



Health Matters

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

Fall 2004

<http://www.healthunit.org>

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FREE Influenza Vaccination Clinics (ending Dec. 2, 2004)

STEP UP AND PLAY YOUR ROLE IN ENDING FAMILY ABUSE

Submitted by Carol Quinlan, BScN., R.N., Public Health Nurse

Did you know that:

- 1 in 4 women are abused at some point during their lifetime
- 1 in 6 men are abused at some point during their lifetime
- Family abuse occurs in 1 in 6 homes
- Children who are exposed to abuse are as affected as those children who are abused directly
- Family abuse is occurring in your community, in your neighbourhood and possibly within your own extended family network.
- Family abuse affects everyone

October is **Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month**. The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Health Unit in partnership with two other Health Units- Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington; and Hasting & Prince Edward Counties, have designed a media campaign called, "Step Up and Play Your Role in Ending

Family Abuse". This campaign will run the full month of October. The focus of this campaign is to raise community awareness about family abuse and to encourage action within the community to help these children and their families get the help that they need.

Family abuse continues because we are silent about it. The responsibility to speak out and to stop the abuse can no longer be left up to the victim and his or her children. We have the power to stop violence by **SPEAKING UP**. If you are experiencing abuse or know someone who is please contact:

- Children's Aid Society in Lanark 264-1500
- Family and Children's Services in Leeds and Grenville 498-2100
- Interval House, Lanark 1-800-267-7946
- Interval House, Leeds and Grenville 1-800-267-4409

A note from the editor

The Fall 2004 edition of the Health Matters Newsletter will be **the last hard copy version** for teachers in the Upper Canada District School Board. Beginning in January 2004, teachers will find this publication on the Health Unit/Upper Canada District School Board School Website: www.healthunit.org

Teachers in the Catholic School Board of Eastern Ontario will continue to receive paper versions of Health Matters, while we work to launch a joint School Website within their organization.

Raccoon Rabies Returns To Our Area

Submitted by Piotr Oglaza, BSc.Med, Public Health Inspector

What is Rabies?

- Rabies is a deadly, infectious and contagious disease of the central nervous system.
- It is caused by a virus that is carried in the saliva of warm-blooded mammals.
- In North America, raccoons, bats, foxes and skunks are significant wildlife species that spread the disease.

How is Rabies Transmitted?

- The rabies virus is concentrated in the saliva, mucus membranes and central nervous tissue of a rabid animal.
- Humans can contract rabies by being exposed to the saliva of an infected animal. Usually, the person is bitten or scratched allowing the virus to enter the broken skin.
- The virus then moves into the nervous system. It may also enter through an open cut or mucus membrane (eyes, nose, and mouth).

Preventing Rabies

- Prevent exposure to the disease by staying away from all unknown animals, both wild and domestic. Avoid contact with stray, unknown or wild animals
- Never touch a sick, injured, trapped or dead animal.
- If you must remove a dead animal wear protective gloves and wash all contaminated surfaces with soap and water. If bitten, wash the bite area with warm water and soap, contact your family doctor and report the biting incident to the Health Unit
- All cats and dogs must be vaccinated against rabies
- Do not let your pets (dogs and cats) run at large.



After a year of no positive rabid raccoons in the health unit area, on August 13, 2004, two raccoons were shot by a local resident and subsequently found to be positive for the raccoon strain of rabies. On September 3, 2004 one more raccoon submitted through the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) was confirmed positive for rabies by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. All three raccoons were from the Mallorytown/ Junetown areas.

In consultation with the Ministry of Natural Resources, Rabies Research Unit, the Ministry on August 20, 2004 started another concentrated control program consisting of trapping, vaccination and releasing of all raccoons caught within a 10-kilometer radius of the residence where the positive raccoons were found. The area spans a 10 kilometre radius around LaRue Mills Road and County Road 2 and will continue for a four week period.

When Bitten

- Immediately wash the wound with soap and water to remove as much of the animal's saliva as possible.
- Avoid splashing wash-water into your eyes, nose or mouth as the virus can enter your body through these mucus membranes.
- Contact you doctor or visit the emergency department of your local hospital.
- All animal bites must be reported to the Health Unit in accordance with the Health Protection and Promotion Act of Ontario.

Additional to this local control program, the Ministry started to conduct aerial drops of vaccine-laden bait in a large geographical area encompassing all the rural spaces between Kingston and Ottawa. The aerial vaccine bait drop program is intended to complement other control activities that have been carried out locally since raccoon rabies first arrived in our Health Unit in 1999.

The 9th Day of the 9th Month is International FASD Awareness Day

Submitted by Denise Kall, BScN, R.N., Public Health Nurse

Each year at 9:09 a.m. on the Ninth Day of the Ninth Month, communities around the world are asked to spend a moment of reflection to remember that during the nine months of pregnancy, alcohol can be very dangerous to the baby. People everywhere are asked to remember the millions of people worldwide who will struggle with lifelong intellectual disabilities caused by exposure to alcohol before birth. This Fall, the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Coalition of Leeds, Grenville & Lanark wants women of childbearing age and their families to understand that “Alcohol & Pregnancy Don’t Mix.” In fact, it is safest to stop drinking alcohol before pregnancy. The school setting is an important place for this message, since so many young teachers are in their reproductive years. Intermediate students, within the Health curriculum, should learn about the effects of alcohol on the developing fetus.

Prenatal exposure to alcohol is the leading known cause of preventable brain damage in Canada. There is no known safe amount or time that alcohol can be consumed during pregnancy. One in 100 births are affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol.

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause permanent brain damage and birth defects to a baby. Brain damage caused as a result of prenatal exposure to alcohol can result in learning disabilities, hyperactivity, difficulty

paying attention, difficulty remembering, difficulty managing anger, poor judgment and difficulties with problem solving.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is the umbrella term used to describe the range of defects and disabilities that are caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is a lifelong problem that the child will not outgrow. FASD occurs in all cultures and levels of society. Early diagnosis is important to help get resources in place to support FASD families.

Alcohol is a part of our Canadian lifestyle. There are many reasons why it may continue to be used during pregnancy:

- Some women may drink before they know they are pregnant
- Some may not know it is harmful
- Some women drink alcohol because of life’s problems
- Some may be pressured by family & friends
- Some drink alcohol because it is part of their social life

All women need the support of their partners, families, co-workers and communities to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

For more information on alcohol and pregnancy, contact the Health Unit’s Health Action line: 1-800-660-5853 or visit www.alcoholfreepregnancy.ca



Borrowing children’s products from a friend, or buying second hand? Make sure they’re safe, says Health Unit

Raising children is expensive. More than half of Canadian parents cut costs by borrowing children’s products such as car seats from friends and relatives. One third buy used products at second-hand stores or garage sales.

But are those second-hand or borrowed products safe? Safe Kids Canada and the Health Unit urge parents to check these products out to make sure.

The Health Unit has provided two information sheets with this newsletter. “Check It Out”, produced by Safe Kids Canada, is a product safety

booklet with warnings about baby walkers, bath seats, older cribs, baby gates, and more. The second sheet offers tips on how to dispose of unsafe children’s products so they will not be reused and put other children at risk.

The Health Unit has requested support from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark municipalities to aid constituents’ efforts to clear their homes of unsafe products. During November check out local newspapers or our website at www.healthunit.org for a list of participating municipalities and how they will make disposal easier for you.

Facts About Hepatitis C

Submitted by Denise Gaulin, BScN, R.N., Public Health Nurse

What is Hepatitis C?

- Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by a virus. This virus was first found in 1989. It is called the Hepatitis C virus or HCV, for short.
- HCV is spread when people share blood or body fluids containing blood.
- Hepatitis C is different from Hepatitis A or Hepatitis B.

Who is at Risk of Getting Hepatitis C?

Since HCV is usually spread through direct blood-to-blood contact, people who are most likely to learn that they have Hepatitis C are:

- Past or present drug users who shared needles, spoons, straws and other drug-related equipment.
- People who received blood transfusions or blood products before 1992.
- Health care workers who have had an accidental needle stick injury.
- People who get tattoos or body part pierced with dirty or unsterile needles.
- People who share a razor or toothbrush with someone who has Hepatitis C.

Is it easy to get Hepatitis C?

If you live or work with someone who has Hepatitis C, you will NOT get the disease from day-to-day contact. To get Hepatitis C, you must share blood or body fluids containing blood with a person who has the disease.

Can I get Hepatitis C from having sex?

Your chance of getting Hepatitis C from having sex is very low. This is true for both straights (heterosexuals) and gays (homosexuals).

People with multiple sexual partners should always practise safer sex.

In general, longstanding sexual partners need to be informed that although the risk of HCV transmission is low it is not absent. Long-term monogamous couples should decide for themselves about routine condom use. However, sexual partners should know that the risk of transmission during sexual activity may increase when there are open sores and during menstruation.

Can babies get Hepatitis C from their mothers?

Yes, they can. Some studies show that between 5 and 10 women out of 100 who have HCV might pass it to their babies before OR at the time of birth.

Studies show that breastfeeding does NOT pass HCV from mother to baby. However, if the nipples are bleeding or cracked, it is recommended that breastfeeding be suspended until they are healed.

What are the signs of Hepatitis C?

Many people infected with HCV show no symptoms and feel healthy for years.

Other people feel tired, suffer from joint pain or don't feel like eating (no appetite). Some have a yellow look to their eyes and skin. This yellow look is called jaundice.

How Can I Know for Sure if I have Hepatitis C?

The only way to find out for sure is by having a blood test.

What If the Blood Test is Positive?

If you have a positive result, your doctor may order a second blood test. The second test will find out if the living virus is really in your blood and will check out the state of your liver.

A small number of people get very mild cases of Hepatitis C. They are able to get rid of the disease within six months. But when these people have a blood test, antibody to HCV can show up. So a second test is needed to find out if the living virus is really there.

In most cases, people with HCV infection do NOT get rid of it. They have HCV infection for the rest of their lives. Your family doctor will send you to a liver specialist.

The Canadian Liver Foundation can help you learn more about Hepatitis C. Call 1-800-563-5483 for more information.

Misuse of medication is 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 (*Ontario Drug Awareness Partnership, September 10, 2002*).

Clean out your medicine cabinet and make your home a safer place!

Submitted by Lois Dewey, Public Health Nurse

Medicine Cleanout

November 2004

When was the last time you cleaned out your medicines?

DID YOU KNOW...

- Expired, left over or unlabelled medicine can be dangerous. (Always complete the full prescription of antibiotics.)
- Medicine is a hazardous waste... Don't flush it... Don't throw it out.
- Proper disposal of medicine protects your family and the environment.

REMEMBER!!!

**Medicines
Include:
Prescriptions
Over the counter
Vitamins**

FOLLOW THESE STEPS...

- Step 1 Check your medicines for expiry dates
- Step 2 Place any expired, unlabelled or no longer used medicines in a bag
- Step 3 Bring the bag to your local participating pharmacy for safe and free disposal
- Step 4 Keep remaining medicines locked up and away from children

For list of participating pharmacies, call the Health ACTION Line at
1-800-660-5853 or 345-5685 or 283-2740
or visit us at www.healthunit.org



"All I want for Christmas..."

Submitted by Leslie Redmond, Registered Dental Hygienist

With December and the New Year fast approaching, bringing with it the season of giving, thoughts turn to gift buying for children.

If "all they want for Christmas is their two front teeth", how about something to help keep those teeth strong and healthy for a lifetime. There are many dental care products on the market that would make great gifts or stocking stuffers. You're never too young (or too old) to add a new "toy" to your oral health care routine. Healthy "baby" (primary) teeth are important for eating, smiling, talking and they also hold a place for erupting "adult" (permanent) teeth to come in.



Students & Staff Can Now Eat Smart!

Now there are healthier food choices on the menu. Tri-Health is proud to announce that *Brown's Fine Food Services* has received the Eat Smart! Award of Excellence in its ten high school cafeterias in Leeds, Grenville & Lanark in the Upper Canada District School Board. This provincial Eat Smart! School Cafeteria Program attempts to increase:

- Availability and promotion of healthier food choices.
- Awareness and knowledge of healthy eating.
- Food handling safety.

The ten high schools include:

Almonte and District High School
Athens District High School
Brockville Collegiate Institute
Gananoque Secondary School
North Grenville District High School
Perth and District Collegiate Institute
Rideau District High School
Smiths Falls District Collegiate Institute
South Grenville District High School
Thousand Islands Secondary School



Why not try these gift suggestions:

Electric or Battery Toothbrushes

- ▶ Sold at drug and department stores.
- ▶ Vary in price from under \$6 to over \$100.
- ▶ Manufactured by numerous companies and available in a variety of colours and sizes.
- ▶ Have either rechargeable or replaceable batteries.

* Look for replaceable brush heads and switch every 3-4 months.

Manual Toothbrushes

- ▶ Also come in a variety of colours, sizes, and "themes".
- ▶ Compact travel toothbrushes with cases are great to take to school.

* Look for soft bristles and age appropriate sizes.

Timers and Brushing Logs

- ▶ Handy egg timers ensure proper length of brushing time.
- ▶ Brushing charts or logs help keep track of brushing twice a day.
- ▶ Very motivational for younger children.

* Look for 2-minute timers.

Floss Picks and Handles

- ▶ Handles that hold floss for easier one handed flossing.
- ▶ Disposable picks come pre-flossed for quick and easier use.

* May require demonstration and not recommended for young children.

Flavoured Toothpaste

- ▶ Available to coordinate with "themes" of brushes of familiar movie and television characters.

* Look for fluoridated paste and only use a "pea" size amount.

Sugarless Gum

- ▶ Available in many brands and flavours.
- ▶ Chewing sugarless gum between meals helps reduce acid activity in the mouth that causes tooth decay.

So try stopping at the drugstore on your way to the toy store and add some variety to your gift giving.

Unplugged and Still Running

Submitted by Danielle Shewfelt, BScN, Public Health Nurse

Our TV Turn Off Campaign for 2004 was a great success. The TV Turn Off Week Challenge took place the week of March 29th to April 4th. This year's challenge was very well received. Fourteen schools registered to turn off their screens for the week although twenty schools agreed to take the challenge. They engaged in a variety of activities that promoted healthy eating and physical activity. Approximately 3,000 households in Leeds Grenville and Lanark were affected by this Challenge. Congratulations are in order for every class in every school that participated.

Schools were encouraged to organize activities throughout the week that the entire school and even the community could participate in. Teachers were encouraged to incorporate physical activity and nutrition messages into their curriculum and classroom activities. Students, teachers and their families were encouraged to turn off TV's, computers and video games and to get active instead.

Teachers were provided with a package of resources to assist parents with the challenge, documents to support the curriculum, log sheets, promise forms, certificates and ideas for how to make TV Turn Off Week a success.

Each school that registered received a prize for one class in their school that was the "Best Class" for the week. The prize was a large bin containing a selection of physical activity equipment, donated by the Tri Health Coalition. There was a "Best School" chosen that was awarded the TV Turn Off Cup engraved with the school name that can be displayed in their School for the year.

This year Calvary Christian Academy from Franktown was awarded the "TV Turn Off Week Cup" They had 100% participation by all students and staff. Also, 87% of the students' families participated. School wide activities were organized and parents were encouraged to assist in the week's activities. Daily routines included lunch and snack analysis, home room exercises, morning, lunch and afternoon recess activities and take home ideas and activities. Within classrooms teachers also incorporated activities to promote the TV Turn Off messages into their curriculum. As well as the daily routines, they also organized Special Activities including: Winter Carnival activity rotation, Reading Challenge, Dress Up Ottawa Senators Day, poster contest, field trips and guest speakers including police officers and Olympic coach and athlete Dr. Duane Jones.



Calvary Christian Academy has also continued activities from TV Turn Off throughout the year such as their daily morning exercises, water and healthy snack initiatives and their Running Club that is running across Canada. The run across Canada activity was where each student's time was calculated and the entire school time/distance was tracked on a map of Canada.

Pakenham Public School of Pakenham and St James Catholic School of Smiths Falls demonstrated an exceptional effort for TV Turn Off Week and also received an honourable mention.

If you would like to try the TV Turn Off Challenge, information can be found on our website including a promise form, a log sheet and some helpful ideas. To access these resources go to www.healthunit.org and click on PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.