



Healthy Schools

NEWSLETTER

ideas and information for a healthier school community

Winter 2012

York Region Community and Health Services is pleased to present the winter edition of our Healthy Schools newsletter. This newsletter contains updates on exciting local Healthy Schools activities. You will also find valuable information and tips on improving the health of your school community. We wish you a healthy and happy winter season!

What's your story?

St. Clare jumps for Heart and Stroke!

St. Clare Catholic School was recognized for being one of the most physically active schools in the region. The school held its school wide Jump for Heart Fundraiser just before the end of the 2010-11 school year in a continuing effort to promote healthy active living within the school community. The fundraiser encouraged the St. Clare students to get together and take part in a day of endurance, double dutch and free style skipping. As children were "jumping into a healthier path", they were also supporting the mission to raise essential funds for the Heart and Stroke Foundation that is dedicated to eliminating heart disease and stroke in every age group.

~ Submitted by St. Clare C.S. Healthy School Committee



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What's your story? (...cont'd)

Parkland uses demographic data to inform physical activity programming

The latest craze at Parkland Public School is Bhangra, a South Asian dance originating in the Punjab region. The dance was selected by staff for two purposes: to develop co-curricular activities that reflect Parkland's diverse learning community, and to provide participants with a means for having fun and getting cardiovascular exercise. The first school-wide Bhangra performance was so well received that many additional staff and students decided to get involved. Now staff and students enjoy an excellent cardiovascular workout twice each week! Moreover, staff and students who "made the cut" performed a Bhangra selection at the Quest Conference on Friday, November 18, 2011. Nicely done Parkland!

~ Submitted by Parkland P. S. Healthy School Committee



It's winter! Don't hibernate – walk to school and celebrate! Winter walk day

Wednesday, **February 8, 2012** is Ontario's Winter Walk Day for schools.

Keep warm as you walk. Keep your hands and head covered to prevent heat loss. On really cold days wear a scarf to protect your ears, cheeks, nose and mouth and warm, waterproof boots. If possible, change wet clothes at school. Remember to tuck an extra pair of socks and mitts into knapsacks!

Register your school now and have fun walking in winter:

www.saferoutestoschool.ca



Choose to walk, bike and bus to school or park and walk a block! The benefits include less traffic congestion, daily physical activity, a healthier environment, safer streets, making friends and **having fun!**

Workplace wellness

12 tips to staying healthy and energized this winter

- ★ Manage stress through physical activity and healthy eating
- ★ Try a new activity! Consider skiing, snowshoeing, ice-skating or tobogganing
- ★ Take winter walks on York Region trails or build a snowman with the family
- ★ Consider the winter cold as motivation to quit smoking
- ★ Avoid second-hand smoke at home and in vehicles
- ★ Get enough sleep. Stick to a schedule and don't sleep late on weekends or holidays
- ★ The sun's rays can be reflected by bright surfaces like snow and ice. Wear a hat and sunglasses with UVA and UVB protection and apply sunscreen and lip balm with SPF 15 or higher
- ★ Be a responsible host – serve low sodium foods and alcohol-free drinks at your party or event
- ★ To prevent falls, keep walkways and steps clear of snow and ice
- ★ Stay safe and warm! Dress in layers of loose fitting, bright, reflective clothing, and wear CSA approved safety gear for your winter activities
- ★ Get your vitamin D – drink at least two cups of milk each day or include egg yolks and fatty fish in your diet
- ★ Boost your immune system – eat foods rich in antioxidants, vitamin C and beta-carotene, such as oranges, berries, carrots, broccoli, sweet potatoes and spinach

pause to PLAY



From texting to video games, internet to television, elementary school aged children are sedentary over eight hours a day and only seven per cent are getting the recommended intensity of exercise to achieve health benefits. Being active for at least **60 minutes a day** can help children improve their health, do better in school, grow stronger, maintain a healthy body weight and improve their self-confidence.

Kicking off **April 23 to 27 2012**, students all over York Region are encouraged to turn off their screens and turn their activity levels up! Pause to PLAY promotes healthy eating and safety while encouraging students to try new activities with their families. Students record their activity, healthy foods they eat and time spent with their family on a log sheet.

Register your school at www.york.ca/healthyschools in mid March and **download great resources** including announcements, tips and ideas for encouraging physical activity at home. Schools that submit a brief summary of their pause to PLAY activities after Friday, April 27, 2012 will be eligible to win one of ten \$100.00 gift certificates for physical activity equipment.

Try something new in your community and check out local parks and recreation departments for activities and programs to help keep you active. Choose to bike, hike, ride, glide, jump, pump, and run and have fun at home, at school and with your family!

Swap your screen for fun, play and physical activity as you pause to play every day!

Healthy Schools Networks

The York Region District School Board and York Region Community and Health Services celebrated the start of the school year by hosting two fall Healthy Schools network meetings in partnership with Recreation Services, the Heart & Stoke Foundation and Eatrite. At the network meetings, York Region public health nurses presented ideas for starting the Healthy School Student Club, a new initiative piloted in 2010/2011 to enhance student engagement in Healthy Schools.

At the meetings, participants exchanged ideas on comprehensive school health approaches by:

- Brainstorming ideas for Healthy School Action Plans by co-factoring health topics such as physical activity, sun safety and injury prevention.
- Discussing different strategies used by Healthy Schools in implementing the Ministry of Education's School Food and Beverage Policy (PPM150)
- Receiving resources on resiliency and promoting safe schools to incorporate as part of the school curriculum

Fun activities organized by Recreation Services and the Heart & Stroke Foundation demonstrated that Healthy Schools' activities can be just as simple and exciting as Frisbee throwing and rope jumping.

The two fall network meetings reached 88 elementary schools in York Region with a total of 184 participants. "Excellent information" and "ready to use resources" were some of the positive comments received from participant evaluations. A large number of students also indicated an increased need for their involvement in Healthy Schools. As a result of the meetings, 20 new schools showed interested in becoming Healthy Schools and have signed up for more information.

For more information on Healthy Schools, please visit

www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/page.cfm?id=CHH000006 or www.york.ca/healthyschools



At the network meeting held at Bill Crothers Secondary School on Oct 7, 2011, York Region public health nurses explain the Healthy Schools Student Club to participants.

Sun Smart poster contest



Who?

Grade one students in York Region

How?

Create posters that demonstrate and communicate sun safe behaviour

- The first place winner will receive a tree to plant at his or her school or local park
- All grade one classes who come first, second and third in the contest will receive wide-brimmed hats
- Winning artwork will be used for a Sun Smart poster and bookmark for distribution throughout York Region

When?

Contest deadline: **March 8, 2012**

Why?

Schools play an important role in promoting sun safety because children are at school during the highest risk period of the day, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Students spend a significant amount of this time outdoors for recess, lunch, physical education class and extra-curricular activities.

Teaching children to be sun smart and protecting them from exposure to the sun's UV radiation can significantly lessen their lifetime risk of developing skin cancer.

For contest details and entry forms visit www.york.ca/healthyschools



The winning entry of the 2011 Sun Smart poster contest was from a grade one student at Pine Grove Public School in the city of Vaughan. The student's family joined the celebration by planting a tree awarded to the school.

Talking to your children about substance use

It is never too early for children to learn about substance use. By the time children are six months old they have used their first drug. Sometimes we forget substances like teething ointment, fever medication, cough syrup and vitamins are drugs.

The issue of substance use can be confusing to young children. If drugs are dangerous, why is the family medicine cabinet full of them and why do we take them to make us feel better? Getting an initial perspective on substance use from parents will help children start to form their own opinions.

A substance is anything you take into your body that can change the way you think, act or feel. Early conversations, such as explaining a chewable vitamin is to help children grow and only mom or dad, or a responsible adult can give it to them, can progress to deeper discussions about other substances as your child becomes a pre-teen. Develop the habit of talking with your child regularly on a variety of subjects, including substance use.

When it comes to substance use, teach children:

- Medicine is not candy or beverage, even though they can appear or taste like lollipops or freezies. Children need to understand a substance is used for specific purposes with benefits as well as side effects.
- Medicine is only taken when it is really needed and it is given by a trusted adult. Give children choices (e.g., sleep/rest, heating or ice pad) to help them learn about alternatives to substance use.

It is important to be a role model for your children. Read labels carefully and properly; measure dosages every time before giving medicine to yourself or your child. Do not make a game out of giving medicine to children. Children like to imitate adults, so try not to take your medication in front of them.

Presenting honest and factual information about substances is important at home and at school. Children are often exposed to exaggeration or scare tactics that send mixed messages. As a parent or educator, you can dispel myths and encourage children to make informed choices.



Skiing and snowboarding safely

Safe skiing and snowboarding means not only wearing the *right* equipment but also making the *right* decisions.

- **Always wear a helmet designed specifically for skiing or snowboarding.**
Discuss that wearing a helmet **doesn't mean** they can ski or snowboard faster or take more risks. Be a good role model and make sure you wear your helmet
- **Remember the rest of the gear!**
Dress in layers – look for water and wind resistant skiwear and gloves/mittens
Always have eye protection with sunglasses or goggles and don't forget the sunscreen
- **Have children take lessons.**
Children's ski instructors can help them develop their skills and become familiar with safe alpine behaviour
- **Develop and discuss family snow hill rules.**
Have a meeting place. Stay on marked trails and follow all signs. Never ski or snowboard alone. Only ski on runs that match one's ability
- **Know when to stop skiing or snowboarding**
If they are tired, wet and cold, injured or having trouble with their equipment, take a break

For more detailed information visit: <http://www.thinkfirst.ca/documents/SkiandSnowTipsheet2011.pdf>

Bed bug prevention

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small insects (about the size of an apple seed) with oval-shaped bodies and no wings. Bed bugs usually bite at night and can bite all over, especially around the face, neck, upper torso, arms and hands. Bed bugs can live in people's beds and in surrounding areas.



It is possible for anyone, anywhere to experience a bed bug infestation. However, they can be prevented and controlled. Here's how:

When at home:

- Vacuum your mattress often
- Clean up clutter
- Seal cracks and crevices
- Inspect used items before buying
- Never bring discarded items home, such as bed frames, mattresses, upholstered items or electronics

When travelling:

- Pack clothes into sealable plastic bags and leave them inside luggage during the trip, never on the bed or floor
- Inspect the hotel room and look for blood spots, droppings, or live insects
- After your trip, unpack luggage outdoors and re-inspect the contents
- Wash all contents in hot water and place in a hot dryer for at least 30 minutes

For more information, please visit
www.york.ca & www.bedbugsinfo.ca.

Upcoming health promotion events...

January

- Alzheimer's Awareness Month
- 15-21 National Non-Smoking Week
- 18 Weedless Wednesday

February

- Heart Month
- You're the Chef Registration
- 8 Winter Walk Day
- 12 Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Day
- 26-3 National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

March

- National Nutrition Month
- 5-9 School Breakfast Week
- 8 Sun Smart poster deadline
- 22 World Water Day

April

- Dental Health Month
- National Cancer Control Month
- National Autism Awareness Month
- 7 World Health Day
- 15-22 National Volunteer Week
- 20 First day of Spring
- 22 Earth Day
- 23-27 Pause to PLAY Campaign

Healthy Schools NEWSLETTER

Healthy Schools Toolkit: Ready, Set, ACTION PLAN!

Have you ever felt unclear about the direction that your healthy school committee is taking?

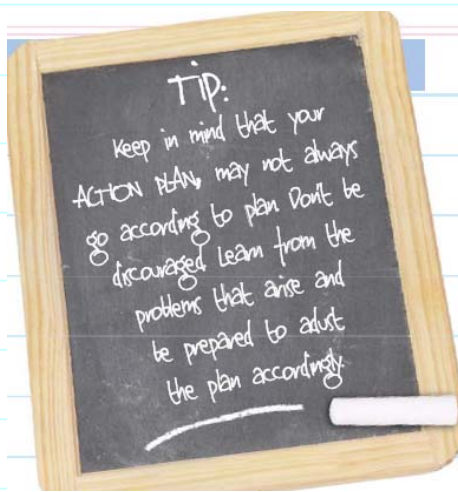
The development of an Action Plan can help your committee plan the direction and activities for the year based on the health priorities identified in your school! The *Healthy Schools Toolkit* can help your committee take the steps needed to create a strong and concrete action plan.

When developing an action plan:

1. Brainstorm and choose activities for your priority areas
2. To help children develop long lasting knowledge, health attitudes and behaviours, your plan should address all four Foundations for a Healthy School:
 - High Quality Instruction and Programs
 - Healthy Physical Environment
 - Supportive Social Environment
 - Community Partnerships
3. Develop goals for the chosen activities
4. Transfer your goals and activities to the Action Plan
5. Determine what success will look like. Ask yourself, "Will we know if we have met our goals?"

Once your action plan is completed, SHARE it with your school community!

Refer back to your ACTION Plan throughout the school year to keep on track!



Check out the *Healthy Schools Toolkit* and other resources available at www.york.ca/healthyschools

For more information contact
Health Connection
1-800-361-5653
TTY 1-866 252-9933
or visit www.york.ca/healthyschools

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York Region