

the VOICE



Volume 16, Issue 2

We have so many irons in the fire, it is exciting to share what is coming with you.

You may already be aware that *The Inspired Spoon* is ready for your use. The idea is for you to share the flipbook link with your clients or earn a little extra money by charging for the link — up to you. We hope that it helps build interest and credibility to your practice.

We are working behind the scenes updating our site and it will be awesome. It will function much more effectively while still providing Members with all the access you currently derive. It was time to update!

There will be a number of “Kits” available to professional Members — each focusing on a specific challenge and each complete with everything you need to partake.

For example there is a kit for you to use if you plan on approaching a medical professional or ND as a referring party. There is one for you to use if you want to conduct a wellness session or lunch and learn. There is one for you to use to assist us by approaching an HR department or a corporation. And there are others.

On the insurance front, we are preparing behind the scenes packages which contain everything an insurer or a corporation might need to know about how to cover our services and why it is important. The underlying premise is that we sit in a sepa-

rate lane from dieticians and weekend warrior nutritionists. We serve a distinct purpose — one that is proactive in bringing the body into balance before disease settles in and before other professionals are required.

We are also working on our social media presence with a focus on Linked In and Facebook. We have been aware for a while that we should become more public facing but frankly, we were working in the background making other great offerings available to our Members — always our main focus as it will continue to be.

In the fall we hope to utilize Ready, Set, Chat to hold monthly “Office Hours” where your tricky protocols can be reviewed or pressing questions can be answered.

EfficSafe is another venture we have been working closely with and they tend to be quite responsive. We are proud to be the first in Canada to bring this important and enlightening platform forward. To the right you can see they are keeping up with the times by examining Cannabis and CBD — we will need to understand the effect of these.

There is more in the works but is a taste of what to expect.

More EfficSafe Updates

New monographs and interactions were added, including Medical Cannabis, Cannabidiol (CBD), Chlorella, Tremella fuciformis, Pleurotus ostreatus, and Viscum album, alongside multiple updates based on recent studies.



Medical Cannabis and CBD highlight a key clinical insight: interactions are highly context-dependent.

Pharmacodynamically, cannabinoids tend to amplify the effects of CNS-active drugs, increasing risks such as sedation and cognitive impairment.

Taken together, cannabinoid interactions should be evaluated as compound-specific and patient-specific, rather than a single unified category.

Medical Cannabis: interactions/ monograph
CBD: interactions/ monograph

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1. Cookbook

The Inspired Spoon is now available to Members as a flipbook. The hope is that you can use it as an enticement for clients. Also we want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to those who chose to contribute to the book. We hope you enjoy using it and that you find great value.

2. EfficSafe

You need to check this out. It is so powerful and totally holistic in its approach. And it is FREE to professional members! We are so excited that we are the first in Canada to bring this opportunity to our industry. So many Members have clients who are on medications — this is the information that you require. The founders are listening to our requests and have made the information easier and faster to access and it now includes Cannabis and CBD.

3. Alternative Modality Directory.

We have this available on the site right now in the Members Only area, under Business Tools. Our plan is to continue to accept the modalities which our Members partake in and to build this directory. We hope that it serves well as a point of connection and also of referral.

If you would like to send us information on your alternate modality (not Holistic Nutrition) please complete the form on the right side of your weekly eblast.

4. Need a Buddy?

The Buddy System is based on the idea of pairing Members with others of about the same level of expertise and perhaps in the same province with whom you can share ideas and protocols. This is exactly how Wendy and Beth connected. Supply us with your name and contact information, years in practice and province and we will attempt to connect you with someone. (the assumption will be made that the information you provide can be shared.)

There are new initiatives in the works all the time around here. So please pay attention to your eblasts for the latest and greatest.

Power Hours

The Power Hour series acts like a single continuous conference featuring interesting and informative opportunities — and there is no charge! You pay \$10 to hold your spot but if you show up that \$10 is refunded to you.

Power Hours provide a learning venue that counts as continuing education, but is also a way for you to ask pertinent questions and just to connect with other Members. It is mostly informal with time for questions and always worthwhile.

In April our own Eiman delved into the world of Square and explored how you can use it better to enhance your services while saving you time. It was highly informative and worthwhile.

In May Marla Samuel was our guest again and she discussed Functional Lab Testing. She shared the hows and whys we as holistic nutritionists may wish to take advantage of this option. As always Marla was bursting with exciting energy and valuable insights.

Our June Power Hour was cancelled due to illness but we hope to regroup for the end of the month. Learn how to become the “go-to” nutritionist.

While we try to record all the Power Hours so Members can revisit them, we cannot always do this for various reasons. It is best to join in person so that you get your questions addressed.

Also, though we try to feature Power Hours monthly, we are not having one this July. So don't feel as though you missed out — instead take advantage of the warmth that is bound to be coming your way.

Upcoming Webinars

August 18, 11 am - We will explore how to make your offering better by taking advantage of what CANNP offers.

September 10, noon - Judith Cobb will share some of her extensive knowledge on Iridology.

October 22, 11:30 am - Join Shawn Persuad in discovering the value of Body Talk for your practice.

November 19, noon - Dr. Cobi Slater will share a discussion on hormones.

December 8, noon - Jen Vasey will visit again with insight on GLP use and the Metabolic Balance approach

January Tracey Malanowich will discuss the importance and influence of NLP on your practice.

Ready, Set, Chat

Our Whats App group is going strong. We welcome all Professional Members to join in. Lots of questions get asked and answered — so far — nothing is off limits. Let's face it, we all have questions.

Log into the cannp.ca site and go to Members and find Ready Set Chat. From there you can link to the group.

Starting this fall we hope to host one hour a month called “Office Hours” when we will discuss tricky protocols or pressing questions. Time to get ready!

What a great way to connect and get to know one another.

We love seeing so many chattering. Please join in! See you there soon!

Please Note

CANNP is pleased to bring you many discounts and opportunities; we encourage you to use your best judgement and discrimination when choosing to participate. We do not endorse programs; we simply make them available to you as a benefit of membership. We appreciate the generosity of all our supporters.

The content of this newsletter is for the purpose of sharing information only. Readers are encouraged to investigate all ideas, products and/or services before committing to them. CANNP will not be held responsible for any adverse consequences resulting from the use of any information in this newsletter.

Challenge and Accountability

Once again, Challenge and Accountability was a great hit. Next time will be Oct/Nov.

For the 2-month period, Members meet to tackle business tasks that you should be pursuing to either start your business on the right track or refresh your existing practice. But that's not all – you will be accountable to complete them! You will be paired with a partner for support and we all meet as a group every two weeks to hone the results. For details about how it works, log into the Members only area and under Members go to Business Tools.

The Challenge and Accountability initiative is one way to be effectively mentored and gain real insight into how to make your business soar.

If you would like to partake in the fall initiative, and you are serious about the opportunity, email info@cannp.ca and we will add you to the growing list of those wishing to attend.

Practitioners Toolbox

If you are looking for an ideal platform which will help you to run your business more effectively, consider checking out the Practitioners Toolbox in the For Your Use portion of the site.

Do your due diligence when looking into the options listed there. Most are free and so worthwhile. Many platforms are designed for “patients” but can easily translate to “clients.”

Providing superior and efficient service to your client is a non-tangible but effective way to make an impression. The impression you create, from start to finish, may be a deciding feature of whether they will keep come back to you or not.

Quotable

The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison.

Often attributed to Ann Wigmore, founder of the Hippocrates Health Institute

Amazingly Helpful Free Stuff

Who doesn't want something for free, especially if it's super useful!

If you are a Member in good standing and you have not attended a free Power Hour or requested a free giveaway or taken part in the Challenge and Accountability or any of the other great offers and benefits from CANNP — you are definitely missing out. Those who are part of these initiatives tend to be those who are most successful.

April we shared a Hormone Balance Shopping list which highlighted what to purchase and why it matters. This was a great one to share with clients particularly those who are fretting about what they can eat.

May we offered a piece called Mother's Day Nutrition Gift Guide — but truly it was a gift guide for any time. It featured interesting ideas that would be appreciated any time of the year.

June the giveaway is called Your Summer Skin Starts on Your Plate — pretty self-explanatory. Though the article expresses the continued need for sunscreen, it also references what particular nutrients do for the skin.

If there is something in particular you would like us to produce and share, please let us know.

1,000 Reasons Why: More Important Now

We are putting together an amazing pitch for the insurers who continue to overlook the good work done by our profession. As part of that submission, we have been informed that getting real person data about why you were pursued is invaluable.

If every Member just got 3-5 clients to complete the short Take Action form at the top of our website, we would have substantial and irrefutable data. Please ask your clients to help out and you can assist by accessing sample reasons, For Your Use, left side.

Other Fabulous Benefits

Remember you have the option to save some money on your renewal fee by referring colleagues to the CANNP through the Membership Renewal Advantage. Should they join and mention your name as a referring party, you will receive a \$10 discount, up to \$100 on a single renewal.

Also take time to check out the Interaction Database. It will make you much more thorough and therefore more professional.

Conversations Nobody Prepares You For

Every practitioner encounters them. The client who isn't following through. The one who pushes back on your recommendations and protocols. The one who is frustrated, or emotional, or simply not getting the results they had hoped for. These are the conversations nobody really prepares you for — but are part of every practice.

The good news is that navigating these moments well is a skill. And like any skill, it gets easier with intention and practice.

Here are some approaches that may help when things get a little sticky.

1. Pause Before You React

When a client says something unexpected or challenging, resist the urge to respond immediately. A brief pause gives you a moment to think clearly and prevents a reaction you may regret. It also signals to the client that you are taking what they said seriously.

2. Lead With Curiosity, Not Defense

When a client pushes back, try asking a question before offering a response. "Can you tell me more about that?" or "What is it exactly that you are opposed to?" goes a long way. Often what presents as resistance is really frustration, fear, or confusion in disguise.

3. Validate First

Even if you disagree with what a client is saying, acknowledge what they are feeling before you address the content. "That sounds really discouraging" costs you nothing and builds a great deal of trust. You may also say something like, "I have heard that before," which makes the client feel less alone. People are more open to guidance once they feel heard.

4. Stay in Your Lane

Some conversations will naturally drift toward territory that is outside your scope of practice. Be ready with a gentle, clear response — one that you have thought through in advance. Knowing what you will say ahead of time makes it much easier to say it well in the moment.

5. Address Non-Compliance without Inflicting Shame

If a client is not following through on your recommendations, approach it with genuine curiosity rather than judgment. Ask what has been getting in the way. There is almost always a reason — and if you can pinpoint and address it, the door opens to real progress.

6. Know When to Name the Elephant in the Room

Sometimes the tension in the room needs to be acknowledged directly. "I get the sense that something about this isn't feeling right for you — am I reading that correctly?" This kind of gentle directness can shift an entire consultation.

7. Manage Emotional Moments Carefully

Clients sometimes become emotional in consultations — and that is not a problem you need to solve. Offer a moment of quiet acknowledgment. Have tissue available. Allow the emotion to pass without rushing to fill the silence with advice.

8. Revisit the Goals

When a client seems unmotivated, or stuck, it can help to go back to what they originally came to you for. "Let's revisit what you were hoping to achieve" can re-establish direction and remind the client — and you — of the bigger picture.

A simple but powerful tool here is a 1–10 progress scale. Ask the client to rate how they felt on Day 1 across relevant key areas — energy, confidence, symptoms, motivation — and then rate where they are today. Seeing the numbers side by side often shifts perspective in a way that words alone can't. A client who feels "stuck" may not realize they've moved from a 3 to a 7. This visual or numerical comparison can reignite momentum by making progress tangible, reminding them that change has already happened — even when it doesn't feel that way in the moment.

A similar visual cue can be achieved by using Trueview. Comparing charted scores from a first to a third visit can have a powerful impact.

9. Set Expectations Early

Many difficult conversations are preventable. A clear intake process, an honest discussion of what is realistic, an outline of what your working relationship looks like including office policies, and the time and cost involved, can reduce misunderstandings significantly.

10. Debrief With a Trusted Colleague

Difficult conversations stay with you. Having a trusted peer or mentor to debrief with — not to gossip, but to process and grow — is an underused professional resource. This is exactly the kind of thing that comes up in the Buddy System and the Ready, Set, Chat group. Use them.

The most skilled communicators are not those who never face difficult conversations. They are the ones who have learned to move through them with honesty, warmth, and composure.

That is the kind of practitioner who clients will remember — and refer.

Power Hour: Sticky Situations

For more helpful advice & approaches to:

How much do you charge?

Are you covered by insurance?

How to navigate when you simply don't know an answer.

How to approach a non-compliant client.

When a client is done, but you know there is more work to do.

What if the client wants you to breach Scope of Practice?

What about the client who presents with no main health concern, or too many?

What if the client presents information that contradicts your plan for them?

What about the client who keeps reaching out seeking answers?

What if the client is simply too demanding or too difficult!

Paul Fink, BA, MBA, CPA (former), is a graduate from the University of Michigan and worked as a CPA at Peat, Marwick, Mitchell (now KPMG) in Detroit, Michigan, before moving to Toronto and becoming a leader in Commercial Real Estate Brokerage.

Paul shares his extensive experience in business and his expertise in financial matters with the CANNP board.

Time is Money

As a sole practitioner, whether working independently or within a clinic, making every moment count can significantly improve your productivity. Productivity requires motivation and self-discipline, but it is essential for your success. It is particularly important to use your non-billable hours wisely. Here are 10 tips to help accomplish more in a day.

1. Determine your daily goals. Be realistic about what these might be for you by deciding which are your top priorities. Setting too many goals at one time can become overwhelming, while a few quick wins can help build momentum and motivation.
2. Break tasks into manageable chunks. Prioritize tasks and delegate when appropriate. There is both a time aspect to this and a skill portion. Perhaps you have the time but simply are not skilled in the area — time to delegate. Always try to keep in mind the life-work balance you are seeking to maintain.
3. Take regular, short breaks. Once you have worked for a predetermined amount of time, a short break will help you to refocus and reduce your stress level. You may come back to the same project but see a whole different aspect — increased creativity and increased problem-solving come more easily after setting away for a bit.
4. Utilize time blocking and task batching. Designate time for administration work, deep-focus tasks like research and client-facing activities. Automating administrative tasks like scheduling and billing will free up more time for revenue-generating client work. Consider time saving ideas such as creating templates for answering frequently emailed questions. If you start to notice the same inquiry appearing repeatedly, it is time to make a standard answer and store it in an easily retrievable place. As you work to increase productivity, be mindful of maintaining healthy boundaries with your clients.
5. Minimize distractions. Have you noticed how much more difficult it is to turn off the television or to stop scrolling on Instagram once you have begun engaging? One of the more effective strategies is to organize your workspace so that everything has a place. Use checklists and structured routines to help keep you focused and on task.
6. Avoid “switch-tasking.” Some call this multi-tasking and can negatively affect performance. Simply put, when you divide your attention among several tasks, you are less likely to give your best effort to any one of them. While you may complete multiple duties adequately, you may not excel at any of them. Building strong client relationships requires focus, attention, and creativity — all of which are diminished when constantly shifting between tasks.
7. 80/20 rules applies here too. The theory is that approximately 80% of your results come from 20% of your effort. Productivity is not simply a matter of doing more; it is about focusing on the tasks that produce the greatest impact. Prioritize the activities that contribute most meaningfully to your goals and overall success.
8. Taking care of you. Your physical and mental well-being is directly linked to your productivity. In addition to the usual — getting enough sleep and eating well, consider incorporating healthy habits into your work day. Consider taking a walk during your lunch break — get fresh air, sunshine and a little movement. Meaningful connections with colleagues — whether over lunch or while discussing protocols — can also help support both productivity and professional satisfaction.
9. Do the most important task first. You have probably heard about this strategy before because it is highly effective. Early in the day, you are often fresher, more focused and mentally prepared to tackle difficult tasks. Completing that first challenging task helps you to build momentum and motivation to take on more and it takes something, possibly less desirable, off your to-do list for the day. All this reduces your overall stress and increases your focus for the remainder of your day.
10. Strengthen your self-discipline. Improving productivity requires personal accountability. You need to be able to rely on yourself to stay focused, motivated and committed to your end goals. Developing strong self-discipline helps to minimize procrastination and allows you to make the most of your time and energy.

The take away message:

Maximize the time you have and use it as effectively as possible, Consistent productivity, combined with balance and focus, is one of the strongest foundations for long-term success!

Science Catching Up

6

A cohort-based cross-sectional study involving more than 3,000 adults found associations between ultra-processed food consumption and poorer cholesterol/triglyceride profiles. Published in *Nature Publishing Group's Scientific Reports*, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between the consumption of ultra-processed foods and the atherogenic index of plasma blood lipids, including triglycerides, total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein, and low-density lipoprotein. This is a cross-sectional study based on data from 3,285 participants. The evidence supported that UPFs consumption may negatively impact the nutritional quality of the diet and cause dyslipidemia. The research underscores the necessity for implementing effective strategies to reduce the intake of UPFs during life. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-025-33621-3>

Researchers analysing clinical evidence found intermittent fasting does not produce significantly greater weight loss than conventional diets that reduce daily calorie intake. In short, the method may work, but not because of any special biological edge. The research examined 22 randomized controlled trials involving nearly 2,000 overweight or obese adults across multiple continents. Participants followed various fasting models. Participants practicing intermittent fasting lost slightly more weight than control groups with no dietary changes — around 3.4% on average — but the advantage over traditional dieting was not clinically meaningful. The conclusion is clear: weight reduction appears driven primarily by overall calorie reduction, not by fasting windows. https://aboutinsider.com/intermittent-fasting-vs-traditional-diets-what-22-clinical-trials-reveal/#google_vignette

Eating fruit and drinking a cup of coffee a day could halve the risk of cells aging unhealthily, research suggests. Foods rich in polyphenols such as berries, apples, coffee, cocoa and tea are known to have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, but a new study has found they are also associated with a lower risk of short telomeres. Researchers from the University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain, measured the length of telomeres in samples from more than 1,700 adults. “But because plant-based foods are the main source of polyphenols, it is very difficult to distinguish between whether that healthier aging is due specifically to the polyphenols or the fact of eating a healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables.” <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/may/11/consuming-fruit-coffee-halve-risk-unhealthy-cell-ageing>

The results of this study underscores the significance of adhering to healthy dietary patterns based on healthy recommendations for extending life expectancy, offering individuals the flexibility to adapt these dietary patterns according to their preferences and traditions. Strengths of this study included the large sample size, relatively long follow-up, using a validated dietary recall method on at least two independent occasions to collect dietary data, and estimating the association between multiple dietary patterns and life expectancy. The conclusion showed greater adherence to various healthy dietary patterns was consistently associated with a lower risk of all-cause mortality and longer life expectancy, regardless of longevity genes. <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.ads7559>

www. Wild, Wacky, Wonderful

dailydishgame.com

Are you a daily game fan? This is very cool. Each day you are offered a new game. You are given one of the ingredients as a clue and you take a guess as to what the dish might be. Then, like Wordle, the letters are evaluated for usage and you can continue guessing. You have 5 attempts. There are no ads or subscriptions — it is completely free to use. They also offer a recipe archive which has a search element. Each includes prep/total time and a description of the dish.*

cronometer.com

If you have that stuck client who is just not moving the bar and you are having difficulty figuring out why, this might help you. Try plugging in the intake from a recent food diary. You can see if any hidden gems are missing like iron or magnesium. This then gives you something substantial to review with the client. It is science backed nutrition tracking at your fingertips.*

nutrition.org.uk

The British Nutrition Foundation exists to promote health and wellbeing and prevent diet-related ill health through evidence-based nutrition science. They act as a bridge between nutrition science, government, industry, education and people, and a conduit to a healthier, more sustainable food environment for all. You are likely to find some valuable information on this site to consider when completing protocols.*

*Be sure to do your own due diligence when you are downloading from the internet as some seem free but may not be and others issues could possibly occur.

If Only For Da Vinci

Most know Da Vinci as a masterful painter but he was also a scientist, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, sculptor, architect, botanist, musician and writer. He knew a great deal about a lot of things and apparently had a unapparelled curiosity which took him in many directions.

Will Durant, author of *The Renaissance*, wrote of him, "All postures and actions of the human body, all expressions of the face in the young and old, all the organs and movements of animals and plants from the waving of wheat in the field to the flight of the bird in the air, all the cyclical erosion and elevation of mountains, all the currents and eddies of water and wind, the moods of the weather, the shades of the atmosphere, and the inexhaustible kaleidoscope of the sky — all these seemed endlessly wonderful to him."

You may ask what could Da Vinci mean to me and the world of health?

In the 1500's, just a few years before his death, he wrote some interesting reflections in his diary on health, diet and living.

1. A life well spent is long

It is surmised that Da Vinci meant that life, while it can be measured in years, should also be measured in how well it was used. He was clearly busy studying and creating all of his time, thinking perhaps that an active mind is one that stays alive, while an inactive mind can become stagnant and rigid. He would have thought very deliberately as to how to spend his hours and how they would come to shape his days and ultimately his life.

2. As a well-spent day brings happy sleep, so a life well used brings happy death.

It is thought that Da Vinci meant that one should live in a way that allows one to rest soundly at night without regret. No turning the days events over and over in your head and analysing each happening. Live so that does not become necessary, or worse, habitual.

3. Nature never breaks its own laws.

How powerful! The message is simple — work with nature, not against it. Nature tends toward an innate balance.

A modern interpretation of these words might be to eat simply, observe nature closely and avoid excess that disrupts balance. Taken further, this may relate to avoidance of processed food, choosing wisely and eat only when one is hungry enough to.

Interpretation could also lean toward the need for moderation both physically and mentally to achieve a balanced harmony. He may not have approved of the excessiveness that comes with modern living.

If his brilliance were to be written as a

summarized philosophy for life it would include:

"Live in accordance with nature's prescribed balance in everything you partake."

"Keep the mind constantly active." We are seeing many studies today touting the merits of this for long term mental agility.

"Avoid excess in all forms." We know this to be true for food and drink as well as excessive exercise and much more.

"Observe the world with precision." This would be paramount to his world and he learned a great deal about life this way.

"Spend each day in a way that brings peace at night." Again, we see study after study exploring the merits of a good sleep.

Special Thanks for These Book Reviews

Supplied by Proud Member C.Young

Detoxify Or Die by Sherry A. Rogers, M.D.

I really enjoyed reading this book, as it offered valuable insight into the use of a Far Infrared (FIR) sauna for detoxification and overall health support. The book explains how environmental toxins can negatively affect the body and outlines practical strategies for using infrared sauna therapy to help reduce toxic burden. It also includes supportive supplement protocols that may be used alongside FIR sauna sessions to enhance detoxification and promote recovery. I found the information especially useful because it connects scientific principles with practical wellness applications that can support clients and patients in improving overall health and reducing risk factors associated with chronic disease. I also personally value this topic, as I have owned an infrared sauna and have been using infrared sauna therapy since 2010. In my experience, it is a powerful wellness tool that can support relaxation, circulation, recovery, and long-term health when used consistently.

Change Your Brain Change Your Life by Daniel G. Amen, M.D.

This book proved to be an excellent educational resource. It presents research-based evidence showing how emotions such as anxiety, depression, anger, and other mood-related concerns can be connected to specific areas and functions of the brain. The author explains the relationship between brain chemistry, nutrition, and emotional wellbeing in a clear and practical way. The book also reviews a wide range of supportive interventions, including nutritional supplements, medications, dietary strategies, and lifestyle approaches that may help improve mental and emotional health. I found the information both insightful and clinically relevant, as it helps bridge the gap between science and practical application. It has become a valuable reference in my practice and has supported my understanding of how targeted nutritional and lifestyle strategies may positively influence mood, cognition, and overall mental wellness.

The Hidden Benefits of Outdoor Eating

In today's screen latent world, many people eat meals while distracted, rushed, or stressed. Dinners are often consumed in solitude or in front of a screen. Lunches are eaten at desks or lunchrooms under artificial lighting. From our perspective, how we eat is just as important as what we eat. One of the simplest and most effective ways to support digestive wellness is surprisingly simple: eat outdoors.

Picnicking and outdoor dining reconnect us with natural rhythms that modern lifestyles disrupt — fresh air, sunlight, simple movement, time in nature, grounding, and reduced stress. These accessible options work together to create a digestive environment promoting proper nutrient absorption, relaxation and healing.

Outdoor eating then, is far more than a leisure activity—it is a practice that nourishes the digestive system, nervous system, and emotional well-being simultaneously.

Digestion Begins in the Nervous System

The digestive process functions best when the body is in a parasympathetic state, often referred to as the “rest and digest” mode. Unfortunately, many people eat while in a sympathetic “fight or flight” state due to stress, multitasking, anxiety, or over-stimulation. Of course this is when the body redirects blood away from digestion impeding stomach acid production, enzyme secretion, nutrient absorption, and gut motility. Symptoms such as bloating, indigestion, acid reflux, constipation, and stomach discomfort may result.

Outdoor eating naturally helps shift the body into a calmer state. Studies reviewing exposure to natural outdoor environments have found reductions in stress markers such as heart rate, blood pressure, and perceived anxiety. Sitting beneath trees, listening to birdsong, or feeling a gentle breeze and sunlight can calm the nervous system which are difficult to get in other ways.

Fresh Air and Oxygen

Outdoor environments often encourage deeper breathing. When we breathe deeply,

oxygen delivery improves throughout the body, including to digestive organs. Shallow breathing is associated with tension, stress, and poor vagal nerve stimulation.

We know the importance of the vagus nerve as a critical communication pathway between the brain and digestive tract. It regulates stomach contractions, enzyme release, and intestinal function. Mindful breathing can stimulate vagal tone, particularly if the outbreath is longer than the in.

Outdoor meals also tend to unfold more slowly encouraging people to linger, savour and engage socially. The pace alone encourages more mindful eating.

Sunlight and Circadian Rhythm

Natural sunlight plays a profound role in regulating circadian rhythms, which influence more than sleep quality. Exposure to daylight—especially earlier in the day—helps synchronize the body's internal clock.

Better sleep and lower stress directly benefit gut health because microbiome and digestive system tend to follow circadian patterns. Humans after all, evolved eating under natural light, not fluorescent bulbs. Digestive hormones, appetite regulation, and metabolic signaling are all influenced by these environmental cues.

Additionally, moderate sunlight exposure supports vitamin D production, which plays a role in immune function and inflammation regulation. Since much of the immune system resides within the gut, supporting immune balance can positively influence digestive resilience.

Nature and Healthier Food Choices

When people slow down and reconnect with surrounding nature, they often become more attuned to what their bodies genuinely need.

Preparing one's own picnic foods tend to be fresher and less processed. Outdoor meals frequently include fruits, vegetables, non-cream-based salads and sandwiches, nuts, and whole-food snacks. Seasonal produce is more appealing in a natural setting.

Eating these foods outdoors can deepen appreciation for where nourishment comes.

Role of Movement in Digestive Health

Picnicking rarely involves just sitting to consume. Outdoor meals are often paired with walking, hiking, gardening, swimming, or other movement activities. These behaviours can significantly support digestion.

Walking helps stimulate intestinal motility, reduce bloating, and improve blood sugar regulation after meals. They also encourage circulation and social engagement. Movement prevents stagnation and supports the natural rhythm of elimination and detoxification.

Emotional Nourishment/Social Connection

The positive impact on the mental aspect of improved health cannot be ignored. We know that digestive wellness is directly linked to emotional health. Feelings of loneliness, chronic stress, and emotional suppression can contribute to digestive disturbances through the gut-brain connection.

Even if partaking in outdoor eating alone, nature can offer a sense of grounding and perspective that is of great value, improving mood and reducing anxiety.

A peaceful picnic may seem simple, but it can become a complete healing ritual involving sensory pleasure, emotional regulation, mindful nourishment, and digestive restoration.

Remind clients to:

- Eat slowly and chewing thoroughly
- Bring whole, minimally processed foods
- Stay hydrated with water or herbal teas
- Sit on the ground occasionally
- Include a short walk after eating
- Avoid non-essential digital distractions

As the weather turns, take advantage of the outdoors yourself for noticeable shifts in mood, digestion, and stress levels.

Consider an outdoor eating adventure as an opportunity to feed the body as well as to calm the system — physically, emotionally and socially.