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Health Unit promotes tool to help parents manage mealtimes

Do you have, care for, or work with a toddler or preschooler? Are you curious about a child's eating habits? Are you looking for tips to make mealtimes easy, or get kids excited about eating veggies?

NutriSTEP® is a no-cost questionnaire that covers children's eating, physical activity and screen time habits. The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit (LGLDHU) promotes NutriSTEP® as a quick and easy way to see how children are doing. The questionnaire takes 5-10 minutes to complete and offers resources and information personalized to your responses.

Why NutriSTEP®?

NutriSTEP® offers ideas and tools for:

- Healthy eating
- Meal planning
- Cooking
- Healthy growth
- Physical activity
- Feeding and mealtime challenges
- Eating out
- Food safety

"Eating habits are established at an early age and food choices affect children's growth and development," says Registered Dietitian, Dana Hawthorne. "It's important to teach young children about the importance of healthy eating, physical activity and screen time behaviours to set them on a path of lifelong healthy living."

Who can use NutriSTEP®?

Parents, caregivers and grandparents of toddlers and preschoolers can complete the NutriSTEP® screen. Staff working in a community agency with children ages 18 months to 5 years can receive training to support families with completing the screen.

Where can I find NutriSTEP®?

There are several ways to complete the NutriSTEP® questionnaire.

- At the LGLDHU:
 - o Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program
 - o Dental Screening Clinics
 - o Language Express - Preschool Speech and Language program
- At Ontario Early Years Centres in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark
- Online at www.nutritionscreen.ca
- By calling EatRight Ontario toll-free at 1-877-510-5102 to complete the screen with a Registered Dietitian.

Community agencies interested in working with the LGLDHU to offer NutriSTEP® screening in their facility should contact the Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853.

For more information: http://www.healthunit.org/nutrition/lifecycle/toddler/toddler_preschool.html

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