

# Ask The Professionals

If you have any questions these professionals can answer, please write to:

"Ask The Professionals"  
c/o The Canadian Champion  
555 Industrial Drive  
Milton, Ontario L9T 3E1  
or Fax to: 878-4943

## Halton Hills Speech Centre

Division of M. Karen MacKenzie Steiner Speech Language Pathology Professional Corporation  
"Your Caring Partners..."

Northview Centre, 211 Guelph St., Suite 5, Georgetown  
(905) 873-8400 • www.haltonspeech.com

**Q: My wife has trouble taking pills. How can I help?**

**A:** Difficulty taking pills is a very common problem for several different reasons.

1) The pills do not go down: All pills should be taken with liquids. It takes at least 1 cup of liquid to flush the pills through to the stomach. Pills should be given sitting or standing. **Pills should never be given lying down.**

2) The pills are too big: Talk with your pharmacist to see if the pills can be crushed. Not all pills can be crushed as they work outside of the stomach and may have a coating that stops them breaking down in the stomach. If they can be crushed ask your pharmacist if the crushed pill can be put into jam, pudding or icecream so that it tastes better. If it can't be crushed ask if there is a smaller version or a liquid version that would be easier to take. If this is not possible, try taking the pill with water. Hold the pill and the water in your mouth, put your chin down towards your chest and swallow hard. Swallow again.

3) The number of pills that need to be taken during the day: Talk with your doctor and/or pharmacist. Sometimes the doctor can change the number of pills to once a day rather than three times a day. They could also be changed from tablets to capsules. Your doctor might also be able to change how they are taken. Some pills can be taken in a liquid form. Ask if this liquid can be mixed with juice or milk so that it tastes better. It is difficult to take an unpleasant medicine. **Do not make any changes yourself** without consulting your doctor or pharmacist. There are reasons for each medication. **Read the labels on the bottles and talk with your pharmacist.** For further information and help on swallowing difficulties please contact the Halton Hills Speech Centre and a Speech-Language Pathologist would be happy to help you.



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Yvonne Oliveira

## How to choose a hearing clinic

In selecting a hearing clinic your doctor or 'ear specialist' may refer you, or you may choose a clinic on your own since no referral is needed. In deciding on the best hearing clinic for you, there are several considerations.

**Location:** You will likely be making several visits to the clinic particularly if a hearing aid is needed, therefore, a convenient location is recommended. Follow-up appointments for minor hearing aid adjustments, purchase of hearing aid batteries, annual check-ups and hearing aid cleanings are typical.

**Office Hours:** The clinic should be open on a regular basis with an office and staff that you can visit weekly if needed. Make sure the hours the clinic are open will be convenient for you.

**Staff:** One of the most important considerations is the staff. Staff must be licensed and qualified to test and fit hearing aids. An Audiologist must have at least a university Masters degree in audiology and be licensed through the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO). Hearing instrument specialists are certified through a college level program and can fit hearing aids, but may or may not be able to do the testing. Find a professional in whom you are comfortable and confident; someone approachable and listens to any concerns or requests you may have.

**Selection:** The clinic should carry a number of different types and makes of hearing aids. There is an extensive selection of hearing aids available to accommodate most budgets, lifestyles, personal tastes and needs. Don't feel overwhelmed by all these decisions. An experienced, well-trained professional can help you make these important decisions in your best interest.



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## Q. Every fall when I participate in indoor sports, my feet ache.

**A:** This is the time of year when many changes occur. The environment around us starts to cool in temperature, leaves start to change colour, our hours of work in the garden come to an end, kids start back to school, winter outdoor and indoor sports begin.

Many of us do not realize the potential for injury when participating in sports. It is usually only when a serious injury results, that we seek medical attention. Many kids and parents alike, often complain of nagging aches and pains, but still compete on school sports teams, the adult sports leagues, or even in grade school gym classes. We must remember that indoor sports involve activities on hard concrete floors which are hard on our joints. Sometimes all that may be required is footwear best suited for the sport or best suited for YOUR particular foot structure.

If footwear is not the problem, braces may be required for the knee or arch supports for the feet. With the help of these devices, you can participate in sports or everyday activities, pain free. If you or your children are constantly plagued by ongoing knee or feet problems, think about what the end result might be in 20 years - arthritis.

A career in sports starts at a young age. It is never too young to detect and treat potential problems.

## Trusted Care for the Senior You Care for.

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With a little help from a friend.



TOM CHUCHMACH  
Managing Director

## Low Vitamin D Level Can Lead to Death

By Tom Chuchmach from the Home Instead Senior Care office in Milton / Oakville

**Q: I'm always after my mother, a widow who doesn't often eat right, to take her vitamins. At age 77, she said that vitamins don't really matter anymore. Is that true?**

Not according to the latest research. In fact, seniors don't often get the vitamins, minerals and nutrients they need, health experts say.

A recent study even revealed that a low level of vitamin D increases an individual's risk of death. The latest research published in the Archives of Internal Medicine says a lack of the sun vitamin puts you at higher risk of death from all causes. This follows a study of older people released in June that reached the same conclusion.

Several lines of evidence support vitamin D's role in death risk, including the fact that cardiovascular events are more common in the winter, when vitamin D levels are lower and that cancer survival is better if the disease is diagnosed in the summer when levels are higher.

According to the study, published in the magazine's August issue, those in the group with the lowest level of the vitamin had a 26 percent increased rate of death from any cause compared with those in the group with the highest vitamin D levels.

The authors of this report acknowledge that several studies have found that vitamin D deficiency contributes to cardiovascular disease, cancer and death. A recent consensus panel estimated that about 50 to 60 percent of older individuals in North America and the rest of the world do not have satisfactory vitamin D levels.

If you're worried about your mom's overall health and nutrition, why not ask her to consider some help around the house. She might be ready for assistance in the kitchen and at the grocery store.

First, see if your mother would meet with her doctor or a dietician who could customize a proper food and vitamin supplement plan for her. A companion then could help her follow that plan. For instance, CAREGivers from Home Instead Senior Care, who are screened, trained, bonded and insured, could assist her with grocery shopping as well as meal preparation and light housekeeping.

A companion is just what your mom may need to achieve a healthy lifestyle for her age and individual circumstances.

For more information about Home Instead Senior Care, contact Tom Chuchmach or Scott Johnson at 905.847.8433 or visit www.homeinstead.com



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## THE DANGERS OF WASP STINGS

There are several types of reactions that animals and humans can suffer after being stung. The first is pain and mild swelling at the site. This is a normally what happens to an individual who does not have an over reactive immune system and this generally does not require immediate attention. Some individuals with over reactive immune systems can have an allergic reaction, which may require swift medical attention.

In dogs, this can be anything from massive swelling of the head (angioneurotic edema) to difficulty breathing, intense itch all over, circulatory shock and even sudden death. Luckily, in 17 years of practice, I have only once encountered a dog that died of a wasp sting.

Most reactions we see, involve swelling of the head and are easily treated with injectable antihistamines and anti-inflammatories. It is very important to seek medical attention if your dog shows these symptoms or if your dog has suffered a reaction in the past. Successive reactions can have worsening symptoms.

If you are going somewhere remote with your dog, it is always a good idea to carry some benadryl with you, or if your dog has had an extreme reaction in the past, consider carrying an epipen. Your veterinarian can advise you on dosing.

I know that I wrote about this subject a few months ago in early summer, but one of my dogs got stung yesterday, and it reminded me that we seem to get at least two waves of wasps, in early and late summer.

As a result, of the wasp sting yesterday, my pup, who only has to look at a wasp sideways to have a reaction, had to be quickly treated with allergy reaction medication. He looked very uncomfortable, bless him, but he was lavished with sympathy... and a few cookies, which seemed to work wonders!!

Wishing you and your pet happy and healthy times this Fall.



Tina Doney  
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## Q. I went on a driving trip across Canada, and now I have pain in that big tendon at the back of my heel. It hurts to walk, and especially to go up the stairs. What can I do for this?

**A:** It sounds like you have Achilles tendonitis. It often comes on from over use of the calf and ankle, and I guess the position that your foot was in to press the gas of your vehicle over and over, probably caused it.

Try some ice to the back of the heel, and to stretch your calf muscles, as that big tendon is the tendon that attaches to your calf muscles. You can do this by standing on the edge of your stairs, and dropping your heels. Hold for 10-30 seconds if you can, and repeat twice. Try to avoid activities that aggravate it for a few weeks, like walking up a hill, or running. You can also try to massage the calf muscles and tendon.

If you have tried these things, and are still getting symptoms, you may need some physiotherapy. Some of our machines help with healing and help to improve your symptoms faster. Tendons can sometimes be slow to heal.

If this problem sounds similar to yours, or if you have any other problems that you wonder if physiotherapy treatment can help you with, give us a call at 905-876-1515, and we would be happy to help you with our friendly and knowledgeable staff.