



medisys

PREVENTIVE HEALTH

Health. Lifestyle. Business.

SPECIAL ISSUE: AVOIDING WORK FROM HOME BURNOUT DURING COVID-19

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KINESIOLOGIST, MEDISYS HEALTH GROUP



The Medisys Preventive Health Online Monthly Magazine is **FREE** to Medisys Clients and Subscribers. Not a Subscriber? **SUBSCRIBE NOW**.

HOW TO MITIGATE DIGITAL EYE STRAIN

We are in the midst of what is essentially a government-advised screen-time binge. From work and working out to socializing and entertainment, many – if not most – of our daily activities are facilitated by screens as we continue to practice physical distancing.

Most of us are spending more time in front of our computers, tablets and phones than ever before: the average Canadian spent 11 hours looking at screens each day before the coronavirus outbreak.

While technology is making it easier for us to stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic, our eyes are suffering.

According to Kathleen Digre, chief of the division of headaches and neuro-ophthalmology at the University of Utah's John A. Moran Eye Center, digital eye strain – also known as computer vision syndrome and caused by prolonged screen time – is unsurprisingly on the rise. Its symptoms include headaches, blurred vision, dry eyes and neck and shoulder pain; and although they are most often temporary, they add discomfort during an already-difficult time.



Here's how to protect yourself from digital eye strain:

1) Apply the 20-20-20 rule. For every 20 minutes of screen time, look away from your screen and focus on an object located 20 feet away for a minimum of 20 seconds.

2) Eat eye-healthy foods. A balanced diet full of colour and variety is essential for eye health. In particular, vitamin A helps maintain normal vision and keep the corneas healthy, while Omega-3 fats can help to prevent blurry vision and pain caused by eye inflammation. Consider consuming more eggs, firm goat cheese and mackerel as they are good sources of preformed vitamin A, as well as oily fish, flax seeds, hemp hearts, chia seeds and walnuts, which are good sources of Omega-3 fats. Vitamin E found in whole grains, nuts, and seeds is also important to help prevent cataracts. Get personalized nutrition advice during a **phone consultation** with one of our registered dietitians.

3 Rest your eyes. Contrary to this expression, which suggests taking a nap, resting your eyes means walking away from your screen and changing settings. Do this several times a day for 5-10 minutes by stepping outside for some natural light, preparing a meal, or looking out a window.

4) Modify your work station. Position your computer screen so it's 20 to 24 inches away from your eyes. The centre of your screen should be 10 to 15 degrees below your eyes for comfortable positioning of your head and neck. Adjust your computer's screen settings as well: the text should be easy to read and the white background on a webpage should not look like a light source: if it does, it's too bright.

5) Consider investing in blue light-blocking glasses. Designed to block or reduce the blue light emitted by screens, glasses with blue light-blocking lenses may reduce eye strain and even improve your sleep quality. A 2017 study by the University of Houston determined that participants who wore blue light glasses showed a more than 50% increase in nighttime melatonin production – that's the hormone that helps the body transition to sleep mode.

6) Practice simple eye exercises. You guessed it – even your eyes need exercise in order to perform optimally. Try this one after prolonged computer work: look far away at a distant object for 10-15 seconds, then gaze at something up close for 10-15 seconds. Repeat this 10 times. For more eye exercises, download our free 2020 Eye Exercise Calendar **here**.

Your eyes and COVID-19

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed that the novel coronavirus is transmissible through the eyes. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends that contact lens wearers switch to glasses temporarily as a way to reduce their risk of contracting the virus. The WHO also recommends the wearing of safety glasses for people who provide regular care to those infected with COVID-19.

Do you have questions or concerns about your eye health? Contact your ophthalmologist or get real-time advice from a clinician through your **virtual care platform**.

Sources:

<https://www.allaboutvision.com/coronavirus/eye-care-at-home/>

<https://blog.medisys.ca/spending-most-of-your-waking-hours-in-front-of-screens-you-may-need-a-digital-detox>

Medisys is always publishing downloadable content, articles, webinars (and much more) to help support our community and clients.



WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM YOU!

If there are specific COVID-19-related topics you want to learn about, whether through a webinar or articles, please **click here** to fill out a quick survey.

EASY MAKE-AHEAD POWER SNACKS

A Sunday well-spent brings a week of content – or some delicious work-from-home snacks! Carve out half an hour (or less!) on the weekend to prepare one of these Medisys dietitian-approved, nutritionally-dense recipes, and enjoy a week's worth of delicious power snacking.

BANANA BREAD CHOCOLATE CHIP SNACK BARS

By Andrea Stokes, Registered Dietitian, Medisys Health Group



Gluten-free



Vegan options

(Makes 12-16 bars)

Ingredients

- 2 1/4 cups oats (gluten-free, if desired)
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 medium ripe bananas (fresh or thawed from frozen)
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract (gluten-free, if desired)
- 1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1/4 cup honey (or agave nectar or maple syrup if vegan)
- 1/3 cup milk/dark/white chocolate chips (vegan, if desired)

Method

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray 9x9 inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Make oat flour by placing oats into a small blender or food processor and blending for 1-2 minutes until the oatmeal resembles flour.
3. Transfer oat flour to a medium bowl; whisk in baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon; set aside.
4. Place bananas, vanilla, applesauce, and honey into blender; blend 1-2 minutes or until smooth and creamy. Add to oat flour mixture and mix until just combined.
5. Gently fold in 1/3 cup of chocolate chips. Pour batter into prepared pan, spreading evenly with rubber spatula.
6. Bake for 15 minutes or until knife inserted into centre comes out clean, or with just a few crumbs attached. Cool 10-15 minutes on wire rack.
7. Cut bars into 16 squares and enjoy! For longer storage, keep in freezer and thaw as necessary.

Recipe adapted from: <https://www.ambitiouskitchen.com/healthy-banana-bread-chocolate-chip-oat-breakfast-bars-vegan-gluten-free/>



EDAMAME GUACAMOLE

By Jessica Tong, Registered Dietitian, Medisys Health Group



Vegan



Dairy-free



Gluten-free

(Makes 4 servings)

Ingredients

- 2 cups cooked edamame beans (shelled)
- 1 large ripe avocado, peeled and pitted
- 1/3 lemon, juiced
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon chili flakes
- Sea salt, to taste

Method

1. In a food processor, blend the edamame, avocado and lemon juice until the edamame skins are broken down well.
2. Add paprika, chili flakes and salt, then pulse the mixture until combined.
3. Serve with raw vegetables, pita wedges or seed crackers.



MOOD-BOOSTING ENERGY BITES

By Dusty Stevenson, Registered Dietitian, Medisys Health Group



Vegan



Dairy-free



Gluten-free

(Makes about 16 bites)

Ingredients

- 1 cup pitted Medjool dates, packed (about 8-9 dates)*
- 1/4 cup almond butter
- 2 tablespoon hemp seeds
- 1 tablespoon ground flax seeds
- 3/4 cup rolled oats
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoon cocoa nibs or chopped dark chocolate

Method

1. Pulse pitted dates in a food processor or blender until they are roughly chopped and begin to form into a ball.
2. Add almond butter, hemp seeds, flax seeds, salt, cinnamon and rolled oats. Pulse several times until it comes together but not overly processed.
3. Finally add the cocoa nibs and pulse a couple of times.
4. Using a slightly heaped tablespoon, scoop mixture into balls and roll into spheres; will yield about 16 balls.
5. Store in the fridge in an airtight container.

**if you can't find Medjool dates or if your dates are dry, cover them in hot water for 10 minutes, then drain them before using*



COCONUT COCOA MIXED NUTS



Gluten-free



Vegan



Dairy-free

(Makes 8 servings)

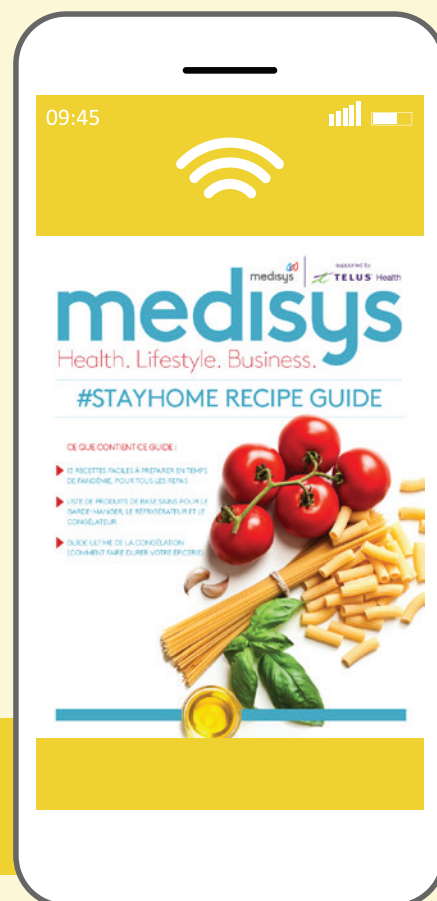
Ingredients

- 2 cups almonds (or another nut you have on hand)
- 1 cup hazelnuts (or another nut or seed you have on hand)
- 1/2 cup coconut flakes
- 1 tablespoon melted coconut oil
- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup dried cherries (or another dried fruit you have on hand, chopped if they're large)

Method

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Toss all ingredients (except the dried cherries) together in a bowl and mix until coated evenly.
2. Spread the mixture evenly on a baking sheet. Bake for 15 minutes, shaking the baking sheet after 10 minutes.
3. Remove from oven and let cool.
4. Add dried cherries and toss together.
5. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place for up to four weeks.

Click here to get your FREE copy of the Medisys #StayHome Recipe Guide featuring 13 pandemic-friendly recipes designed by our dietitians, plus grocery shopping and food storage tips!



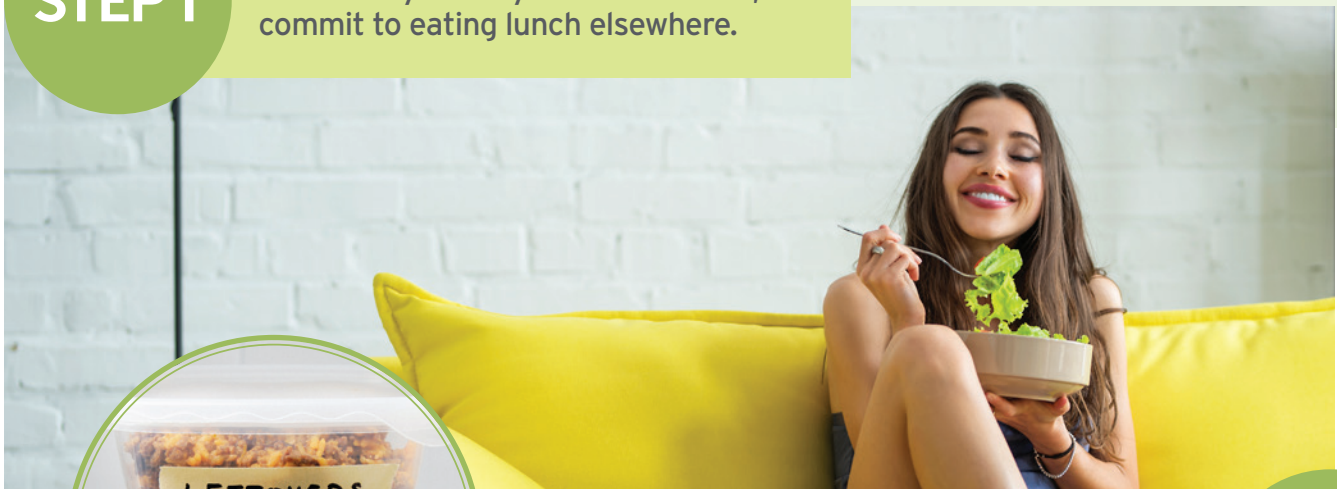
THE PERFECT #WFH LUNCH GUIDE

If lunchtime during the COVID-19 pandemic has morphed into a steady stream of snacks consumed “al-desko,” you’re not alone. Being thrust into working from home, in the midst of a stressful time, perhaps with kids running around nearby, can be a recipe for chaos. But it only takes a little awareness and forethought to get back on track.

Follow this simple guide to assemble the perfect #WFH lunch, packed with nutrients and staying power:

STEP 1

Move away from your workstation, and commit to eating lunch elsewhere.



LEFTOVERS

Do you have leftovers from last night’s dinner? If so, proceed to Step 3 for The Easy Route.

STEP 2

If not, proceed to Step 4.

STEP 3

The Easy Route = leftover toast. Toast a slice of multigrain bread and top it with re-heated stir fry, fajita mix, chopped grilled chicken or other protein, a diced burger patty, etc. Add sliced avocado and a crack of sea salt or grated cheese.

Now proceed to Step 7.



STEP 4

No leftovers? Prepare a well-balanced plate or bowl, starting with a protein:



- Canned tuna or salmon mixed with lemon, mayo or olive oil
- Diced chicken or turkey
- Drained, rinsed and seasoned canned chickpeas or black beans
- Hardboiled eggs



- Sliced avocado with a crack of sea salt
- Olives
- Nuts and/or seeds
- Grated or cubed cheese



Add a healthy fat:

STEP 5



- Slice of multigrain toast on the side
- Cooked brown rice or quinoa as the base
- Whole grain pasta or soba noodles as the base
- Rice crackers on the side



STEP 6

Add a healthy grain:

STEP 7

Add any vegetable:

Add any roasted, raw or frozen then thawed vegetable as a side or on top of your bowl



STEP 8

Add a side of fruit:

Add any fresh or frozen fruit on the side



4



SELF-MASSAGE TECHNIQUES



If massage therapy, acupuncture or chiropractic care was part of your self-care routine before the COVID-19 outbreak, it's probably one of the rituals you're most longing to return to. But even if you've never experienced professional bodywork, odds are your muscles are feeling the burden of stress, poor sleep or a less-than-ideal home office setup these days.

Fortunately, we can reap some of the incredible benefits of massage therapy at home with nothing but a tennis ball or a softer, dollar-store-type bouncy ball. We spoke with Vancouver-based RMT and online fitness coach **Anne Jones**, who shared four expert self-massage techniques to help release tension and common pain points:

1) Rolling Interscapular Area (between shoulder blades): An achy upper back is one of the most common complaints Jones hears in her practice, and almost all of us could benefit from some gentle massage or release in this area.

- **Setup:** Begin standing with your back to a wall, with your massage ball between your body and the wall, positioned between your right shoulder blade and your spine.

- **Movement:** Bend your knees, doing mini squats, to roll the ball up and down between your back and the wall, as high as the base of your neck and as low as the bottom of your shoulder blade. Do this for 1-2 minutes, then repeat on the opposite side.

- **Need more intensity?** Begin lying on your back with your knees bent, your feet on the floor and your ball under your body, between your right shoulder blade and your spine. Interlace your fingers behind your head to support it. You can stay here and breathe into the sensation for 1-2 minutes before switching sides.

2) Rolling Glutes: Tight glute muscles can be a source of pain in various parts of the body. Releasing them can achieve major relief!

- **Setup:** Begin lying on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Place the ball under your right bum cheek, between it and the floor. Interlace your fingers behind your head to support it.

- **Movement:** Push into your feet to move your pelvis over the ball. Try to cover the entire surface of your right seat. Think of it like a map of Canada: Take the ball all the way to the northernmost border (near the top of your pelvis), all the way South (towards your sitting bone), all the way East (towards the outside of your hip and thigh bone), and all the way West (towards your sacrum and the centre of your bum). Do this for 1-2 minutes on each side.

- **Need more intensity?** Begin sitting with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor.

3) Sub Occipital Release: Tension at the base of the skull is very common and often a culprit of tension headaches. This technique is a powerful release during times of stress and extended computer use.

- **Setup:** Place your massage ball on top of an object a couple of inches high, like a yoga block or a fat book or two. Locate the soft(ish) spot where your neck meets the right side of your skull. Lie on your back and place that exact area on your ball.

- **Movement:** Lying still, breathing, and letting your skull release onto the ball may be enough sensation. Stay here until the sensation and tenderness reduce significantly or completely. Then, turn your head slightly to find a new spot and repeat. It is best to relax in this position until the sensation completely reduces, to prevent it from returning. When you are done, sit or lie down and do some subtle nods of the head to reset these muscles. Repeat on the other side.

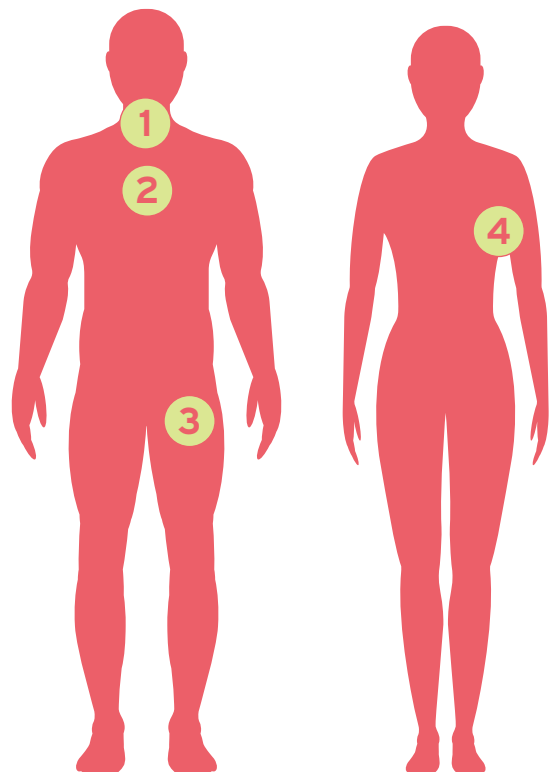
4) Pin & Stretch Pecs (chest muscles): Our pectorals or chest muscles can get short and tight from holding them in the same positions with our arms in front of us for hours. (Think driving, texting, typing, washing dishes, etc.) Releasing these muscles can also allow us to stand up a little straighter, decreasing their pull on our upper backs.

- **Setup:** From a seated position, make an L shape with your right hand. Lift your left arm and place your right fingertips in your armpit and your thumb on the front of your chest. Completely relax your left arm in your lap.

- **Movement:** Massage your pectoral muscle between your fingers and thumb. If/when you find something tender, gently grip/pinch it. Slowly extend your bent left arm to the left, like you are elbowing someone in slow motion. Bring it back towards the centre of your body. Repeat until the tender sensation decreases completely or almost completely. You can find new 'trigger points' and repeat this action as much as you would like, on both sides.

Yoga is another great way to release muscle tension. Medisys supported by TELUS Health is excited to offer complimentary yoga classes while we practice physical distancing.

The
**#StayHome Virtual
Yoga Series** 
provides a gentle,
low-impact practice
to leave you.





Q&A WITH JONATHAN LOHÉ CHUNG, KINESIOLOGIST, MEDISYS HEALTH GROUP

Jonathan Lohé Chung is a medical coordinator for Medisys Health Group, working with the team of dietitians and kinesiologists at the executive clinic in Montreal. He holds a B.Sc in kinesiology from the Université de Montréal and is currently working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside his very active 14-month-old son.

Q: Many of us have been mandated to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. What are some of the physical health risks that come with working from home, and how can we prevent them?

A: A poor work space at home can cause a number of musculoskeletal problems such as back pain, neck pain, several inflammatory issues and more. It is crucial to set up a supportive work station with proper computer monitor positioning, chair and armrest height, and a real keyboard and mouse as opposed to a laptop if possible.

Q: What are three changes people can make to optimize their physical health while working from home?

It's imperative to maintain a physically active lifestyle, yet it's easy to neglect this when changing routines. We can no longer go to the gym, play soccer or swim laps at the local pool, but many other alternatives are still present and permitted! Here are a few tips:

Avoid sitting in front of your screen for hours on end. Every 30 minutes or so, stand up from your desk and walk around, stretch or climb up and down your stairs a few times.

Adopt a daily home exercise routine. It doesn't have to be long and you can even include your kids! Home exercise is new to many of us, so try out different online options until you find something that clicks.

I can't stress enough how important it is to go out for some fresh air! Hop on a bike, go for a run or take a brisk walk around the block.

Q: How has your practice changed since the COVID-19 outbreak?

As a clinic that typically welcomes hundreds of clients a day, we've obviously had to adapt quite a lot. Virtual care has become a vital component of our service. While virtual consults with doctors, nurses and dietitians are quite common, we've now developed a consultation service with kinesiologists, which so far has been a tremendous success! Our kinesiologists can answer questions regarding physical activity, give suggestions and tips on exercises to do at home, help with setting up a proper work station and more.

Q: What is one challenge you've faced during this pandemic?

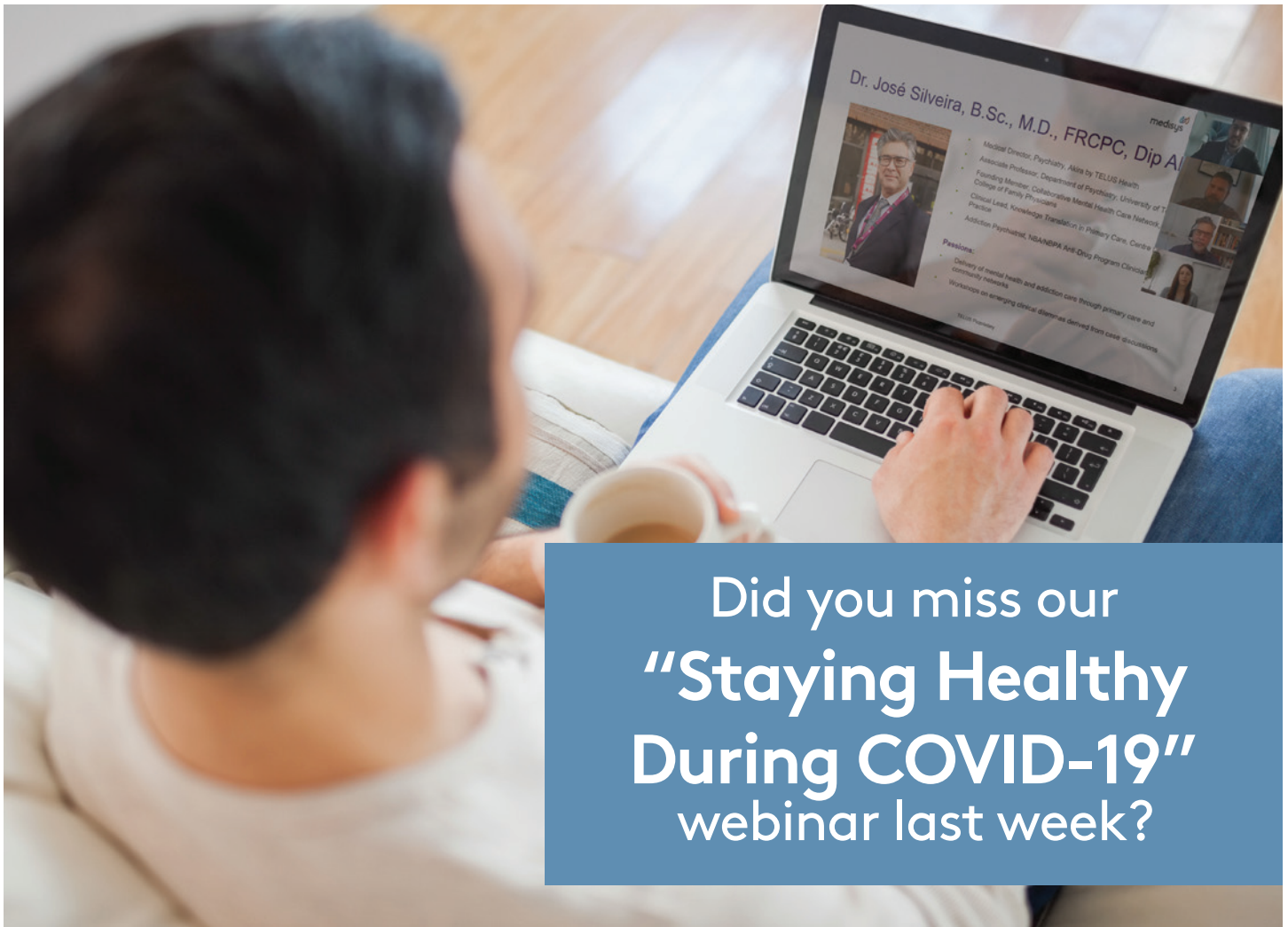
With my spouse working in a hospital, it's been quite difficult managing home and work life with a very, very active 14-month-old boy with me at home. I'm able to work during naps and at night, which makes for early mornings and late nights. The hardest part has been taking conference calls with my little boy often in my arms playing with my headset!

Q: What is one silver lining you've experienced during this pandemic?

This may sound cheesy, but despite the challenges it's been truly wonderful to be able to spend so much time with my little boy. In any other circumstance it wouldn't have been possible. I'm very quickly discovering how exceedingly difficult, yet incredibly rewarding, it is to be a "stay at home dad." My spouse is incredible for doing this job for over a year!

Another undeniable silver lining: going to work in my PJs.

[Click here](#) to learn more about your physical health support services at Medisys.



Did you miss our “Staying Healthy During COVID-19” webinar last week?

This is a challenging time for all of us, and it can take a toll in several ways. This interactive, Q&A style webinar discussed realistic health strategies for coping with #StayingHome during COVID-19, presented from a range of perspectives, namely:

- General health
- Mental health
- Physical activity & body mechanics
- Diet & nutrition

[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE!](#)

