

YOUR HEALTH

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Avoid back pain when gardening

Over 80 per cent of Canadians are spending time raking, pruning, and planting to make their curbs and backyards look beautiful. But, the pursuit of that perfect outdoor oasis often comes with a price— back pain.

Gardening is considered a leisure activity, but all that bending, stretching and lifting is more like a full-body workout. So, it comes as no surprise that Canada's favourite horticultural pastime often leads to muscle strain and sore joints.

To help avoid back pain this summer, here are some WEEDS that might actually be welcome in the garden:

- Warm up before you start. This will reduce the stress on your joints and muscles, decreasing the chance of injury.
- Elevate— sit on a low stool or bucket while gardening, alleviating stress from your back and knees. When raking, dig-

ging, hoeing or pruning change positions frequently and kneel to plant.

• Enlist help when lifting heavy objects and always bend your knees. If you are feeling any back pain, consider taking an over-the-counter medication. The Tylenol line of pain relievers, for example, deliver a combination of both pain and muscle relief.

• Drink plenty of fluids and take a break every 20 minutes. Taking a break and keeping hydrated gives your back a rest and replenishes your energy supply.

• Stretch once you've finished. Stretching improves circulation which in turn shortens recovery time of muscle injuries. Stretching also has the added benefit of increased flexibility, better posture and enhanced coordination.

—News Canada



Thermography can help in early cancer detection

ANDREA LEFEBVRE

Advertising Special Features Writer

A new service being offered in Halton Hills could lead to the earlier detection, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer.

Starting this week, Dr. Cynthia Simmons, a doctor of homeopathic medicine, will be operating the Thermography Clinic of Halton Region out her medical practice on Fourth Line in Acton.

Breast thermography is a new technology that uses digital infrared imaging to measure heat given off by the body and to detect areas of increased or unusual

blood flow. Abnormal and cancerous cells need a lot of blood to grow and survive, so an increase in blood flow to a certain area of the body could be an indication of cancerous activity.

"The thermography machine picks up on heat and lets us know if there's something going on in the body," says Simmons, a certified thermography technician. "It's early risk assessment: it can pick up on cancerous activity while it's still small."

Early detection and treatment is extremely important for breast cancer patients and that's where thermography comes in handy. Mammograms and

ultrasounds pick up on larger lumps and structural changes, while thermography can catch them while they're still small or before they have even formed. But breast thermography isn't meant to replace mammograms and ultrasounds, says Simmons.

As with any medical procedure, there are pros and cons. Because thermography doesn't involve any radiation or compression, it can be used on women who are pregnant or who have breast implants. The nature of the test, however, means that it can only detect tumours or cancerous activity near the skin's surface. It can't pick up on cancers that are

deeper in the body, like prostate cancer, says Simmons.

Thermography can do more than just detect breast cancer. It is also used to identify and monitor problems like arthritis, sports injuries, whiplash and chronic pain. In fact, Simmons already has people booked for full body thermography scans at the Thermography Clinic of Halton Hills.

Simmons says thermography, especially breast thermography, is a passion.

"Breast cancer is a big fear for all of us women," she says. "We're all thinking about it, so it's good to start working preventatively."

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