

Health Unit Media Release



Contact: Melanie Ramsay, RN, BScN, Public Health Nurse at 283-2740 or
Julie Bolton, RN, BScN, Public Health Nurse at 345-5685

TAKE THE CHALLENGE! **Turn off your screens for the week of April 3rd to 9th**

The Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit is challenging the residents of the tri-county to turn off their TV, computer, and video game screens for the week of April 3rd to 9th. **During TV Turn-off Challenge people are encouraged to replace the sedentary time usually spent in front of screens, with physical activity and healthy eating.** Visit our website for great ideas on how to have a successful week and to register yourself, your workplace, school, or family to be eligible to win an incredible prize! If registering your workplace, be sure to let us know if there is another workplace you and your coworkers would like to challenge for the week! Good luck to everyone who participates!

Why participate in the TV turn-off Challenge? Most of us spend far too much time involved in sedentary activities, and too little time being active. For example, **Statistics Canada 2002 reports that children over the age of 2 spend on average 21 hours per week watching TV, in addition to time spent on computers and playing video games.** This physical inactivity coupled with poor eating habits has led to increased rates of obesity and puts people at a greater risk for chronic disease (Healthy Weights, Healthy Lives 2004). The TV Turn-Off Challenge is an attempt to counter this trend.

So, what do you do if you don't watch TV? The answer is EVERYTHING. A one-week recess from screen time will allow you to exercise, volunteer, play, talk, read, create, volunteer, and participate in your community. Be creative, it is all about having fun!

To make your TV Turn-Off week a success, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Replace your screen time with something active. Look for fun activities in your community.
- Move the television to a less central location.
- Have TV free meals.
- Avoid using the TV as a reward or punishment. This gives the TV more power.
- Don't worry if your children complain that they are bored. Boredom often leads to creativity and physically active play.
- Be a positive role model by being physically active and cutting down on screen time yourself.

For more information on the TV Turn-Off Challenge Screen Free Week, and practical tips on how to reduce screen time and increase physical activity, please contact the Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853 or (613) 345-5685 or visit our website at www.healthunit.org <<http://www.healthunit.org>>. Be sure to register to win great prizes!

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