



# Health Matters

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

Spring 2004

<http://www.healthunit.org>

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## THE TIME FOR SUMMER-FUN HAS BEGUN!

*Submitted by Danielle Shewfelt, Public Health Nurse*

Summer-Active is a national challenge that will be launched on May 10, which is the second annual "Global Move for Health Day". The challenge will run from May 10 to June 19 2004. The goal of the Summer Active Challenge is to get Canadians more active.

Currently Canadians are not active enough with 54% of men and 60% of women 20 years and older are considered inactive in Ontario (Canadian Population Health Initiative, 2004)

Physical Activity is anything that gets your body moving. Some examples of family activities can include washing the car, walking the dog, planting a garden, shovelling the walk and raking the leaves.

Family outings can be centred on fun activities like hiking, biking, swimming and ice-skating. These types of outings can create great memories for your family. These memories may also give a positive view of physical activity, which can be carried throughout a lifetime. This is a great incentive for your kids to live a healthy active life.

Health Canada recommends that adults be active for a minimum of 30 minutes a day every day of the week. This activity can be done in smaller 10-minute blocks of time throughout the day. Children and youth (ages 6-14) are encouraged to replace their screen time (TV and video games) with active play. It is recommended that they be active starting with 30 minutes of physical activity per day and working up to 90 minutes per day. For more information on Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines go to [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/paguide/](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/paguide/)

For those wishing to take the Summer Active Challenge information is available on the Summer Active website [www.summeractive.canoe.ca](http://www.summeractive.canoe.ca)

Community leaders can post local events and information on line. You can also register for the Summer Active challenge on line.

If you have any questions about the Summer Active Challenge contact

Monica Sulej  
Parks and Recreation Ontario  
1185 Eglinton Ave East Suite 406  
Toronto, ON, M5G 3C6  
Tel (416) 426-7313  
Fax (416) 426-7371  
Email: [summeractiveon@ontario.org](mailto:summeractiveon@ontario.org)

## Let's Get Physical!

*Submitted by: Kim MacInnis, Public Health Nurse*

Our children are less active and as a result less healthy today than ever before. Some of the reasons for this may be due to our changing family lives, obsession with technology and less time devoted to physical activity in schools.

Quality Daily Physical Education (QDPE) is a program that can help remedy the crisis of inactivity in our youth. QDPE is a well planned, balanced program of instruction that incorporates physical activity through curricular, co-curricular and intramural activities from k-12, for an accumulated minimum of 30 minutes per day. This program helps to instill a positive attitude towards active living. Some of the benefits for students include:

- Increased performance academically than those receiving more academic curriculum time and less physical education
- Development of positive attitudes about physical activity, school and themselves.
- Creation of a positive school climate. Students are less aggressive and experience fewer disciplinary actions.
- Increased endurance and muscle strength.
- Decreased risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.
- Improved self-esteem and self-concept.
- Better personal health habits- (i.e. less likely to smoke and use drugs and alcohol).

In January 2004, the Gananoque group of schools consisting of Linklater, William Hiscocks and Landsdowne hosted a Professional Activity day with a focus on QDPE. This informative, activity filled morning was lead by enthusiastic trainer Stephanie Reddoch from Ontario Physical Health and Education Association (OPHEA). Stephanie demonstrated activities that can easily be incorporated into the classroom on a day-to-day basis.

This group of schools has already begun to incorporate QDPE into schools by teaching students a variety of dances that will be performed during a dance festival in May.



PHOTO: GANANOQUE REPORTER

### ***Quotes from the day:***

*"I've always seen my job as helping to build healthy bodies as well as healthy minds. This workshop helped me do exactly that."*

– Randy Ruttan, Principal of Gananoque Secondary School

*"This was a very practical day with lots of ideas for the classroom, gym and outside in the playground. The activities were enjoyed by all."*

– Pam Truesdell, grade 1 teacher, Linklater Public School

*"This was most assuredly the most engaging workshop I have participated in in years. The activities Ms. Reddoch presented covered English, Math & Geography curricula while having participants do an aerobic workout. It was fun and practical."*

– Cathy Sawyer Griffin, Principal of Linklater Public School

### **How can you find out more about this exciting initiative?**

Contact: Dianne Norris, Linklater Public School  
Pam Truesdell, Linklater Public School

The following are a list of sample activities you can use in your classroom! Be creative.

## Classroom Triathlon

Source: Stephanie Reddoch, QDPE trainer

1. Introduce Triathlon to students (ex.-swim, bike, run) at the beginning of the week to allow them to bring in equipment. Students are asked to bring in:
  - Swimming goggles
  - Bike helmet
  - Baseball hats (hats to shade head)
  - Sweatbands
  - Comfortable clothing like shorts, t-shirts
2. Provide examples of how to do each activity:
3. **Swimming**- jogging on the spot with swimming arm actions=higher intensity (front crawl, back crawl, etc.). Lower intensity=just arm movements.
 

**Biking**- sitting in chairs and rotating their feet to pedal. Lower intensity= while sitting in chair peddling with feet, feet lower, hands on seat of chair, slower revolutions with feet. Higher intensity=faster peddling motions.

**Running**- jogging on the spot. Lower intensity=slower jogging with arms low. Higher intensity=faster jogging with arms higher.

### Transition Times

Explain that transition times occur when the athlete finishes an event and has to change into his/her next gear

to go on to the next event. Use music- when one song is finishing and another is beginning, shout "transition" to cue the students to take off one kind of gear and put on another.

### Review

1. Make sure the students understand the event-create a visual image.
2. Make sure they know where to keep their equipment (on desk).
3. Make sure they know to vary intensity levels

### NOTE:

- Stopping is not an option! If students are tired, have them alter their intensity!
- If students do not have a bike helmet, they may turn their ball cap backwards for the bike segment. They can then turn it back the other way for the run.

**Music:** Have familiar music from a movie depending upon what subject you are teaching. (Ex.-if you are teaching Medieval Times-use "A Knight's Tale"). Any upbeat music will be suitable.

**End of the Event**- have all students pretend to "break the tape" at the finish line. We are all winners for participating in this event!

*Activities continued on page 4*



PHOTO: GANANOQUE REPORTER

**Activities** *continued from page 3*

**Math Match**

*Source: Ontario HPE Curriculum Support*

**Equipment:**

Number cards, developed by teacher to meet curriculum level.

**Description:**

1. Students move around the room (jogging, skipping, hopping).
2. On a signal, they each take a card from the teacher and try to find the person who is their match (e.g.- question card:  $5 \times 7 = \underline{\quad}$ , answer card: 35).
3. Each question should have one answer card.
4. When the students find their match, partners complete a fitness task together (e.g-five chair step-ups, 10 jumping jacks), then continue moving around the room.
5. While the students are moving, the teacher can mix up the cards, or distribute them at random.

**Action Spelling**

*Source: Ontario HPE Curriculum Support: Grade 4, Unit 10, Subtask #2*

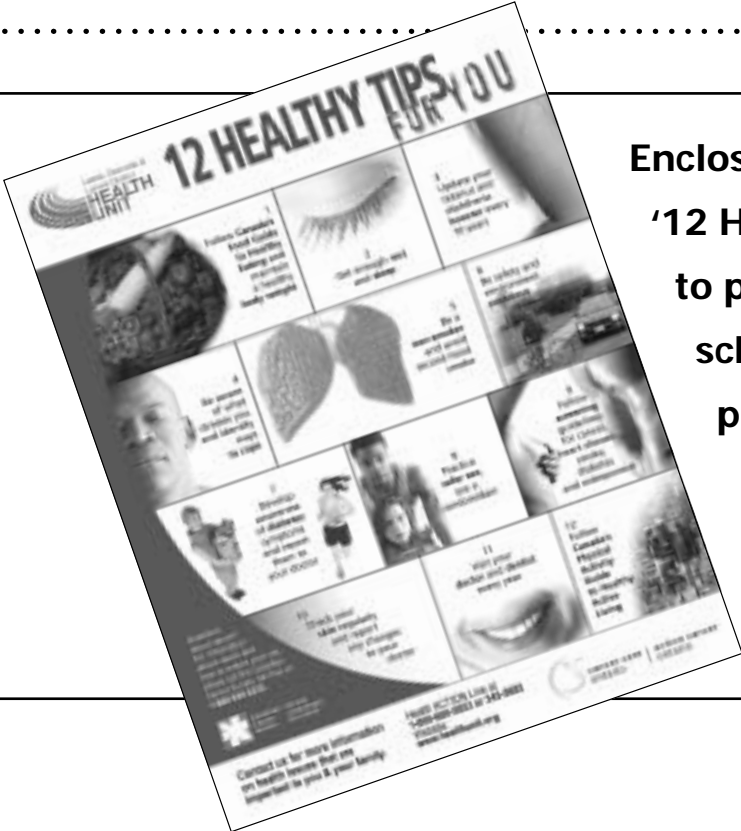
**Equipment:** List of actions for vowels

**Description:** Students spell vocabulary words out loud as a class. Each time they say a vowel, all students do an action:

- A - lunge jump-each side
- E - 2 stride jumps
- I - reach up then touch the floor
- O - knee lift-each leg
- U - jump on spot-5 times

To find out more about QDPE check around your school for the physical education curriculum binder or log on to <http://www.cahperd.ca/e/qdpe/>

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**Enclosed are copies of the '12 Healthy Tips for You' poster to post. Display within your school for staff, students and parents to view.**

**If you require additional copies, please call 1-800-660-5853.**

## Healthy Snacks, Healthy Teeth

*Submitted by Heather Deegan, Registered Dietitian and Leslie Redmond, Registered Dental Hygienist*

Snacks provide energy between meals and help us get through the morning and afternoon. They can also be a valuable source of nutrients like calcium and iron, to help round out the nutrients we get from meals. Snacks are particularly important for children. With small stomachs, it can be difficult for kids to get all the nutrients they need from 3 large meals a day.

Of course, some snacks are healthier than others. Many snack foods are high in sugar, fat and salt and do not offer a lot of nutrition. However, there are many healthy options for snack foods. You should also think about your dental health when planning snacks. The following tips will help you choose snacks that are healthy for you and your teeth.

### Tips for Healthy Snacks

- Use Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating to plan snacks.
- Try to choose foods from 2 or 3 food groups for a snack.
- When selecting grain products, choose higher-fibre muffins, pita, bagels, cereal, bread and crackers.
- Choose dark colours for vegetables and fruit (red peppers, orange carrots, green peppers, blueberries).
- Milk products supply calcium and many other important nutrients.
- Seeds, nuts and nut butters are an alternative to meat and give a protein boost.

#### Healthy Snack Ideas

- popcorn & chocolate milk
- pretzels & hummus
- yogurt & unsweetened cereal
- ½ sandwich
- bread sticks & cheese
- vegetable chunks, such as peppers, carrots, broccoli and tomato
- ½ bagel & nut butter
- nuts & seeds
- crackers & cheese
- muffin & fruit
- pita & egg salad

### What about dried fruit?

Even though some snacks are nutritious, they may be bad for your teeth. Raisins are a good example of this type of snack. Raisins are very high in fibre and also contain iron. Both of these nutrients are good for nutritional health. However, raisins and other dried fruits such as Craisins (dried cranberries) and apricots are high in natural sugar. Because these foods are sticky, the teeth are exposed to sugars for longer periods, which increases the risk of tooth decay.

Other high-sugar foods are also bad for dental health. Fruit drinks (made with syrup or sugar crystals) and high sugar snacks (sticky granola bars, candy, cookies, cakes, chocolate) mix with germs in the mouth (plaque) to make an acid. This "acid attack" can lead to cavities.

### Think About Your Teeth

If you can't brush your teeth after you snack, eat cheese, nuts or seeds to prevent tooth decay – especially after sticky, high-sugar snacks. These foods offer some nutrition and will help reduce the dental risk by neutralizing the acids which cause cavities.

Chewing on sugar-free gum and rinsing your mouth with water after eating will also cut down the risk of tooth decay by removing food particles from the teeth and increasing saliva flow in the mouth.

Between-meal snacks are a great option for that mid-morning or mid-afternoon hunger. When you are choosing snacks, don't forget about your dental health because nutrition and healthy teeth go hand in hand.

For more information on nutrition and dental health, please contact the Leeds, Grenville, & Lanark District Health Unit's Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 (or 345-5685).

# MOSQUITO-PROOFING YOUR HOUSE & YARD

## Reduce the places that attract mosquitoes

The West Nile Virus (WNV) is a mosquito borne virus that can cause human illness (particularly in individuals 50 and above). This virus is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. To help reduce your risk of being bitten, it is recommended that you eliminate the mosquito breeding areas around your house.

Any standing water should be discarded so that breeding of mosquitoes is interrupted. Follow the checklist and you will help prevent mosquitoes from breeding around your home.

### Helpful yard clean-up hints for around your home.

- Store wheel barrows on their side
- Clean out eaves troughs
- Empty water buckets and either store inside or turned over
- Empty water from flowerpots
- Empty water from toys
- Turn over child's swimming pool when not in use
- Change water every 3 days in bird baths
- Change water in pet water bowls frequently
- Empty water from old tires
- Rain barrels should be covered with mesh or screen



**Brockville 345-5685 Smiths Falls 283-2740**  
**Health action Line 1-800-660-5853**

For further information on West Nile Virus  
please call the Health Protection Department  
or visit our web site at

[http://www.healthunit.org/hea\\_haz/westnile/west\\_nile.htm](http://www.healthunit.org/hea_haz/westnile/west_nile.htm)

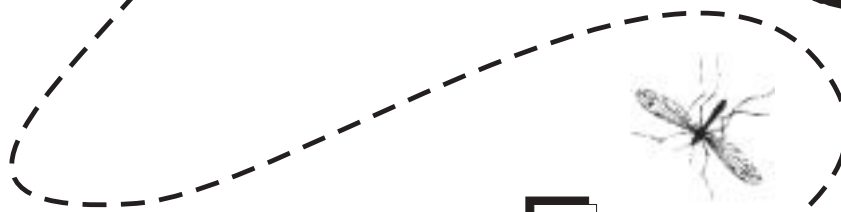


# Where would you look for standing water? How many places can you find?



Toy Truck

Child's Pool



Shovel



Pail



Flower Pot

Wheel Barrow



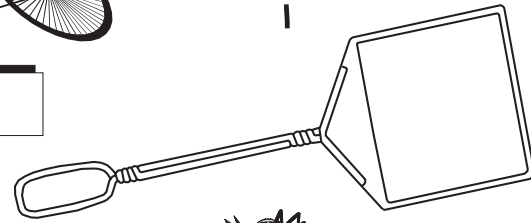
Old tires



Bird Bath



Bike



## Clean Hands Are Classy.

*Submitted by Piotr Oglaza, Public Health Inspector*

Proper handwashing is the single most important means of reducing the spread of harmful germs. It is important to wash your hands properly and regularly. But when should you wash your hands?

### Use the 6 Step Method of Handwashing to thoroughly wash your hands:

- Before handling food
- After using the washroom
- After handling pets
- After coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or yawning
- After touching money or anything else that could have likely contaminated your hands

Be aware of what you are doing with your hands and how they can become contaminated with harmful germs. Did you touch your hair or clothing? Did you cough or sneeze? Did you touch a doorknob or use a keyboard used by other people? Did you take out the garbage? Did you turn off the tap with your bare hand?

Wash your hands often and avoid re-contaminating them before eating or handling food. It is a sure way to reduce the spread of harmful germs.

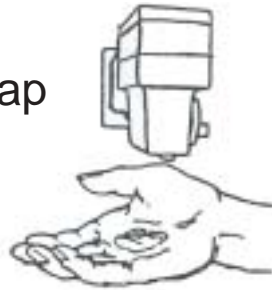
For additional information and assistance call the Health Unit at (613) 345 5685 or (613) 283 2740.

## 6 Step Method of HANDWASHING

### 1. Wet Hands



### 2. Soap



### 3. Lather



### 4. Rinse



### 5.



Towel Dry

### 6. Turn Taps Off With Towel



# Cannabis: Weeding out the Myths from the Facts

*Submitted by Tawnya Boileau and Julie Ingleby, Public Health Nurses*

## What is Cannabis?

Cannabis, also known as Marijuana, pot, hash, weed, dope, honey oil (hash oil), ganja, or a joint, is the most common illegal drug in Canada. It is made from the dried leaves and flowering tops of the Cannabis Sativa plant. THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) is the main active ingredient in Cannabis and is responsible for producing the “high” that changes the way you think, feel and act.

## Myth vs. Fact

MYTH	FACTS
<b>Cannabis is harmless.</b>	Cannabis can cause a great deal of harm. Today’s Cannabis is more powerful than 20-30 years ago as growers have produced cannabis plants with increased amount of THC. All forms of Cannabis are mind-altering but can affect users in different ways depending on several factors: the strength and amount taken, users past experience with drugs, the route taken (smoked or eaten), users mood and their expectations of the drug and use in combination with alcohol or other drugs. Some effects include relaxation, anxiety, paranoid thoughts, hallucinations (distorted perception-hearing or seeing things), thirst and hunger, increased heart rate and blood pressure, loss of motor coordination, impaired memory, learning and judgment. Also, THC can damage immune cells, making a user more likely to get sick.
<b>Smoking Cannabis is less hazardous to your lungs than smoking cigarettes.</b>	Smoking Cannabis can be worse for the lungs than smoking cigarettes. Cannabis users tend to inhale more deeply than cigarette smokers, as a result, the amount of tar inhaled and the level of carbon monoxide absorbed is about 3-5 times greater. Studies show that 5 joints has as many cancer causing chemicals as a full pack of cigarettes. Although people usually smoke Cannabis less often than cigarettes, the effects are the same and include coughing, wheezing and lung infections.
<b>It is safe to drive under the influence of Cannabis.</b>	Smoking Cannabis impairs your skills required to drive safely such as: your ability to react quickly, to concentrate, to judge distances, and to remain alert. Studies have shown that Cannabis users demonstrate the same lack of coordination as a “drunk driver”. Smoking just one joint can impair driving ability up to 4-6 hours.
<b>Cannabis is not addictive.</b>	You can become addicted to Cannabis. The more you use the drug, the more drug you need to achieve the same desired effect-this is known as “tolerance”. When regular users are without the drug, they may feel uncomfortable, anxious, irritable or nervous and may experience disturbed sleep patterns, sweating, stomach upset, and loss of appetite.
<b>There are no long-term effects with Cannabis use.</b>	There are numerous long term effects associated with chronic marijuana use. These include: persistent symptoms of chronic bronchitis, increased risk of cancers and lung infections, altered function of the body’s immune cells, possible impairment of memory and attention, subtle cognitive impairments, drug tolerance, and potentially mental health issues (ie. schizophrenia and psychosis).

**Sources:**

*Community Safety Net – Drug Safety The Choice is Yours, 2001*  
*Addiction Research Foundation, pamphlet “Cannabis”, 1991*  
*Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, article “Cannabis, is it safe?”, 2002*

*Centre for Addiction and Mental Health “About Marijuana”, 1991*  
*National Institute on Drug Abuse “Marijuana Facts for Teens”, 2003*  
*Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse “Cannabis FAQ’s”, 2002*

# Promoting Sun Safety in Schools

*Submitted by Tawnya Boileau, Public Health Nurse*

Overexposure to UV radiation is a public health concern due to the serious health effects it can have on children and adults. These health effects may include: sunburns, blisters, premature aging, eye damage, immunosuppression, skin cancer and even death (WHO, 2003).

Children, in particular, are at risk for serious health effects as their skin is thinner and more sensitive to UV radiation damage. In fact, it is estimated that up to 80% of skin damage occurs before the age of 18. This skin damage increases the risk of developing skin cancer later in life (Division of Epidemiology, Prevention and Screening, 2002). Therefore, it is evident that preventative efforts need to be taken in order to protect children from harmful UV rays. Children who learn preventive health habits at an early age are “more likely to adopt and sustain a healthy lifestyle during schooling and for the rest of their lives” (WHO, 2003).

Schools can be an excellent place to deliver preventive “sun safety” messages for the following reasons:

- Children spend a large portion of their time at school where they are often exposed to UV radiation at recess, lunch, sporting events etc. when UV radiation levels are highest.
- The school environment is geared towards learning and practicing and reinforcing new skills.
- Teachers can be positive role models, influencing knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. (WHO, 2003).

In the World Health Organization’s 2003 document “Sun Protection, A Primary Teaching Resource”, they have provided a few lesson plans that teachers can use in order to incorporate sun safety into the curriculum without having to invest a lot time and resources. Here are a few samples:

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## **Sun Safety Through Sun Protection (ages 6-9) Shady Characters**

### **Objectives:**

### **Students will:**

- Learn that staying indoors or in the shade at certain times of day/year can help to avoid skin and eye damage.
- Learn that appropriate hats and clothing, sunscreen, and sunglasses can help to protect against damage caused by the sun.
- Be able to identify strategies used by the school to minimize sun exposure.

Discuss why using shade is an important way to protect the skin from sun damage. Ask the students to name different kinds of shade providers, such as an umbrella, hat, tree, clothing, sunglasses, shade cloth, a roof.

### **Key Sun Safety Messages:**

- Reduce sun exposure between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the sun’s rays are strongest
- Seek shade, especially between 11a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Cover skin with protective clothing (loose fitting, tightly woven, lightweight).
- Wear a wide brimmed hat.
- Wear sunglasses with UVA and UVB protection.
- Wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen (protects against both UVA and UVB rays). Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before sun exposure and reapply at least every 2 hours.
- Tanning beds are not a safe way to tan.
- A tan is evidence of skin damage-no tan is a safe tan.

*Source: Canadian Cancer Society*

**Try some of these activities:**

- Go for a walk around the school just before break or lunchtime and map the shady areas.
- Talk about what games the students like to play in these places.
- Take your umbrellas for a walk around the neighbourhood.
- Plant a shade tree where shade is needed.
- Make a collage out of magazine pictures of shady gardens, houses with verandas, etc.
- Label the pictures with the student’s explanations of how these things help to keep them and others safe from the sun.

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**The Sun and UV Radiation (ages 10-12)  
Understanding the UV Index**

**Objectives:**

**Students will:**

- Learn that UV radiation is at its maximum at certain times of day and year.
- Learn that wearing protective clothing, sunscreen, and sunglasses helps to minimize UV exposure.
- Be able to identify times/locations/situations when sun protection is most necessary.

Ask students whether they have heard of the UV Index. Where have they come across the information? Can they describe what the UV Index is?

Explain that the UV Index is a way of describing the level of solar UV radiation at the Earth’s surface. The values of the index range from zero upward – the higher the index value, the greater the potential for damage to the skin and eyes, and the less time it takes for harm to occur.

Discuss some of the factors that influence UV radiation levels at specific locations, e.g. altitude, cloud cover, surrounding surfaces, and in particular latitude.



Using a world map, ask students to predict which cities or countries would have the highest/lowest UV radiation levels. You could provide them with a list of cities listed on the Internet (e.g. from <http://www.who.int/phe/uv>) and ask them to locate them on the map and rank them according to UV radiation levels. You may even ask them to do the same exercise for two different times of the year, e.g. mid-winter and mid-summer.

Ask them to verify their thoughts with selected UV Index readings for different cities around the world that are available from the Internet. What is the reason for these differences? How does the UV Index differ at different times of year and times of day?

For more information on sun safety or for additional lesson plans, please contact Tawnya Boileau, Public Health Nurse, at 345-5685 ext. 2226. Lesson plans may also be retrieved by visiting the World Health Organization site at [www.who.int/uv/publications/en/primaryteach.pdf](http://www.who.int/uv/publications/en/primaryteach.pdf).

# Road Safety is No Accident

*Submitted by Julie Ingleby, Public Health Nurse*



Road traffic collisions kill almost 1.2 million people each year around the world. Despite this statistic, collisions are largely neglected as a health issue, perhaps because they are viewed by many people as events that are beyond our control. However, most of these collisions can be avoided. The majority of all injuries are predictable and preventable.

The World Health Organization has designated April 7<sup>th</sup> each year as World Health Day. This year, for the first time, the serious issue of Road Safety is the designated theme.

Numerous organizations and partners worldwide are planning events with the theme: “Road Safety is No Accident”. The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, together with Perth, Smiths Falls and Brockville Safe Communities and local police forces, is addressing this important issue. The campaign includes the distribution of handbills, resembling traffic tickets, at events such as RIDE programs. This “ticket” includes the 5 Smartrisk messages as related to road safety:

<b>Drive Sober</b>	Drive free from impairment (drugs, alcohol, drowsiness) and distraction (cell phones, loud music).
<b>Look First</b>	Assess the area before you proceed (check your blind spots). Be alert for pedestrians, animals, cyclists, railway crossings, and other vehicles. Check to ensure your vehicle is mechanically safe.
<b>Buckle Up</b>	Ensure seatbelts and car seats are properly adjusted and installed.
<b>Wear the Gear</b>	Wear the appropriate safety equipment for the activity (including approved bicycle, motorcycle, ATV, and snowmobile helmets).
<b>Get Trained</b>	Know the rules of the road. Take a defensive driving course. Get trained in First Aid and CPR.

May 31<sup>st</sup> to June 6<sup>th</sup> is  
**Safe Kids Week.**  
 This year’s theme is on Booster Seat  
 use and we will be sending materials  
 to your school for JK to grade 2  
 students to take home  
 in late May.