

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



## **Healthy Aging Community Workshops**

EDMONTON, AB, January 14, 2005—"We're aging twice as fast as we should," according to Dr. Sandy O'Brien Cousins, Professor Emeritus in U of A's Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation and advisor to the Alberta Centre for Active Living's Healthy Aging Community Workshops.

In fact, Dr. O'Brien Cousins believes that we can cut the aging process in half by exercising regularly: "Factor in healthy eating, and who knows?"

Older adults who would like to become more active can face many barriers. For example, a fear of falling on winter ice can trap many older adults in their homes—a decision that leads to other serious health risks from sedentary living.

### ***Some Facts about Physical Activity and Older Adults:***

- 60 per cent of Canadian older adults are considered inactive;
- sitting or lying for long periods of time is a serious health risk;
- inactivity is as harmful to health as smoking (and twice as prevalent);
- inactivity leads to declines in bone strength, muscle strength, heart and lung fitness, and flexibility (Health Canada, ALCOA, & CSEP, 1999).

The benefits of physical activity for older adults include enjoying life more because of being able to function better, independent living, improved mental outlook, stronger muscles and bones, and weight maintenance.

Dr. O'Brien Cousins and her colleague Lesley McEwan are offering a new series of workshops for anyone interested in healthy aging. Examples might include older adults and caregivers, health practitioners, and community leaders who work with older adults.

Workshop participants will

- learn about physical activity and healthy eating and how these fit into the care of older adults;
- learn about other provincial resources and programs that promote healthy aging;
- find out how to promote healthy aging in their communities.

Anyone interested in promoting physical activity and healthy eating among older adults (e.g., staff from Regional Health Authorities, seniors' centres, nursing homes) will benefit from these workshops. Workshop content will focus on ways to enhance older adults' quality of life through healthy living. For more information about the project, visit [www.centre4activeliving.ca/Education/OlderAdults/](http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/Education/OlderAdults/).

In the first half of 2005, workshops will be offered in the following centres across the province:

- February 10: Cochrane
- February 17: Camrose
- March 3: Medicine Hat
- March 4: Brooks
- March 17: Vermillion
- May 5: Grande Prairie
- May 9: Westlock

- June 2: High Level
- June 16: Calgary

Other workshops can be added by request.

***About the Alberta Centre for Active Living***

The Alberta Centre for Active Living is a non-profit research and education centre affiliated with the Faculty of Physical Education at the University of Alberta. The centre is supported by the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, Alberta Community Development, and the University of Alberta.

***Contact information***

For more information about healthy aging and the Healthy Aging Community Workshops, contact

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