



# Health Matters

A newsletter from the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit

Autumn 2003

<http://www.healthunit.org>

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## "Do Bugs Need Drugs?" Wise Use of Antibiotics

*Submitted by Bonnie Erwin, Public Health Nurse*

This fall the Health Unit will be launching a campaign to promote the appropriate use of antibiotics, in order to prevent the continuing rise in the emergence of Antibiotic Resistant Organisms. (A.R.O.)

The very first antibiotic was penicillin, which was developed in 1929. It was considered a miracle drug and it has saved millions of lives. Over the next decades penicillin has improved life expectancy by treating a variety of potential deadly diseases such as pneumonia and tuberculosis. Because of the overuse and misuse of antibiotics many bacteria have developed a resistance to penicillin and first-line antibiotics. Why is this of concern? When infections become resistant to first-line antibiotics, treatments have to switch to second or third-line drugs, which are nearly always much more expensive and sometimes more toxic eg. the drugs needed to treat multi-drug resistant forms of tuberculosis are 100 times more expensive than first-line drugs.

A recent public opinion poll showed that close to 50% of Canadians believed that antibiotics were effective against viral illnesses such as the common cold. Antibiotics have no ability to kill viruses! Using antibiotics for an illness that is viral, can contribute to the rise in anti-biotic resistant bacteria. Many patients insist on antibiotics for an illness that is viral, hoping that it will make them or their child feel better, faster.

The Canadian Committee on Antibiotic Resistance (CCAR) reports that over half of the antibiotic prescriptions for Canadian pre-school children were unnecessary. The study of the Saskatchewan Drug Database that analyzed data on all respiratory infections in children under five years of age showed that in 1999, 56% of children in Saskatchewan visited a doctor for a respiratory infection, and 64% of these children received a prescription for an antibiotic. Compliance with appropriate guidelines would have resulted in an 85% reduction in antibiotic prescriptions in this age group. Everyone can take action to help control the growth of antibiotic resistant organisms and to promote the appropriate use of antibiotics.

Look for continuing information in Health Matters and log onto the Health Unit web site at [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org).

## Medicine Clean Out Campaign, November 2003



*Submitted by Carol Quinlan, Public Health Nurse*

People take medication to relieve a variety of ailments. Those same medications can cause injury or even death when taken at the wrong time or by the wrong person.

Misuse of medication affects everyone. Not only are they responsible for almost all cases of poisoning hospitalizations among children less than 10 years of age, (National Trauma Registry Bulletin- April 2002) they are also the cause of 25% of hospital admissions for the elderly and 23% of all nursing home admissions as well. (Ontario Drug Awareness Partnership, September 10, 2002).

For the month of **November**, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is joining forces with the Eastern Region Injury Network to deliver the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Eastern Ontario 'Medicine Clean Out' campaign. Our goal is to reduce the risk of injury from unsafe medication use and storage, and to promote safe disposal of unused, not needed, and expired medications.

The group's "Medicine Clean Out" campaign had three main messages:

1. Return out-dated, expired and no-longer-required medicines to your local pharmacy for proper disposal.
2. Medicines are hazardous wastes- don't throw them out in the garbage and don't flush them.
3. Medicines can lead to injury. Protect your household by keeping medicines locked and away from children.

To decrease the incidence of these injuries or deaths, local residents need to take a good look at the medicines in their homes. It's as simple as checking all the places that medicines are stored and cleaning out those that are out-dated and no longer needed. The message is clear: old medicines should never be kept "just in case". Keeping, taking or sharing old medicines can lead to serious falls and poisonings. Disposing of medications safely ensures that they do not harm your family or the environment.

For more information or to find out where the participating pharmacy is in your area, please call you local Health Unit Office or the Health Action Line 1-800-660-5853.

### Peanut Allergy Information

At the beginning of the school year an information package was mailed to every principal in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark, on the topic of peanut allergy. The information package contained a cover letter, and three fact sheets on peanut allergy - foods to choose and avoid, peanut free snacks, cautions to take with peanut containing foods. If you have concerns about peanut products, and have not reviewed the new materials, please check with your school administrator.

ALLEREX LABORATORY LTD., the Canadian distributor of EpiPen, and two Ottawa Allergists have developed a two hour training program, for those who may need to deal with a life threatening allergic reaction. Participants receive annual certification status similar to a C.P.R. certificate. This training is available through Allergy Essentials. They also carry a full line of adults and children's educational resources dealing, with allergies.

The Health Unit does not endorse this company, but has reviewed it's training materials and finds them similar to the materials we have used over the years to train teachers. Allergy Essentials can be contacted at 1-888-850-6051 or through their website [www.allergy-essentials.com](http://www.allergy-essentials.com) .



## Common Myths of Children's Nutrition

*Submitted by Dianne Oickle, MSc, RD & Heather Deegan, MSc, RD*

Have you ever received advice about feeding your children? There are many sources of information about how and what to feed children, including in-laws, parents, grandparents, friends, health professionals, books and television. Some advice is based on fact, and some is based on myth. As a parent, it is ultimately your decision what foods you will make available for your children. Here is some information that may help reduce your confusion about the more common advice people share.

### **Myth: Every child should take a vitamin-mineral supplement.**

**Fact: Most children do not need a supplement.** If a child eats a wide variety of foods from all four food groups in Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, over time they will get the nutrients they need. Teaching children to get their nutrition from a pill tells them that food is not important, and that they can rely on something in a bottle to keep them healthy. Many children (and many adults!) will have days where they do not eat a great variety of food. Over time, in most cases, children will eat enough foods to provide them with the nutrition they need. Remember, foods eaten in one single day or at one single meal do not determine a child's health. Rather, foods eaten over several days add together to provide the nutrients the child needs.



### **Myth: Making healthy lunches and snacks for school takes too much time.**

**Fact: There are quick and easy ways to make healthy meals and snacks for your children.** It may seem hard to try and plan healthy meals and snacks for kids at home or at school when trying to balance work

and family. Keep a copy of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating on your fridge and try to include something from every food group at each meal. This lets you be flexible and offer the foods your child likes. Here are some ideas for healthy choices from each food group:  
Grain Products – pita bread, bagels, muffins, crackers, granola, cereal  
Vegetables & Fruit – raw veggie sticks, fruit, 100% fruit juice, steamed vegetables  
Milk Products – milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt dip for fruit or vegetables  
Meat & Alternatives – tuna or egg salad, peanut butter, sliced meat, chili with beans

Remember – there are no foods that are “breakfast”, “lunch”, or “dinner” foods – whatever healthy foods you and your family enjoy can be eaten at any meal.

### **Myth: Sugar makes kids hyper.**

**Fact: There is no research that shows hyperactivity is caused by eating too much sugar.** Often, children eat foods that are high in sugar, such as candy, pop, or cake, at celebrations that make them excited and act hyper. Birthday parties, family gatherings, sleep-overs, and play time with friends are some common situations where kids eat foods that are high in sugar and may appear cranky or hyper. However, it is the situation, not the food, that affects a child's behaviour. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD, is not caused when kids eat too much sugar.

As a parent, you want to do the best for your child. Set a good example by eating healthy and being physically active with your children. Your children will learn that a healthy lifestyle is both important and fun.

For more information on myths of childhood nutrition, and for tips on developing healthy eating habits for your family, contact the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit's Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 (or 345-5685) and ask to speak with a Registered Dietitian.

## TEACHERS RESOURCES

*Submitted by Kelly Munroe, Public Health Nurse*

Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Services looks at areas that lead to chronic disease as well as the prevention of injury and substance abuse. We are committed to delivering equitable service to all schools in our Tri-County area. Due to the large number of schools and our limited staff, we are unable to fill teachers requests for classroom teaching at this time. In order to assist teachers with the requirements of the Health and Physical Activity curriculum, we have teacher resource packages available on the following topics:

<b>Drug Use and Abuse</b>	Grade 1 – 8	<b>Injury Prevention</b>	Kindergarten
<b>Nutrition</b>	Kindergarten – 8		Grade 1
<b>Physical Activity</b>	Kindergarten – 8		Grade 2
<b>Smoking</b>	Kindergarten – 8		Grade 3
<b>Sun Safety</b>	Grade 1		Grade 4
	Grade 4	<b>Body Image</b>	Grade 6
	Grade 5		Grade 1 –8
	Grade 8		

To request a package call 1-800-660-5853 or 345-5685 and ask for the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Department.

## What does Self-esteem have to do with Physical Activity?

*Submitted by Danielle Shewfelt, Public Health Nurse*



The answer to that is **EVERYTHING!** Just think about how physical activity can improve your body. You become stronger, more flexible and you feel healthier. You improve your skills and knowledge in whatever activity you are doing. All of these things

improve your mood your health and the way you feel about yourself.

Self-esteem is the way you see and feel about yourself: your skills, your knowledge, your strengths and your weaknesses.

Many people struggle with their self-esteem, children and adults alike. What better way to improve your self-esteem than by doing something like physical activity?

Physical Activity has so many other benefits too like reducing the risk of diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, stroke, obesity, colorectal cancer and more.

Physical Activity is also a great way to deal with your stress, which can also affect the way you feel about yourself. The better you manage your stress the more confident you will feel.

You can be active with friends and family, Make it a fun social event, or use it as your time to be alone (peace and quiet)

So go for a walk, ski, snowshoe, dance or swim. Just get out there, and **PLAY!** It will make you feel better.....**ABOUT YOURSELF.**



## Prenatal Classes: What to do when "It's no longer all about YOU"!

*Submitted by Denise Kall, Public Health Nurse*

Pregnancy is an exciting time for a woman and her family. It can also be a challenging time. A pregnant woman and her partner have many decisions to make in the coming months. They also have many expectations and maybe several worries or fears. How can they know what to do when 'Life is no longer all about you'? How can they make sure the new 'little one' gets the best start possible? Health Unit Prenatal Classes can ensure a smooth transition through pregnancy, childbirth and parenting.

Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit Prenatal Classes are delivered in a classroom setting, but use a variety of tools such as displays, videos, discussions & additional reading materials to suit different learning styles. Pregnant women can attend with their husband, partner, or another significant person who can be supportive throughout the pregnancy. Classes are offered in seven locations throughout the tricounty, making it easy to find a location close to home.

Pregnancy is a time when women and their partners want lots of information. There certainly is a lot of information out there! With ready access to the Internet, many women find vast amounts of information about pregnancy & delivery. But how do they know it is accurate & trustworthy? The Health Unit's Prenatal Classes have

recently been revised with a whole new series of classes starting in October 2003. The new classes feature the latest information on medical tests, premature labour, nutrition & lifestyle choices, delivery options, roles for fathers, breastfeeding, and infant care. The videos are current and informative. For peace of mind, participants will be given references to websites, books, and articles that are known to be reliable and trustworthy. Weekend classes will be piloted in some locations in the New Year.

When should a couple go to Prenatal Classes? Many couples wait until later pregnancy before attending. Some couples even miss the last few classes if 'baby' decides to make an early entrance. In fact, starting classes early in pregnancy is recommended for several reasons. Many of the changes a woman makes in her lifestyle during pregnancy are important to start as soon as possible. Knowing all about these changes early, gives baby the best start possible. The majority of medical tests are done in early pregnancy, so learning all about them, helps during doctor's visits. Learning about relaxation, comfort measures & breathing patterns sooner, gives lots of time for the couple to practice & perfect their technique. Knowing what is normal & when it is necessary to seek medical assistance can be valuable if any complications arise. So, if you are planning a pregnancy, are pregnant, or know someone who is, call the Health Action Line (1-800- 660-5853) for more information about the new Health Unit Prenatal Class series.



## Breast Health

*Submitted by Bonnie Schnittker, Public Health Nurse*

### October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month!

Breast cancer is the most common female cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death in women. This year, approximately 8,000 women in Ontario will find out they have breast cancer and 2,000 will die from the disease.

### Who is at risk?

Two of the biggest risk factors for breast cancer are being a woman and increasing in age. Ontario Early Detection Guidelines recommend that women over 50 begin having regular mammograms every 2 years. Some women with other risk factors, such as family history, may start having regular mammograms earlier. Speak to your doctor to see what you should do.

### What are we doing about this?

The Leeds Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit and the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) are working together to promote the services of the Ontario Breast Screening Program. This is a program for women 50 and over, who can take charge of their breast health and can call to make their own appointments. Results are sent to women and their doctors, and women are automatically called back for their next appointment.

### What is breast screening?

At the Ontario Breast Screening Program, women receive a thorough clinical breast examination by a specially trained nurse examiner, a high quality mammogram (x-ray of the breast) and information on breast self-examination.



ontario breast  
screening program

a cancer care ontario program

### Why is breast screening so important?

Currently there is no clear way to prevent breast cancer so early detection through screening is the best approach. Screening finds breast cancer earlier, when treatment has a better chance of success. Research shows that regular screening in women age 50 – 69 can reduce deaths from breast cancer by 30%.

### What should you do?

You can call to make your own appointment. If you don't meet the age requirement yet, keep this information in mind for future use.

#### Your local OBSP sites are:

**Ottawa OBSP Centre** 613-728-0777  
1-800-465-6226

**Renfrew:**  
Renfrew Victoria Hospital 613-432-4851  
1-800-916-6277

**Winchester:**  
Winchester District Memorial Hospital  
613-774-2422 ext.5617

**Kingston OBSP Centre** 613-384-4284  
1-800-465-8850

**Brockville:**  
Brockville General Hospital 613-345-8304

Men and women alike are encouraged to share this information with a friend, loved one or co-worker.