

# QFHT NEWS

SPRING/SUMMER  
2022

NEWS &amp; INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS OF THE QUEEN'S FAMILY HEALTH TEAM



## No Time for Lyme!

The Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington (KFL&A) area is a high-risk region for Lyme disease. It is important to keep yourself protected!

Lyme disease occurs when a person becomes infected with the bacteria *B. burgdorferi* after being bitten by a blacklegged (deer) tick. Early diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease can prevent complications.

### Symptoms

Possible symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, muscle spasms, limb numbness and/or tingling, facial paralysis, fatigue, swollen glands, and expanding red skin rash. Symptoms often occur one to two weeks after a tick bite but can appear as early as three days or as late as one month after a tick bite.

### Prevention

You can help reduce your risk of tick bites by taking the following precautions:

#### Clothing

- Wear light-coloured clothing, as this makes it easier to spot ticks.
- Wear socks, close-toed footwear, and long-sleeved tops and pants. This can help you spot a tick before it has time to attach.
- After outdoor activity, put clothes in the dryer on high heat for at least 10 minutes to kill any ticks.

#### Repellent

- Before heading outdoors, use bug spray containing DEET or Icaridin on clothes and exposed skin (follow manufacturer's instructions).

### Tick check

- Check clothes and body for ticks at least once daily. Pay close attention to the groin, navel, armpits, scalp, behind the ears, and behind the knees. Do the same for others in your care.
- Use a mirror or get someone else to help you check your back.
- Check your pets and talk to your veterinarian for possible tick-prevention measures.
- Take a shower as soon as possible after coming in from the outdoors to wash off any loose ticks.

### How to remove a tick

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Do not use your fingers.
2. Pull up with a steady motion. Do not squeeze, smother, or burn the tick, or use other remedies.
3. Clean the bite area with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
4. If the tick was attached for longer than 24 hours, ask your health-care provider if preventive antibiotics are appropriate for you.
5. Watch for signs and symptoms of Lyme disease. See your health-care provider if you develop symptoms. Left untreated, Lyme disease can cause serious health problems.

*Article provided by KFL&A Public Health.*

### More information

Please visit the [KFL&A website](#) and [Ontario.ca/lyme](#) for more information on protecting yourself from Lyme disease.

# FAST FACTS

## HEALTH CARD RENEWAL

Is your Ontario health card up to date? Most Ontario residents\* can now renew their card online, instead of visiting a ServiceOntario centre in person. (\*Some restrictions apply.) All patients need a valid card to get coverage through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). There is no fee to renew your card either online or in person. Visit [ServiceOntario](#) or call **1-888-777-8906** for more information.

## COVID-19 INFORMATION

KFL&A Public Health offers up-to-date information on everything you need to know about COVID-19, including the status of the virus in our area, vaccines, health and safety measures, etc. Visit their website [here](#).

## AFTER HOURS CLINIC

During the pandemic, we are unable to provide walk-in appointments in our after-hours clinic (AHC).

Patients who require after-hours care must call 613-533-6563 during our AHC hours (Monday-Thursday: 4:45 to 7:30 p.m. and Saturday: 12:45 to 3:30 p.m.) and leave a message. We only check messages during our AHC hours. We will return your call and you will either receive a telephone (or video) appointment or be directed to visit the clinic in person (location: 115 Clarence St., first floor). Our AHC is available to QFHT patients only. For more information, [visit our website](#).

If you are calling outside our AHC hours, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Telephone Health Advisory Service is available at 1-866-797-0000 Monday to Thursday from 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. and around the clock weekends from 5 p.m. Friday to 9 a.m. Monday.



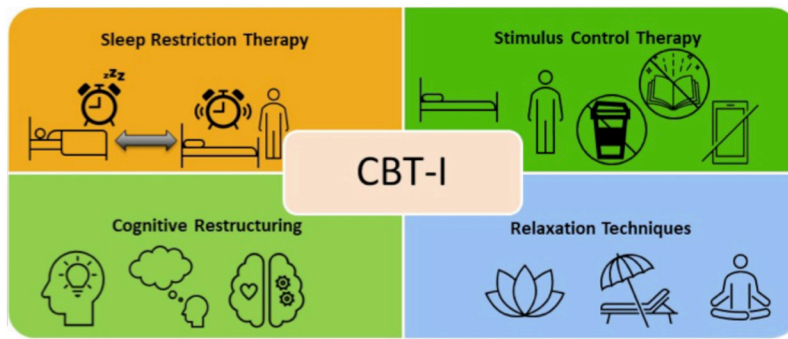
Resident physicians pose for a selfie during a fun team-building scavenger hunt during the residents' introductory activities. Each year, up to 60 new residents join us in Kingston.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT QUEEN'S FAMILY MEDICINE

We are so grateful to our resident physicians for nominating us, once again, for the PARO (Professional Association of Residents of Ontario) **Residency Program Excellence Award**. Among other factors, this award recognizes educational excellence, resident well-being/good work environment, and innovation in resident education. We have won this award twice, making us the only residency program to win this prestigious recognition more than once. We remain the only family medicine program in the province to receive this award in its 16-year history.

Queen's Family Health Team allied health staff members **Erin Desmarais**, social worker, and **Cynthia Leung**, pharmacist, recently offered a virtual presentation to their Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario (AFHTO) colleagues entitled "Delivering Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Insomnia via Virtual Platform." Cynthia and Erin were part of a planning committee and presenters for an Insomnia Interventions Online Series offered through Queen's University that drew 177 learners from throughout Canada. They also regularly offer a six-week sleep therapy program for QFHT patients and community members. (See Spotlight, next page.)

A number of our physicians have received national funding to support research in their areas of interest/expertise. Among them, **Dr. Imaan Bayoumi** received funding to develop a research program on poverty and child health, with the goal to increase family income and improve child development. (She also received provincial funding to study primary care-embedded interventions addressing poverty, as well as the impacts of COVID-19 on primary preventive care and health outcomes for young children.) **Dr. Michael Green** received funding for his team's project, "Implementation and Evaluation of an Indigenous Virtual Patient Experience Tool in Response to COVID-19." **Dr. Amrita Roy** and her team of Indigenous and settler scholars received funding for their project, "Toppling Monuments: Colonial Trauma, Justice, Heritage, and Restorative Healing," which will examine Kingston as a case study to address the social exclusion and historical trauma inherent in current understandings of heritage.



## SLEEP THERAPY PROGRAM

Do you have difficulties falling asleep or staying asleep? Is it impacting your functioning or causing you significant distress? Do you feel fatigued all the time? Has this been going on for more than three months? If so, you may be suffering from chronic insomnia, and we can help!

Chronic insomnia is a common sleep disorder, estimated to affect at least 10 to 15 per cent of the general population.<sup>1</sup> Many individuals with chronic insomnia sometimes feel hopeless, as they have not responded well to many different sleep-hygiene techniques and medications. In response to this demand, QFHT allied health staff members Cynthia Leung, pharmacist, and Erin Desmarais, social worker, along with Kingston-based sleep expert Dr. Judith Davidson, developed and started delivering a sleep therapy program in 2018.

The QFHT's sleep therapy program is based on a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) approach, which is the recommended first-line treatment for chronic insomnia.<sup>2</sup> Our program employs various strategies to help individuals restore their biological sleep processes. It comprises four main components: sleep restriction therapy, stimulus control therapy, cognitive restructuring, and relaxation techniques.

Participants learn a set of techniques such as scheduling time in bed, as well as strategies to deal with thoughts that interfere with sleep. When these techniques are used together, we have observed 80 to 85 per cent of patients experience significant improvements. The benefits include less time required to fall asleep, more time spent asleep, and waking up less often during sleep.<sup>3</sup> Results are often maintained over time. Participants wishing to come off their sleep medications also have the option to work with our pharmacist for an individualized tapering plan.

We also track participants' sleep progress by measuring the Insomnia Severity Index before and after the program. For individuals who have completed the program, we can consistently see reduction in this index, which suggests an improvement in sleep.

If you are interested in learning more about this program, please speak with your physician to submit a referral. [Click here](#) to read this article, which includes a list of resources we recommend, on our website's Programs & Services page.

*Article provided by the QFHT's Erin Desmarais, social worker, and Cynthia Leung, registered pharmacist.*

1. Morin et al. Prevalence of Insomnia & its treatment in Canada. *Can J Psychiatry* 2011; 56(9):540-548
2. Qaseem A et al. Management of Chronic Insomnia Disorder in Adults: A Clinical Practice Guideline from the American College of Physicians. *Ann Intern Med* 2016; 165: 125-133
3. Traumer et al. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Chronic Insomnia: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Ann Intern Med* 2015 Aug 4;163(3):191-204

## PATIENT PROFILE

I moved to Kingston in 2017 after living in Quebec for 46 years. I had enjoyed two long careers, first as a registered nurse and then as a financial



advisor. I was participating in many rewarding activities. Life was going great.

I developed a severe case of insomnia during the first wave of COVID-19. It began soon after the "fall back" time change in November 2020. The time change has always affected my sleep, but I wasn't able to adjust this time. My sleep, or lack of it, got worse each night. I managed to carry out my many scheduled activities via Zoom, but the bowling events, choir, and church services I enjoyed so much had all been cancelled. It was a very stressful time.

In December 2020, I started keeping a sleep diary and realized I needed help. I was sleeping less than three hours a night. Herbal teas, prescribed drugs, and over-the-counter remedies did not work. I had problems falling asleep and staying asleep. I became hyper-alert and reactive to every little noise.

In January 2021, I received an email from the QFHT's six-week, virtual sleep therapy program, on a referral from my doctor, inviting me to participate. Of course, I accepted. My sleep quality average on starting the program was 57 per cent; at the program's conclusion, it was up to 79 per cent. I was sleeping deeper and for longer sustained periods. After a program follow-up in June 2021, my sleep quality average was 86.7 per cent.

I am so grateful to have had this opportunity to work with program leaders Erin and Cynthia, whose support and caring sustained me over those six weeks.

When the clock changed back one hour in November 2021, I never even noticed.

*Judith Austin*

# RESIDENT PHYSICIANS AND YOU



Dr. Allyshia Van Tol

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced us to many changes in medical practices, including the addition of telephone appointments at the QFHT. The telephone appointment helps reduce COVID exposure risks and can reduce the time and economic burden of travelling to clinic for appointments. However, this new medium has required adaptation for physicians and patients alike.

Here are some tips to help maximize your phone appointment.

- Come to your appointment prepared with what you would like to talk about to ensure your concerns aren't missed. If we have missed asking something, please let us know!
- Choose an appropriate environment to talk about your concerns. Have a pen and paper and any other aids (glasses, water, previous notes) at the ready in case you need them.
- One of the most challenging parts of telephone appointments is not being able to read body language. If you are reacting in a certain way, feeling confused, sad, or happy, or have other concerns, please let us know.
- According to research, a good interview results in enough information for appropriate management in about 70–90 per cent of cases. However, if there is something you think we should see in person, please let us know.

We look forward to seeing (or speaking with!) you for your next appointment.

Dr. Allyshia Van Tol  
Resident Co-Lead  
Kingston-Thousand Islands Site



## CLINIC CONVERSATION

As many of you know, each July we welcome new resident physicians to our clinic for their year of training at the Queen's Family Health Team (QFHT). This year, we will also welcome new faculty physicians. As a result, some of our physician teams and clinic locations will be changing as part of our annual July transition.

We thank you in advance for your patience and understanding as you, our valued patients, may be receiving a letter in May/June notifying you of a change in your clinic location and/or primary physician. We will also post clinic-area signage with physician lists by location.

There will be no disruption to the care you receive. Still, we know that change is not easy, and we appreciate the many team members who contribute to your overall health and well-being, from the clinic receptionist, nurse, and resident physician to the allied health staff member and primary-care physician.

As the COVID-19 restrictions change province-wide, it's important to note that our clinic will continue to require you to wear a face mask until further notice. Your health and safety are our primary concern as we follow this Ontario Ministry of Health directive for primary-care health settings. For everyone's safety, thank you for continuing to wear a face mask during your visits to the QFHT.

We welcome your input and suggestions about our clinic operations. At any time, please feel free to contact me or your care provider.

To you in good health,  
Diane Cross  
Clinic Manager

We are Family Medicine.  
For Learners. For Patients. For Communities.

**Do we have your current email address?** If not, please send it to [info@dfm.queensu.ca](mailto:info@dfm.queensu.ca) so we can keep you and your family well informed.