Thompson. "Participants should begin by thinking about why they smoke, why they want to quit, and how they can cope with the withdrawal symptoms and powerful urges to light up. Planning ahead and having supports in place, such as family, friends, family doctor, and self-help books, can help to persevere through the cravings."

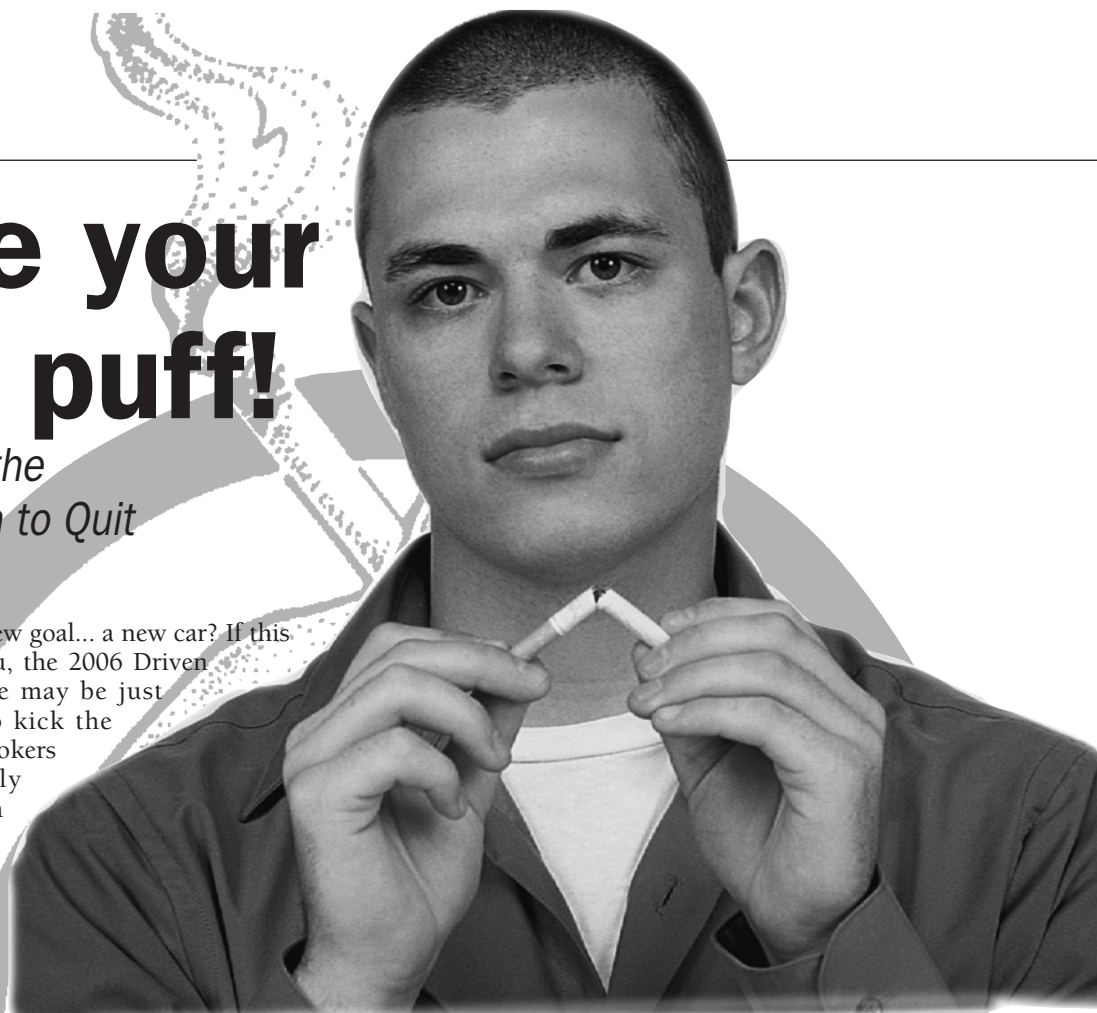
The Challenge is based upon research that show quitting is a process, in which smokers go through numerous

stages before being successful. Registering for the contest in March allows smokers to mentally and physically prepare to quit April 1st. As part of the Challenge, participants must also enlist the help of a buddy to keep them on track during the quit process.

The contest is open to all Ontario residents, who are 19 years of age or older. Registration deadline: March 31.

For more information, an entry form or help getting started visit the Halton Council on Smoking or Health website at www.choices4health.org or visit the Driven to Quit Challenge website, www.driventoquit.ca

The Driven to Quit Challenge is presented by the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division, and funded by the Government of Ontario. Pfizer Consumer Healthcare is the official prize sponsor of the grand prize of a Honda Civic Hybrid, the seven regional television prizes and the buddy prizes.



New foot care clinic to begin in Acton next week

A new foot care clinic, sponsored by Shoppers Drug Mart, will begin on Tuesday, March 21 and then every third Tuesday of the month after that.

Foot care is provided by Sylvia Long R.N., B.Sc.N. M.Ed. who will look at foot health, toe nail cutting and filing, callus reduction, corn treatment and non-invasive toenail treatment.

Fee: \$25 for a 40-minute session

(\$5 subsidized for each senior by Shoppers Drug Mart, which will also give each senior who uses the clinic an extra 20 per cent off for purchases of non-prescription and non-sale items on top of the regular seniors day held the last Thursday of each month).

To make an appointment please call the pharmacist Mark Ward-Drach, 519-853-3346.

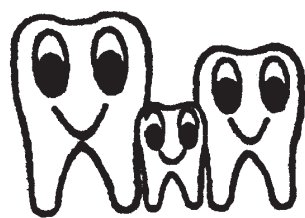


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March 20-
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- Wednesday Nia 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.
- Thursday Yoga 8:15 - 9:30 p.m.
- Thursday Nia 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.
- Thursday Yoga 10:45 - 12:00 p.m.

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