



# The AMBER Report

ISSUE 5

DECEMBER 2016

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Dragon Boating**
- **New provincial wide program**

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## Message from the Investigators

Happy Holidays! We hope you are able to relax and enjoy the holiday season with family and friends.

With each newsletter we want to keep you informed on our study progress and provide information that is, hopefully, useful to you as well. This past fall, the Calgary site hosted an “All Investigators’ Meeting” to present the progress to date for the AMBER Study and discuss next steps. Currently the study has enrolled 66% of the 1,500 participants that we hope to recruit by mid-2018. As of December 2016 we have enrolled 521 participants in Calgary and 470 in Edmonton. To date, 642 participants have completed their YR1 assessments and 182 participants have completed their YR3 assessments. Beginning

summer 2017, we are excited to have participants completing their final assessments for the study at the five year mark. In 2017, we also hope to hear good news from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research regarding additional funding for another five years. As always, thank you again for your ongoing commitment to the study! We couldn’t do it without you!



Investigators at the AMBER Team meeting in October 2016 (L to R.): Dr. Darren Brenner, Dr. Jessica Mc Neil, Dr. Nicole Culos-Reed, Dr. Margaret McNeely, Dr. Kerry Courneya, Dr. Christine Friedenreich, Dr. Jeff Vallance and Dr. Karen Kopciuk.

## Make it a “SMART” Goal

It’s that time of year again where new year resolutions become a hot topic. Whether or not you have been successful in the past, it is never too late to try again! However, this time be “SMART” about it! This means the goal is:

**Specific** - What do you want to accomplish? (Who, What, Where, Why). It needs to be clear and well defined.

**Measureable** - How will you demonstrate or evaluate that the goal has been met. It needs to be objective and quantifiable.

**Actionable** - What will you do to achieve the goal? It should be a challenge but within your ability to achieve the outcome.

**Relevant** - It is important and meaningful to you. Being successful is motivating in itself.

**Timed** - There is a set timeline to achieve your goal. Have one or more target dates to guide when your goal will be completed.

Using this easy to remember

tool can help provide structure to setting and achieving your goals that may have alluded you in the past.

Here’s to reaching our goals in 2017!



## Meet Terri Wood



Terri and her cats!

Terri joined the Edmonton team in January of 2016 as an exercise tester. She graduated from UBCO (Kelowna) in 2013 with a Bachelor of Human Kinetics.

### What led you to work as an exercise specialist?

After losing a family member to chronic disease at a young age, I realised the importance of physical activity and diet in disease prevention. After taking an exercise and chronic disease course I knew I had found my passion. After moving to Edmon-

ton, I was extremely grateful to become a part of the AMBER team, as well as working on other cancer and exercise trials. I love what I do and I plan to continue working in exercise and chronic disease for the rest of my working years.

### Tell us about your pets?

I have two cats, Charlie and Leroy. I don't have any children yet, so they are my babies. I am not ashamed to say that I am a bit of a crazy cat lady!

### What's your favourite holiday destination?

I love going home (Okanagan B.C.) to visit family and the

mountains! I love snowboarding, so that was the hardest part about leaving B.C. to move to Alberta.

### Who is the most famous person you have ever met?

I have done fitness testing for both the Edmonton Oilers & Edmonton Eskimos, so I have met all the players on both teams. Although I am not a huge sports fan, so the novelty was a bit lost on me!

### What is your favourite movie?

I love anything with Jason Statham. It's pretty safe to say he is my biggest celebrity crush!

## Rolling with Jenna: Breathe Life Into Your Scar

Rolling can be a great way to release tight tissue due to scars from surgery or radiation.

Scars should be a minimum of 15 days old with no redness, stitches or open wounds. Even if scars are years old, rolling can still be effective.



In regards to radiation, avoid rolling within three months of treatment. Skin may still be discolored three months

after treatment, but as long as the skin is not hot or red, it is ok to roll.

When rolling it is normal to feel a gentle heat in the area and some discomfort similar to a massage. If the pain does not lessen as you roll, decrease the pressure applied.



Although rolling can be slightly uncomfortable, make sure to avoid "bad" pain.

### Bad Pain would be:

- ◆ The area hurts during and after rolling
- ◆ Your whole body tenses
- ◆ You can't breathe
- ◆ You experience nerve pain
- ◆ Bruising occurs
- ◆ Your muscles are extremely sore the next day

### If you experience this type of pain:

- ◆ Back off the pressure
- ◆ Move the ball up or down off the tense spot
- ◆ Use the wall instead of lying on the ground
- ◆ Use a couch or bed to lay down on so the ball sinks in
- ◆ Use a larger or softer ball or use two balls

### How to:

Lying down on the ground or standing near a wall, place ball at the area of concern between your body and the flat surface (ground or wall). Take a deep breath creating tension against the pressure of the ball. Hold for a couple seconds and then exhale relaxing onto the ball and releasing pressure. Allow the ball to press deeper into your body. Repeat several times.

New study participants can learn more about ball rolling and myofascial release in previous editions of the newsletter found on our website:

[www.amberstudy.com](http://www.amberstudy.com)



# ACE is Coming!

## Alberta Cancer Exercise Program to hit Calgary and Edmonton January 2017

Participants are familiar with the exercise specialists they meet at appointments, however, there is also a team of researchers and academics hard at work behind the scenes on the AMBER Study and other various projects. Two co-investigators on the AMBER Study who are collaborating on a new study in Alberta are: **Dr. Margaret McNeely** and **Dr. Nicole Culos-Reed**.

The project they are heading up is called the “**Alberta Cancer Exercise (ACE) Program for Cancer Survivors**” and they received funding for five years from Alberta Innovates Health Solutions’ Cancer Prevention Research Opportunity, through the Alberta Cancer Prevention Legacy Fund (ACPLF).

After cancer treatment many survivors are faced with long-term impacts on their body, mind, and overall health. All too many are left in the “aftermath” of treatment, feeling lost and unsupported by the system. There is a palpable need to take action to improve both life expectancy and quality of life of cancer survivors.



Enter ACE! An Alberta-based study evaluating the benefits of exercise after a cancer diagnosis. It is a free 12-week exercise program offered twice a week that will be combining aspects of cardiovascular and resistance training, balance and flexibility. Physical activity has been shown to boost energy levels, sleep quality and cardiovascular health, all while reducing fatigue, nausea, pain, and many other psychological symptoms (such as depression and anxiety) that are common side effects of cancer and its treatments. ACE will help to “bridge the gap” after treatment and encourage survivors to take an active role in their well-being.

Programming will start in January 2017 in both Calgary and Edmonton and will spread to rural areas of Alberta throughout the spring. Group classes will be offered at various locations throughout both Calgary and Edmonton. ACE is open to all cancer survivors within three years of their diagnosis who are over the age of 18 and can consent in English. For more information about ACE contact:

**Calgary:** [ace@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ace@ucalgary.ca) or (403) 210 - 8482

**Edmonton:** [albertacancerexercise@ualberta.ca](mailto:albertacancerexercise@ualberta.ca) or (780) 492 - 6007

### Margaret McNeely, PT, PhD



Margaret (Margie) McNeely is an Associate Professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. She currently holds a joint appointment in the Department of Oncology and performs clinical research in the Rehabilitation Medicine Department at the Cross Cancer Institute.

Dr. McNeely’s research interests are in the area of cancer rehabilitation and exercise. Her research to date has focused on upper limb dysfunction and cancer-related symptoms of pain, fatigue and lymphedema. Personal interests include spending time with family, exercise (running, race walking, cross country skiing, tennis) and travelling.

### Dr. Nicole Culos-Reed



Nicole Culos-Reed is a Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology at the University of Calgary and is an expert in the field of behaviour change in the physical activity domain for healthy and clinical populations. Her research primarily focuses upon the determinants and outcomes of physical activity for cancer survivors, the psychosocial outcomes associated with a healthy lifestyle, and the translation of evidence into sustainable community-based programming.

In 2014, Dr. Culos-Reed received the City of Calgary Community Education Award, acknowledging the work she has done to educate the community about the role of exercise in cancer survivorship. Nicole, along with her husband Andrew, are raising three children in Calgary, keeping busy and active with them and their dog!



# Get out on the Water!

Looking for a way to be active and enjoy the camaraderie of a team sport? Dragon boating may be for you!

Dragon boating originated in China more than 1500 years ago and came to North America in the mid 1980s. Boats are about 12.5 m long and manned by 20 paddlers under the direction of a drummer, who beats out the pace, and a steersperson.

There are two teams in AB for breast cancer survivors to join: In Edmonton - **Breast Friends Dragon Boat Racing Team** and in Calgary - **Sistership Dragon Boat Association**.

Teams are open to all age groups and no previous experience is required.

The only requirement is that you are at least three months post-treatment and are cleared by your physician to be physically active.

Jane Appel, who recently completed her three year assessment with the AMBER Study, is a member



Jane on race day!

of the Sistership team in Calgary. Here is what she had to say about being part of a dragon boat team: "The festivals are exciting and exhausting. They consist of two or three races a day, with warm ups, cool downs and

team meetings in between. The races themselves are exhilarating! When the gun goes off, you paddle as hard and as fast as you can for three minutes. It feels like an eternity and afterwards your legs feel like rubber and you are trembling with exhaustion. But when you win.....you are hooked!

After having cancer, treatments and multiple surgeries, I had come to distrust my body and my physical abilities. Being on the boat, pushing myself beyond my comfort zone helped me regain confidence in my physical wellbeing. I can now say with confidence that

I have more than survived, I am thriving! If you want to float around the reservoir watching the ducks, join the canoe club. But, if you want to push your post cancer body to the maximum and rejoice in expending every ounce of energy in a race, come and join us, and ride the Dragon across the finish line!"

For more information contact:

### Edmonton

[www.breastfriendseidmonton.org](http://www.breastfriendseidmonton.org)  
Email: [info@breastfriendseidmonton.org](mailto:info@breastfriendseidmonton.org)  
Info night on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
Deadline to join is January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### Calgary

[www.sistershipcalgary.com](http://www.sistershipcalgary.com)  
Email: [shaunak5@telus.net](mailto:shaunak5@telus.net) or (403) 284 - 3141  
Info night on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017



Please note a correction to the July 2016 newsletter. Address for Wellspring Edmonton is **11306 - 65 Ave NW**.

## AMBER Study Contact Information

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Testing Center Edmonton	Exercise Testers	Edmonton	(780) 989 5911	<a href="mailto:amberstudy@ualberta.ca">amberstudy@ualberta.ca</a>