



BENDING WITH THE BREEZE

Integrative Strategies for Wellness Across the Seasons

INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE AT HENNEPIN HEALTHCARE

The Person-Centered and Culturally-Inspired Division of Integrative Health at Hennepin Healthcare is grounded in a multi-disciplinary team dedicated to partnering with patients, community, and each other to nurture healing, uncover root causes of illness, and offer whole-person, customized care to cultivate well-being for everyone.



FINDING YOUR ROOTS

Integrative Physical Therapist Dr. Catherine Justice Chronicles her Love of Dirt

Every March I start **dreaming of dirt**. Longing for the snow to melt, the earth to thaw, and the chance to dive my hands deep into the beautiful dark earthy ground. This pining for planting is about more than wishing for warmer weather, it's about accessing a primal connection with the planet, one that brings joy and wellbeing through multiple dimensions of my life.

Physically we get so much benefit from gardening. From the flexibility required to squat and kneel on the earth, to the strength and aerobic conditioning when managing wheelbarrows, gardening gets you moving. There is also evidence that exposure to healthy soil builds up our gut microbiome for overall improved immune and gut health. When you add in healthy doses of sunlight exposure and vitamin D and the physical benefits from eating more pesticide-free plants, the gardening gains really add up.

While we know that physical activity improves memory and primes the brain for learning, **gardening is also a prime opportunity to practice mindfulness**. Nature is always changing - intentionally applying openness and present moment curiosity to the shifting landscapes is a wonderful way to settle our minds. Plus if you grow and eat green leafy vegetables and other superfoods, there is evidence that it could prevent cognitive decline as we age.

The emotional benefits from gardening are abundant. The childlike joy I feel when I dig in the dirt, paired with the very adult pleasure of

accomplishment I feel when I bury seeds and plants in the ground is a treasured and uniquely springtime experience.

Growing my own food lowers my family's carbon footprint and contributes to environmental wellbeing. Spiritually, spending time with dirt **cultivates a deeper connection with our beautiful planet**. There is emerging evidence that the simple act of standing barefoot in the grass (a practice called **grounding** or **earthing**) brings us into direct contact with the earth's electromagnetic field with potential benefits of decreased inflammation and stress hormones and improved sleep. **Touching the earth can be healing on so many levels.**

While it's wonderful to have a home outdoor space to garden in, planting in pots indoors or on patios, or joining a community garden are great ways to access these benefits without the benefit of a yard. It's also worth connecting the dots between the joy of gardening and **food justice** - improving access for *all* people to reclaim the real food of our ancestors. Organizations like **Growing North Minneapolis** and **Project Sweetie Pie** are working to advance environmental, social, and racial justice through gardening. When working the earth, it's also important to recognize the history of our land and the past and current **stewardship of the Dakota people**. Digging down to our ancestral roots as we delve into the literal dirt in our backyards and neighborhoods becomes a pathway to health and wellbeing both individually and across communities.

Spring Pea Shoot Salad

- 1 lb frozen peas (4 cups)
- 1 1/2 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 medium spring onions, sliced 1/4 in thick (3 cups)
- 3 Tbs unsalted butter
- 3 cups tender pea shoots
- 1/3 cup fresh mint leaves
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Instructions:

1. In a large saucepan of boiling salted water, cook the peas until they are just tender, about 3 minutes. Drain.
2. In the same saucepan, heat the olive oil. Add the onions and a pinch of salt, cover and cook over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, 5 minutes.
3. Stir in the peas, cover and cook until heated through, 1 minute. Stir in the butter, 1 tablespoon at a time.
4. Remove from the heat and stir in the pea shoots until wilted. Stir in the mint, season with salt and pepper and serve.



PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

Get to know Dr. Arti Prasad



What is your specialty? Integrative Oncology and Leadership and Diversity Coaching

What do you love most about your job? I love to listen to patient stories and help alleviate their suffering. In my mentoring work I get great joy from helping people realize their dreams. And with professional diversity coaching I love empowering anyone who needs support to reach their goals. Behind all the work is transformation - a perfect theme for spring!

What brings you comfort on a spring day? Nature and watching flowers bloom, taking to plants and helping them grow.

What is a healthy habit of yours? Cooking and dancing.



SPRING OFFERINGS

Group Medical Visits/Classes

Gentle Yoga for Cancer Care - Tuesdays 12-1pm (in-person or zoom)

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction - 8-week course, sliding scale, starts 4/4 for more info contact mindfulness@hcmcd.org

Healing Touch - Level 2 - Dates TBD, contact Tracie.Kapaun@hcmcd.org for more info

Staying Healthy: Recovering and Regaining Health from COVID-19 - 7 weeks, Wed 10am-12pm, begins 4/12 (zoom)

Life Beyond Cancer - 8 weeks, Thurs 10am-12pm, begins 4/12 (zoom)

Life Beyond Cancer (Drop-In) - Wed 8-9:30am, 4/19, 7/19, 10/18 (zoom)

Mind Body Skills for Easing Pain - 6 weeks, Tues 1:30-3:30pm, begins 4/18 (zoom)

Blood Sugar Balance (Drop-In) - Wed 8-9:30am, 5/17, 8/16, 11/15 (zoom)

Mindfulness for Health and Wellbeing - Monthly, 2nd Mon of the month starting in June - Dec, 5:45-7:45pm (zoom), 5:45-7:45pm (zoom)

Community Events

Walk with a Doc - Community walks for everyone on the **2nd Sunday of the Month** from **10-11am** at the **Mpls Sculpture Garden** or in inclement weather at the **Mpls Institute of Art**

Mid-day Mindfulness Practice Breaks - Thursdays 12-12:30 (zoom)

For More Info on all Spring Offerings, Go To:

www.hennepinhealthcare.org/specialty/integrative-health/

3 YOGA PRACTICES TO SUPPORT GARDENING

1. **Ahimsa** - The Sanskrit word for "Non-Harming", brining intention to how gardening is a way of practicing peace will infuse the "dirty" work with deeper meaning, purpose, and joy.
2. **Mindful Mountain** - Stand barefoot on grass, feeling the texture of the earth beneath you. Take in the sights and sounds of the natural world. Imagine you have roots growing out of your feet that are as big and as wide as your body - feeling all the support that the planet has to offer.
3. **Malasana** - Sanskrit for "Garland Pose" the squat is an incredibly powerful movement practice supporting healthy ways to lift and get down and up from the earth. Standing with your legs comfortably wide and feet turned out, reach your arms forward as you sit back, feeling your weight shift onto your heels as your spine stays long and supported. Make sure your knees stay over your heels and that your heels stay on the ground. If this practice isn't comfortable or appropriate for your body, getting a gardening stool or box to sit on and/or a pad or folded blanket to kneel on can be helpful tools.

A Light Exists in Spring

By Emily Dickenson

A Light exists in Spring

Not present on the Year

At any other period -

When March is scarcely here

A Color stands abroad

On Solitary Fields

That Science cannot overtake

But Human Nature feels...