

# Menopausal Hot Flashes



By: Lili Nasseri

You awaken in the night. Your face feels very hot, you're drenched in sweat and then suddenly, you feel really cold. Welcome to peri-menopause, you have just had your first hot flash.

Peri-menopause is the period right before menopause and up to one year afterwards. There is no blood test to confirm that you are perimenopausal, just a host of symptoms — all of which are due to hormonal fluctuations in your body. Hot flashes and irregular bleeding are by far the most common symptom of peri-menopause affecting approximately 75% of women. Hot flashes can occur

once a day to every hour, day and night. The good news is most women stop having hot flashes within five years. In the meantime, there is no reason to suffer in silence.

The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) currently recommends women with mild symptoms to participate in regular exercise and to keep the core body temperature cool. Other therapies include isoflavone supplements or black cohosh. (Note: both of these have the same effect as estrogen on the breast and should not be taken by women who have a personal or a family history of breast cancer.)

For women with severe symptoms, and no history of breast cancer or cardiovascular disease, the NAMS recommends short-term hormone therapy. Women who can not or do not wish to take estrogen, have several prescription medication options such as clonidine, gabapentin, venlafaxine or paroxetine. The treatment of choice depends on your overall state of health. Discuss the options with your family physician in making an informed decision together.

## Date Coconut Balls

With these in the freezer, you will always have a party-type cookie on hand.

1 1/2 cups	Chopped dates	350 ml
3/4 cup	Brown sugar, packet	175 ml
1 tbsp.	Butter or margarine	15 ml
2	Eggs	2
1 tsp.	Vanilla	5 ml
1/2 cup	Ground Flax Seed	125 ml
2 cups	Crisp rice cereal	450 ml
1/2 cup	Finely chopped nuts	125 ml
1/4 cup	Finely chopped cherries	60 ml
1/4 cup	Shredded coconut	60 ml

**Method:** Combine dates, sugar, butter, eggs and vanilla in saucepan. Heat. Cook, stirring constantly for about 5 minutes. Stir in cereal, ground flax seed, nuts and cherries. Cool until mixture is warm. Shape into 1 inch (2.5 cm) balls. Roll balls in coconut. Butter hands to prevent dough from sticking. Makes 4 dozen.

# The Allure of Ice-Skating

By: Barbara Muir

With skates laced tight and mittens firmly in place, I stepped onto the ice rink. I hadn't been ice-skating for a while and it took a few strides before my balance kicked in. Before long, a smile spread from ear to ear as the swishing sound of the blade on the ice kept time to the music.

This is truly an activity for nearly anyone, regardless of age. And in addition to the socializing aspect and fresh air, ice-skating has many health benefits.

"Skating not only builds muscles in the legs and buttocks, it also increases endurance and improves flexibility and coordination," says Nadine Chiasson, physiotherapist for South-East Regional Health Authority.

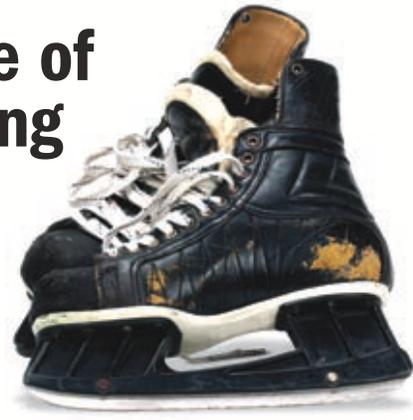
Even though skating is low impact, injuries including pulled muscles can occur if you do not warm up properly. Stretching is one of the main inhibitors of ice-skating injuries.

"It is important to stretch before lacing up your skates to prevent injury and again once you are finished skating," says Chiasson.

When you step onto the ice, take a few warm-up laps at a slower pace until you get your balance. This helps warm up the leg muscles. Once your muscles are warmed up, step off the ice and stretch your legs again, holding each stretch for 10 to 20 seconds.

Proper skating technique will also help to avoid injury. When skating, both knees should be bent when pushing off and your feet should always be parallel to the ice. Keep your back straight and your hips and shoulders aligned. Skates that fit well will make all the difference. They should be snug but not tight.

Whether you are a novice ice-skater or planning to lace up for the first time this winter, this is one physical activity that is as fun as it is beneficial to your health. And it may just sweep you off your feet!



## Where to go

**Alma Recreation Centre**  
Edgewater,  
Alma

**Byron Dobson Arena**  
Biggs Drive,  
Riverview  
Phone:  
387-2060

**Hillsborough Arena**  
Hillsborough  
Phone:  
734-3715