

SCHOOL HEALTH MATTERS



Winter 2008
Newsletter for
Elementary Schools

with our partners in education

From the Editor

Welcome to the School Health Matters Newsletter. Our goal with this newsletter is to keep you, our elementary school educators, up to date with up and coming activities, research, resources and strategies to improve health. The School Health Matters Newsletter has taken on a new look this year.

It is divided into three main sections. The front cover, titled "News Bits" will give you the news from the Health Unit that you need to know for the upcoming school year. Inside, "Staying Informed Matters" has short articles that could assist in curriculum delivery, provide you with important information for your students or help with the development of a healthy school environment. The back page, "Your Health Matters Too" is dedicated to you. This winter issue lists several websites that you can utilize to improve your own health. "Web Wise" lists websites that have been reviewed and are recommended either for curriculum support or student use.

We want to provide you with a newsletter that is informative and useful to you. Let us know if you have any suggestions for future articles or if you have a great website you want to share with your colleagues. Contact your Public Health Nurse from the Health Promotion Department who is assigned to consult with your school.

Have a healthy and safe school year.

Your Editor,
Kelly-Ann Munroe
School Health Coordinator



News Bits ...

Attention Grade 4 & 5 Teachers!

This year's Racing Against Drugs event will be held from **May 27th – 29th, 2008**, at the Smiths Falls Youth Arena. Please watch for your registration form, to arrive by fax, in **March 2008**. See you at the Races!



Pause To Play



Students, teachers and families will be encouraged to pause their screens (i.e. TV, Computers, Video Games) to get active and eat healthy. Classes and schools are eligible to win activity kits.

Would you like to set Pause to Play time each day, once a week or one week a month? If so, materials are available on our website all year round at www.healthunit.org

Risk Watch Safety Program

Risk Watch is a comprehensive school-based teaching resource that addresses the eight leading causes of childhood injury. Every elementary school in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark received a copy of the program. Can you find your copy? For more information contact: Tawnya Boileau, (613) 345-5685 Ext.2226



Winteractive



Children and their families will be encouraged to resist the urge to hibernate this winter and instead celebrate our Canadian winter by getting active indoors and out. Check out our website for more information on how to be active, stay safe and have fun this winter.



Are Plastic Drinking Water Bottles Safe?

Plastic drinking water bottles seem to be everywhere. Look to the boardroom, offices and student desks and you are likely to see them.

Clean, safe drinking water is absolutely essential for good health and a super alternative to sugary drinks and soda pops. The safest sources of water are municipal water supplies that are continually monitored and tested regularly. Reusable water bottles are a more environmentally sound alternative to single use containers.

However, recent studies have suggested that there may be some health concerns related to certain types of plastics used in food and beverage containers; some polycarbonate (lexan) bottles have been removed from sale by retailers because of potential health hazards.

There are several different types of plastics used in food and beverage containers; polyethylene, polypropylene, polycarbonate, etc. Most of us wouldn't know one from the other! But, there is help. Most plastic containers are marked with a recycling

triangle with a **number one through seven** in the centre:

- #1 PETE (PET) - Polyethylene Terephthalate
- #2 HDPE - High Density Polyethylene
- #3 PVC - Polyvinyl Chloride (not generally used for food and beverage containers)
- #4 LDPE - Low Density Polyethylene
- #5 PP - Polypropylene
- #6 PS - Polystyrene
- #7 Other - Other including polycarbonate

Containers made with #1 type plastic, like commercially available bottled water, are designed for **single use only** and cannot safely be washed, sanitized and reused. Polycarbonate (#7) containers may leach harmful chemicals into their contents. This is especially true for older bottles and containers or ones that have become scratched or cracked.

Food and beverage containers made from #2, #4 or #5 plastics and glass, ceramic, aluminium or stainless steel are considered safe.

- Always be sure to wash, rinse and sanitize food and beverage containers after each use.
- Avoid storing plastic containers in direct sunlight and only use microwave safe plastics in the microwave.

Washing and sanitizing reusable water bottles

Here are some easy steps to follow to keep your water bottle clean:

- Wash the water bottle daily with soap and warm water. Use a brush to reach inside and clean the surfaces
- Rinse with clean water, and drain thoroughly
- Allow the water bottle to dry thoroughly overnight
- If you don't have a sink handy in your office, store the water bottle in a refrigerator at the end of the day so that germs won't grow overnight
- At least once a week, follow up washing with a sanitizing step
 - Sanitize by rinsing the inside of the bottle with a dilute bleach solution. Use 15ml bleach per 1 liter of water.
- Allow the bottle to thoroughly air-dry after washing and sanitizing.

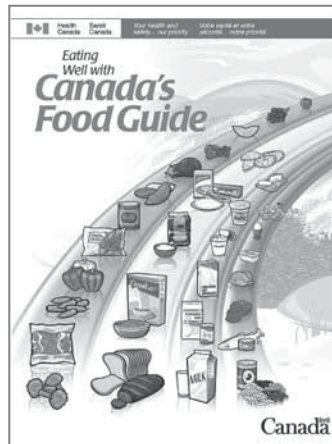
Note: Dishwasher water does not reach all parts of the inside of the bottle and may not be the most effective way to clean your bottle.



STAYING INFORMED MATTERS

The new Canada's Food Guide is here!

In February 2007, Health Canada launched "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide". It has a new look and specific number of servings based on gender and various stages of life, including children, adults, older adults, and pregnancy. The new food guide also includes information on physical activity, reading food labels, and is packed with messages on general healthy eating.



"NEED TO KNOW" details about Canada's Food Guide for your school:

Check out the excellent website from Health Canada: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide, including the interactive "My Food Guide", where your students can create a personalized Food Guide. If you have been using any "Food Pyramid" resources from the United States, now is the time to make your switch and use Canadian material.

To order copies of Canada's Food Guide (6 page foldout), or the Guide for Educators and Communicators (1 copy per teacher), please email: pamphlets@healthunit.org

Healthy Schools Recognition Program

What is the Healthy Schools Recognition Program?

- The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health Promotion have developed the Healthy Schools Recognition Program to promote and celebrate healthy behaviours and practices in Ontario's publicly funded schools.

Who Can Accept the Challenge?

- All publicly funded elementary and secondary schools in Ontario.

What Supports Are Available To Help Schools Become Healthier?

- The Ministry of Education has developed a number of tools and resources to help schools become healthier environments.
- To access the resources & tools please visit: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/healthyschools.html
- **A Public Health Nurse (from the Health Promotion Department) is available to provide information, consultation & support to your school to assist you in achieving this recognition.**

Influenza –

What is it and how can I prevent it?

Influenza, also known as the "flu", is caused by a virus. Anyone can get influenza.

How do I prevent the spread of influenza?

- Have a flu shot every year.
- Avoid contact with ill family and friends.
- Do not share eating or drinking utensils.
- Avoid crowded and enclosed spaces.
- Wash and sanitize hands regularly and properly.
- Cover your cough.

Getting the flu shot will protect you and your family, friends and students from influenza. The flu shot is safe for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

References:

Control of Infectious Diseases 18th Edition, 2004 Canadian Immunization Guide, 7th Edition, 2006

For more information call the Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853 or visit our website at: www.healthunit.org/infectious



Your Health Matters Too!

The Health Promotion Adult Team have included some of our favourite websites for you to peruse when you have questions about your own, or your adult loved ones' health.

SAFETY & INJURY PREVENTION

www.oninjuryresources.ca Ontario Injury Prevention Resource Centre. This site includes many links to other sites and lots of current information on injury prevention.

www.smartrisk.ca SmartRisk organization is a leader in injury prevention. It helps people see the risks in their everyday lives and shows them how to take those risks in the smartest ways possible so they can enjoy life to the fullest.

ACTIVE LIVING

www.isapa.org/About_ISAPA

International Society for Aging and Physical Activity (ISAPA). This is an excellent website for individuals looking for strategies to remain active during older age, or individuals looking to encourage aging parents to maintain or improve the quality of life through physical activity.

www.goforgreen.ca/home_e.html

Go for Green, Active Living and Environmental Solutions. This website is suggested for anyone concerned about their health or the environment, or anyone who enjoys the outdoors.



Web Wise

www.aadac4kids.com

An Interactive website for youth developed by the Alberta Alcohol Drug Abuse Commission. The site is called "My Room" and has several categories to click on such as: **The Facts, Fun 'n' Games, Do I Know Me, Tough Times, Ties that Bind.**



www.notgonnakillyou.ca

This website for youth is about getting active, eating right, and getting and staying healthy.

www.ontario.ca/eatright

This service provides easy-to-use nutrition information to help make food choices easier.

SMOKING CESSATION

www.smokershelpline.ca Interactive website to help smokers quit.

www.pregnets.org

Great information is found here for dealing with smoking during pregnancy.

ADDICTIONS

www.camh.net CAMH is Canada's leading addiction and mental health organization, working with the government to help shape public policy and resource development, as well as providing comprehensive care for people who have problems with mental illness or addictions (e.g. gambling, substance abuse).

www.frcentre.net A resource database for the 22 FOCUS Communities throughout Ontario that provide substance abuse prevention programming.

HEALTHY EATING

www.healthunit.org/nutrition

www.canadianhealthnetwork.ca

These are links to reliable, up-to-date information on healthy eating.

CANCER

www.cancer.ca This website includes information about cancer, prevention, research, support/services, how you can help and publications.

