

Winter 2013/2014

PRICELESS

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**INSIDE:**

**How to Boost Your  
Winter Immunity**

**Being in Both Places at  
Once: How a Mom  
Intertwines her Work &  
Home Life**





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# Welcome to the 2013 Winter Issue of **CK Child!**

CK Child is a hip, local parenting magazine for those raising their children in Chatham-Kent. Our goal is to unite our community by offering various viewpoints on topics relating to all stages of parenthood.

CK Child also highlights the many, valuable locally run businesses in our region & local family-friendly events occurring in C-K. Be sure to check out our new website too at [www.ckchild.ca](http://www.ckchild.ca)

## Letter from the Editor



*I can't believe that another year has gone by! It's just the beginning of December now but I know that all I'll have to do is blink, and Christmas will be over and we will be into 2014!*

*So what is your resolution this year? Are you planning to finally get in shape? Save up for a vacation you've always wanted to go on? Or is it something simple like vowing to spend more time with the people in your life who mean the most to you? No matter what it is, I recommend that you make it something that is meaningful... and reachable. Try making your resolutions as a family! At your next family meal, have everyone divulge what theirs will be. That way you can support each other and motivate each other to keep going when you think about giving up! Just a thought...*

*Anyways, the one vow we should all make is to make this year the best year EVER - Happy 2014!*

*Tammy*

*Tammy Chouinard*  
Editor/Publisher

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Please Note: Articles within CK Child Parenting Magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor.

CK Child is an independent publication created by a parent for the parent and caregivers of Chatham-Kent.



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The cover of this issue of CK Child was photographed by Rebecca Kalp of Open Shutter Photography at Sloan's Tree Village.

Our fabulous models are Abby, Penelope & Jackson. They are wearing handmade hats by Cheeky Mummy Crafty Boutique



Rebecca Kalp's specialty is Lifestyle Photography .....Weddings, Maternity and Newborns; all the real tear-jerker stuff! Being a lover of all things sentimental, I understand the true importance of capturing those magic moments that make life extraordinary.

For more info, visit [www.openshutterphotography.com](http://www.openshutterphotography.com)

## Being in Both Places at Once...



A good day for me can be a lot of different things. It could be hanging out with my kids. Doing things I remember as a child, like baking in the kitchen or collecting frogs, and watching my childhood memories become new memories for my kids. It could be a date with my husband, with grown up conversation, not interrupted by the continual chatter of a 3 yr old. Or, it could be seeing a patient who feels terrible and helping them, relieving their pain, mending their wounds and treating their sickness.

Maybe I should back up a little bit. I'm a veterinarian, wife and mother of two boys. I have a lot of wonderful, important, fulfilling (challenging, strenuous, exhausting) things in my life. It's a lot to live up to: a supportive, loving husband, my rowdy boys so excited to see me when I get home from work, my wonderful patients, and their owners, who trust ME to look after their fur-babies. Phew, it's a privilege, and a responsibility. I don't want to let anybody down. It can be hard to juggle the

demands. At the office I wish I were home, knowing I'm missing something with the kids. At home I feel anxiety not being at work. I'm so fortunate, my husband is a great parent, and the boys adore him. The other doctors and staff at my clinic take excellent care of my patients even if I can't be there. But I still feel like I need to be in both places at the same time.

One very early Monday morning was different. While my early bird kids were still sleeping soundly, I was not. My husband was out of town and I was somewhat anxious about the start of a hectic week. I woke immediately when the phone rang, and a name popped up in my mind, 'Ziggy'. My technician was on the phone and confirmed my suspicions. 'Ziggy' has had two puppies, another puppy is stuck, and she is on her way to the clinic. The clinic will not open for several hours, but Ziggy and her pups cannot wait.

Time to back up again. All of my patients are special to me, but Ziggy is exceptional. Like many black labs she is sweet and gentle, affectionate and trusting. However, she is not just a wonderful companion, she is a hero, as these puppies, like her last litter, will enter the training program for Autism Dog Services (ADS). ADS dogs, like Seeing Eye dogs, are specially trained service dogs. They are companions for children with autism, helping them stay safe, cope and succeed in a world they don't understand. Every one of Ziggy's puppies was invaluable. Each of these puppies was going to change a child's life for the better.

Driven by these thoughts I manage to get ready at a speed I would normally be incapable of on a predawn Monday morning. Question: What to do with the kids? The Question is answered as my oldest wakes up wondering what I'm doing. I explain, he announces he's coming with me! "Ok, but you have to get ready quickly", and surprisingly he does. The little one is still a challenge. At 19 months old he is all action with very little sense of self-preservation. There will not be anybody extra to supervise him at the clinic this early. I wake him, get him dressed and gather their breakfast's to go. Both boys are still sleepy but a little excited, breakfast in the van? This is new! En route to my clinic I am updated that Ziggy's stuck pup has been born and is doing well! However, he is huge, she is exhausted and her x-ray shows 2 more puppies are waiting to come out. Everyone sounds stable so I quickly divert to daycare. A few teachers are there, opening early. They are happy to see Lennox have no problem finding shoes and socks for him, which I now realize I forgot. He's still into his breakfast as I kiss him



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*by Emily Durbin BSc, DVM*

goodbye.

Back in the van, I check in with kid #1,  
"Are you sure you want to come to work with Mommy?"

"Yes!"

"I'm going to be very busy, you will have to stay out the way,  
and not touch anything without permission"

"I know, mommy" (exasperated now)

"I'm going to do surgery on a dog, you'll probably see a lot of  
blood..."

"I know, Mommy" (excitement, this time)

Harry is no stranger to my clinic, he has watched procedures  
and seen pets with some fairly gruesome injuries. He has  
always handled it well.

We arrive and assess our patients.  
The 3 pups are active and squirm-  
ing around. Ziggy, already on  
IV fluids, is looking proud, but  
anxious. She is having a few weak  
contractions and a vaginal dis-  
charge that is a concerning color.  
Ziggy's owner and I make the  
final call to go to surgery and the  
treatment area becomes a flurry  
of activity. I send Harry over to a  
stool at the counter to finish his  
breakfast. While scrubbing for surgery, I notice him wordlessly  
stuck halfway on the stool. He hasn't asked for help because  
he knows I'm busy (heart melts). As I'm getting tied into my  
surgical gown Harry looks at me and says, "Mommy, you look  
like a doctor!" (heart fills with pride). Surgery starts and Harry  
appears at the doorway of the surgery suite, he wants to watch!  
The surgery moves fast, I want Ziggy's pups to get as little  
of the anesthetic as possible. I hand off the puppies to the



recovery team who work quickly to revive, warm, and admin-  
ister oxygen to the pups while they figure out how to breathe.  
Harry, who has been chanting 'blood, blood!' for a while now,  
loses interest in surgery and is now fascinated with puppy rub-  
bing (the technical term for recovering C-section pups).

In surgery, one of my favorite noises reaches me from the treat-  
ment room. It's the first squeaks and cries of new puppies find-  
ing their voices! These little guys' sound a bit irritated about  
the vigorous rubbing! That sound is soon followed by Harry  
now chanting "puppies, puppies!"

Once surgery is done, puppies are nursing and everyone is  
recovering nicely, I take Harry back to his daycare. He is ready  
to be an ordinary kid again and zooms away to play with his  
friends.

I drove back to the clinic I knowing that the love of my family  
helps me be a better vet. I also love being a vet, but the long  
hours and crazy shifts take me away from them. That day was a  
good day, though. That was a day I got to be in both places at  
once!

*Dr Emily and her husband, Tony, moved from Saskatchewan  
to Chatham-Kent in 2003. Dr Emily recalls, "I moved here  
to be part of a fantastic team, at this exciting progressive  
veterinary hospital. And now we love it here! The people are  
friendly and have small town values. It means a lot to be able  
to raise my children in a place they can benefit from both  
rural and urban community".*



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couch!). Get your kids to help you build it too & get ahead of the  
game by avoiding the inevitable phrase, 'I'm bored!' Good luck! =>



by Katie Welton



I am a person who believes in childhood magic. I believe that there are things in this world that cannot be explained and that there are moments in our lives that have untold impact and will shape us in indescribable ways. As a young girl I had one of those moments while watching the musical Anne of Green

Gables in Charlottetown. Matthew had died and I cried my eyes out not understanding that he was acting. At the curtain call, Matthew walked out and I was blown away by the miracle that occurred before me. Matthew wasn't dead! It is a moment that has stuck with me for my entire life and heavily influenced my decision to go to university for theatre.

Now I have kids of my own, and I have to say I really want them to grow up to be people that believe in magic, in beauty, and in those moments that make your heart move. So, it was an easy decision for me to sign my son up for dance lessons. I had this awesome boy who loved to move, and who loved music. It was natural fit. His first class was a tap/ballet combo and at age four he got to be in his first Christmas concert at Pure. His first magic moment was being on stage while it started to snow. He reached up for those snowflakes in disbelief, and I proceeded to have full on "mom tears" in the audience.

The magic hasn't stopped. Every year I get to watch my son grow more in love with dance, and improve in ways I would never have thought possible. His dance lessons are the highlight of his day. Once, last year he was having a full on rotten day at school. We were going to a lesson at Pure, and Charlie was down in the dumps. After his class, Charlie came out full of sunshine and beaming. The change in him was amazing, and I know it was his time dancing and hanging out with his teacher that made all the difference. He was confident and proud, and back to the boy that makes me smile.

And there are times when I see my kids transform. On stage and off – and it is magic to me. Two years ago my son was in a street dance class and it was the first time I really saw him perform. He threw himself into what he was doing and became a "dancer", not just a kid that takes lessons. My daughter has started taking lessons this year, and while in class I have seen her change from a little girl that is reserved and shy to a little ballerina – serious in her effort and determined to try her best.

My kids are magic to me, and their experience at Pure has been magical to them. They have learned to work hard, to go for it, and that performance is a way to transform yourself. And for me, seeing them in class and on stage has convinced me even more that childhood is indeed magic.

*Katie is a mother of 2 and a valued parent and resource at PURE. She has her degree in Direction/Stage Management and volunteers her expertise by stage managing some of our shows. We are so lucky to have such a huge and fabulous family at PURE!*

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## Does Coffee Come in Bucket Size?



Dear Readers,

"T'was the night before Christmas" is a very long poem.

This is especially true when you think it'd be faster to do a parody of

that poem instead of working and working to write something original. You'll find yourself working just as hard, if not harder, to write that parody. And you'll want to give up about half-way through only to realize that you're too far in to quit now.

Ha. Perhaps that is why the message in the parody doesn't quite mirror my usual post. But it's all in good fun, I assure you...

### T'WAS THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS

*T'was the week before Christmas and all through the village,  
Everyone was stressing and starting to pillage.  
The local biz-owners tried not to care  
That citizens were grumpy with vim and with flair.*

*See, money was nestled all snug in their hands;  
So vendors awaited each woman and man.  
With kids in their car seats, and I in mine, too,  
We headed Downtown with our list, Yeehoo!*

*When out in the street there arose such a clatter,  
I laid on my horn to see what was the matter.  
Away down a side street I turned like a flash,  
To avoid getting into a holiday crash.*

*The sun in my eyes, while it rained and it snowed,  
Made me hustle indoors with my kiddies in tow.  
When, what to my half-blinded eyes should appear,  
But a guy on a bike shouting swears-- that was clear.*

*But why was he shouting? What was the trick?  
"You knew you were cutting me off, you're not thick!"  
More rapid than eagles, his cursing, it came,  
And he flipped me the bird while he called me these names:*

*For the sake of the children I shall not repeat them.  
But suffice it to say -- we're not going to be friends.  
My eldest asked Mommy, "Ma what'd he mean?"  
And the youngest repeated the gesture obscene.*

*As we left the toy store with some bags and a sigh,  
I decided that it wasn't my fault, t'was that guy's.  
Down the street we walked with more shopping to do,  
While cars honked and others stopped being nice. Boo!*

*And then, with a twinkling, we opened a door--  
And we were accosted with meanness once more!  
As I sucked in my breath and was turning around,  
A little old lady pushed me to the ground!*

*She was dressed all in fur, from her head to her feet,  
But her disposition was not happy OR sweet.  
A bundle of bags she had in her hand,  
And she said "Hurry up! Move over! Don't stand*

*Right in the doorway! Move along! Now scoot!"  
And I knew nothing I could do for this old coot.  
Her mean mouth was pinched in a permanent frown.  
(I took joy in the long nose hairs that fell down*

*And tickled her moustache, which covered her teeth.  
And those teeth! Oh those teeth! Oh, those terrible teeth!  
She had a broad nose and a rather large belly,  
That shook when she moaned, like a bowl full of jelly!)*

*She was clearly impressed with her important self,  
So I laughed when she said that, cantankerous elf.  
With a huff and snort and a twist of her head,*

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by Elizabeth Sunnen

*She pushed on by me and away that jerk sped.*

*I said not a word, but went straight to work,  
And crossed off the names on my wish list of quirks.  
And laying my Visa in the debit machine,  
I accepted the purchase-- made the vendor's eye's gleam.*

*We walked back to the car, and spotted the ticket.  
Out of time was my meter? That Reader can stick it!  
I'm sure he heard me exclaim, as he drove out of sight,  
"Merry Christmas, my foot! Meter Reader, let's fight!"*  
--

Merry Christmas, my friends. May your shopping trips be closer to the end of It's a Wonderful Life, than the beginning. I hope you don't meet The Grinch and that you do, indeed, get your Red Rider carbine-action two-hundred shot range model air rifle. And that you don't shoot your eye out.

May your stocking be filled with your favourite coffee blend and big, steel bucket in which to make it.

Love,  
Does Coffee Come In Bucket Size  
(aka Elizabeth)

*Elizabeth is a teacher and writer who takes motherhood one laugh at a time. She grew up in C-K and is thrilled to be back in such a great community. For more great reading, check out her blog at*  
[www.DoesCoffeeComeinBucketSize.blogspot.com](http://www.DoesCoffeeComeinBucketSize.blogspot.com)



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*"And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. 'What if Christmas,' he thought, 'doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.' "*

*~ Dr. Seuss, How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*

**CKChild**  
*to your family!*

**We are so incredibly lucky to have such talented and amazing writers, fabulous business partners and dedicated readers - there is no way we could be starting our 6th year without all of you!**

**So thank you, thank you, thank you to each and every one of you...**

*Tammy Chouinard*

## *Dad on the Town:* LESSONS IN JUVENILE GASTRONOMY



This year my wife and I voluntarily chose to drag out our son's birthday into one of those three-day, weekend-long events: Saturday was a mosh pit of youngsters in our backyard swinging at a fire truck piñata and playing pin the tail on the Dalmatian; Sunday was a more subdued cake and ice cream party with the grandparents; when his actual birthday rolled around on Monday, all we wanted was a nice dinner at a nice restaurant to recognize the

day with our family of four. Mind you, Ethan was turning four, and his brother, Jonah, was only two so we already had a track record of restaurant pandemonium under our belts. We knew a relaxing dinner was not in the cards no matter how nice the restaurant was, so we decided it was best just for Ethan to have his choice.

Given that children's taste in food is usually far from refined, I wasn't holding out hope for any fine dining, but something without golden arches overlooking it would be appreciated. As a parent, you quickly learn that a child's tastes are fickle, ever-changing, and downright frustrating. Biologically, I know they must have the same taste buds as the rest of us that detect sweet, sour, bitter, and salty, but they don't seem to care about the combinations as much as discerning adults. I know their food preferences must be based on taste alone. Jonah's continuous phrase of "Don't like it" must come from facts that have caused him to make this decision. He won't stand for food he has inexplicably acquired a dislike for to cross his tongue. Consistently throwing red peppers across the dining room is a sure sign of his dislike (but then again, who is the irrational one – the child who throws it out of distaste, or the parent who continues forcing it on the child with the same results of splattered food on the wall?).

What I can't figure out is how some combinations pass any taste test to be repeated. I've caught Jonah enjoying a Mini Wheat dipped in ketchup. Ethan is not much better with soy sauce and pickles. Actually, soy sauce on anything seems

to be quite alright. Give Ethan a bottle of soy sauce and he'll dump the whole thing onto his plate, not seeming to mind the overwhelming umami flavour he has created in his mashed potatoes.

One thing my children have developed a taste for that is out-of-the-ordinary for most children is sushi. Most likely it comes from their overwhelming partiality to soy sauce. In the last few years, Chatham has been graced with a selection of sushi restaurants that were not part of the culinary landscape when I was growing up. We have visited each of them at least once as a family and the boys' favourite so far has been Tokyo Sushi. So we weren't caught off guard, but pleasantly surprised, when Ethan said, "I think we should go to the sushi restaurant for my birthday."

When we arrived, we were seated in a booth along the window at Ethan's request, because they both like to watch trucks and buses go by on the busy street while we eat. These are things that matter to children.

"Let me see what I want," Ethan said, gazing at the menu, acting pretty convincingly as if he knew what to do, even though he can't read.

We placed an order of salmon sushi, California rolls, chicken teriyaki, wonton soup, vegetable tempura, crab legs, and fried rice. All things they will eat.

"And please don't forget my sushi lettuce," Ethan said very officially to the waitress at the end of our order.

The waitress looked at me quizzically. "He would also like a garden salad," I translated.

Even though sushi is pretty adventurous by children's standards, they continue to confound us with their choices. Ethan's favourite thing at the sushi restaurant is to dip iceberg lettuce into soy sauce. Steamed edamame beans are Jonah's favourite, but yet try to get him to eat green beans, green peppers, broccoli, or any other green vegetable and he obstinately refuses. For Ethan's birthday dessert, the waitress brought deep-fried ice cream with chocolate sauce. Ethan loved it, but Jonah looked at it and said, "I want the green one."

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by Darin Cook

The “green one” being green tea ice cream we had tried before. Realistically he should not like it better than chocolate, but apparently he does. Go figure.

Eating with kids in public is a non-stop adventure. Ethan knocked over a pyramid display of Sapporo beer cans in an aluminium clatter. Wooden chopsticks were used more as drumsticks on the tabletop then eating implements. Ethan managed to fill up his soy sauce container until it overflowed onto the table. Jonah left the usual carnage around his high chair that resembled the aftermath of an epic food fight. But it was exactly what Ethan wanted for his birthday dinner. Our prediction about it not being a relaxing meal was accurate, but we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. And how can we argue with our son's penchant for lettuce in soy sauce if it gets us an evening out at a sushi restaurant?

*Darin is a freelance writer who works and plays in Chatham-Kent, and is becoming a Dad around town by taking in children's entertainment and family-oriented attractions with his wife, Jennifer, and their sons, Ethan and Jonah. Share in more of his experiences at [www.darincook.ca](http://www.darincook.ca)*



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## *The Kids are Alright:* ON MAKING CHANGES & TAKING CHANCES *by Karen Green*



I'm not one for making New Year's resolutions, but I am one for making changes; taking chances. Two years ago, my family made a choice. Premeditated only in our need for change, we sold our house, I quit my job and we moved 300km to a new life in Chatham-Kent. The change we made might have been

bigger than the change we needed, but it led us to discover a new way of living, and a new way of being together. We've had our challenges and our disappointments, but the choice we made two years ago is one we have never regretted. It was scary, it was hard work, but it was worth it.

Because here's the thing about choices: sometimes they are a confrontation, forced upon us; unwanted, and sometimes they are a gift, needed, desired, required. But either way, a choice is an opportunity. An opportunity to make a change.

An opportunity to take a chance.

I remind myself of this every time I am faced with a new situation, a new challenge, or a new choice, because sometimes the simple act of walking into a room feels like taking a bigger chance than changing our entire life did.

Moving away from Toronto was the ultimate act of leaving my comfort zone, but much less serious situations have filled me with a great deal more anxiety. Like joining a local book club. Partly it was because the circumstances were not purely logistical, and I would be forced to navigate personalities, not a check-list of tasks, and partly it was because, unlike putting our house up for sale and opening the doors of it to strangers, I was putting myself on display, and opening myself up to the judgment of strangers.

Turns out, I hated the book we read. It was terrible, but I couldn't exactly say that to people I didn't know, who didn't know me. Over dinner that night, I told my husband that I thought I shouldn't go, that I wouldn't know how to be dip-

lomatic enough to communicate my distaste for the book without offending somebody. He told me that I should just be myself; keep smiling, and maybe, this once, to listen more than I spoke. So I went.

I stood in the doorway of our meeting spot, took a deep breath, smiled, and walked in. Turns out, it was a great meeting. In a room full of strangers I didn't necessarily mesh with every single person, but our shared interest in books, and a ready-laid groundwork for discussion meant that the evening went well. The next day, in the schoolyard, I was chatting with a few other moms, when the topic of a popular reality show came up. Did you watch it, one of the other moms asked me, and before I had a chance to reply, my five-year-old daughter chimed up. "My mom wasn't home last night, she went to the book club even though she hated the book!" I gave her a big smile and corroborated her story. "That's right, I did," I said as the bell rang. We headed towards the doors of the school, and as I held my daughter's small hand in my own, I thought about two things — number one, that children have no filters and will pipe in at any time, so I should make sure she doesn't know anything I don't want her to broadcast to the schoolyard, and number two, that my kid was proud of me. I was modeling behaviour I wanted her to carry into her life as well. I wanted her to see that I could do things that weren't always comfortable, and that there were always opportunities to make changes, to take chances.

Sometimes, they led you to a new book club. Sometimes, they led you to an entirely new life.

*Karen Green recently moved to Chatham-Kent with her family from Toronto. Freed from her full-time job as a writer and editor, Karen now spends her time...writing and editing. And frolicking in the leaves with her two small girls. Karen is a speaker, the founder of the nationally-recognized political movement, Mom the Vote and the author of the blog, The Kids Are Alright where she has been writing about the humorous and poignant moments of family life since 2005.*

# Magical Christmas Moments

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## What to Do, What to Do

We have launched our brand new online 'What to Do, What to Do' Event Calendar at [www.ckchild.ca](http://www.ckchild.ca)! It's still a work in progress but here is a highlight of some of the events coming this Winter:

|   |                        |                          |              |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Dora the Explorer LIVE!</b><br><a href="http://www.cktickets.com">www.cktickets.com</a>                      | Capital Theatre        | December 5th at 6:30pm   | 519-354-8338 |
| <b>Christmas Open House at Milner Heritage House</b>  | Chatham and area       | December 7 from 1-5pm    | 519 354 8346 |
| <b>Dresden Kinsmen Annual Night Santa Claus Parade</b>  | Dresden                | December 14th from 6-7pm | 519 683 6838 |
| <b>Magical Christmas Moments</b><br><a href="http://www.cktickets.com">www.cktickets.com</a>                    | Capital Theatre        | December 14th at 7pm     | 519 354 5000 |
| <b>2013 Last Night Fun Run</b><br><a href="http://www.lastnightrun.com">www.lastnightrun.com</a>                | 15 Dunkirk Dr, Chatham | December 31st            | 519 617 1695 |
| <b>The Wizard of Oz</b><br><a href="http://www.cktickets.com">www.cktickets.com</a>                             | Capital Theatre        | February 6 - 8th         | 519 354 8338 |
| <b>13th Annual Chatham-Kent Toy Show &amp; Sale</b><br><a href="http://www.cktickets.com">www.cktickets.com</a> | John D. Bradley Centre | January 19th from 10-3pm | 519 352 8365 |

## 10 Mortgage Reduction Strategies to Reducing Home Mortgage Costs

While today's interest rate environment makes having a mortgage more affordable than ever, it is important to never forget that paying off your mortgage is for the most people still a very good financial decision. With the average mortgage amount growing along with home values--making sure you pay down your mortgage has become more important than ever. While most mortgages today are amortized over 25 years, below are the tips that I give my clients who want to be mortgage free as quickly as possible. If you follow all the mortgage reduction strategies below, your mortgage can be gone a lot quicker than you think.

- 1 Never get an open mortgage at a fixed rate unless you plan on paying it off within its term.
- 2 Use accelerated weekly or bi-weekly payments.
- 3 Give your mortgage the same raise as you get each year.

- 4 Give your mortgage a portion of any bonus or extra income.
- 5 Keep your payments the same even if you renew or refinance at a lower rate.
- 6 Use your income tax returns to put a lump sum payment towards your mortgage.
- 7 Use extra money from your budget.
- 8 Never use a home owner line of credit for long term borrowing.
- 9 Consider a variable rate mortgage or short term fixed when market conditions justify it.
- 10 Seek independent financial & mortgage advice.

For more information, please contact Brenda Russello at 519.358.3577 (see her ad on the inside cover of this issue)

## How to Boost Your Winter Immunity



Arm yourself this cold and flu season with these top tips to strengthen your immune system and general wellbeing.

### 1. Nourish your Gut

Did you know that around 70% of your immune system is in your gut? Although we may think of it as a mere 'food

processor', your digestive system is responsible for breaking down and absorbing all the essential nutrients from your diet, as well as recognizing and eliminating any 'bad bugs'. Basically, the digestive system is your first line of defense in making sure the good stuff gets in, and the bad stuff is kept out!

Consuming a good dose of probiotic bacteria, such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, helps promote a healthy balance of 'good' bacteria, which help fight off the 'bad' infection-causing bacteria. Probiotics are naturally found in yoghurt. It's best to choose a natural tub set yoghurt for optimal probiotic activity or you can find probiotics in convenient capsule or powder form.

### 2. Get Your Vitamin C

An oldie but a goodie! Vitamin C is involved in the production

of our white blood cells, which are like our army of 'soldiers'! The white blood cells defend our body, fighting off bad bugs and infection, and Vitamin C helps make sure they're primed and ready for attack!

Good sources of vitamin C include oranges, grapefruit, cranberries, blackcurrants, broccoli, cauliflower, kiwi fruit and green pepper.

Vitamin C however, is a very unstable nutrient, meaning it's easily lost during cooking or processing, so it's best to consume foods fresh, raw or just lightly cooked to optimize vitamin C content.

Vitamin C supplements are also a great way to boost your intake over the winter season. Ascorbic acid is the purest form of vitamin C, but can be harsh on the stomach for some people; calcium ascorbate can be a better source for those with a sensitive stomach. Some supplements will also contain bioflavonoids, which are naturally found alongside vitamin C in foods, and provide a similar action thereby boosting the vitamin C activity.

### 3. Propolis

This is one of my all time favorites. Taken at the onset of a sore throat, propolis can help stop it in its tracks! Collected by honeybees, this naturally dark, slightly sticky liquid possesses potent antibacterial, antiviral, antiseptic and antibiotic properties, which make it an excellent broad-spectrum immune support. Propolis can be found in convenient capsules, lozenges or in liquid form.

### 4. Exercise

The increased incidence of cold and flu during the winter months may not just be due to the drop in temperature, but also the drop in our physical activity. Research shows that moderate daily exercise boosts the immune system, reducing the incidence of cold and flu.

Moderate exercise can also help reduce stress and improve sleep patterns, both of which have a positive effect on immune function. But don't worry, there's no need to set the alarm for a 20km morning marathon! Just 30 minutes of moderate activity, most days, is all that's required.

*Tasha Jennings is a qualified naturopath and nutritionist, presenter and author with over 10 years experience. Tasha is a contributor to major media publications including the New Idea, Herald Sun, medical journals and Mouth of Mum's website as well as author of the Vitamins Guide. Inspired by her desire to start a family and the subsequent birth of her son, Tasha now specialises in pre and post-natal nutrition and is Managing Director of Zycia, which means 'life' and provides premium nutrition for conception, pregnancy, breastfeeding and beyond ([www.zycia.com.au](http://www.zycia.com.au)). You can also follow Tasha's blog at [www.tashajenningsnutrition.com](http://www.tashajenningsnutrition.com).*

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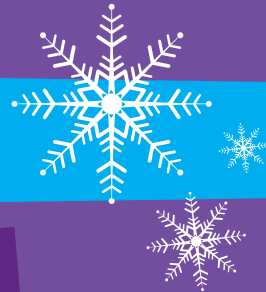
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