



Fall 2010  
Newsletter for  
Elementary Schools

# SCHOOL HEALTH MATTERS

with our partners in education

## PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES SCHOOL HEALTH TEAM

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Visit our website at:  
[www.healthunit.org/school](http://www.healthunit.org/school)  
for additional resources  
or call: 1-800-660-5853

## Hello from the Medical Officer of Health!

I am very pleased to have joined the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit as the Medical Officer of Health in May, 2010. Previously, I have been an Associate Medical Officer of Health at the Ottawa Public Health Department working with the school program, a community health consultant, and most recently Director of Chronic Disease Surveillance at the Public Health Agency of Canada. But local public health has always been my passion, and I am thrilled to be returning to this work. I live on a hobby farm with horses near Perth, and am looking forward to working in the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark community in which my family and I live.



Next to the family, schools exert the most influence on the lives of children and youth, making the school an incredibly important setting for health promotion. Our health unit supports the Ministry of Education's healthy schools approach that focuses on high quality instruction and programs, healthy physical environments, supportive social environments and community partnerships. This approach ensures that students learn about healthy, active living in an environment that supports their learning. We recognize that schools can't do it alone. The entire community needs to be engaged in this process so children and youth have positive mental health, healthy eating, regular physical activity, avoid substance abuse like tobacco, alcohol and drugs, and prevent injuries. Everyone can play a role in promoting the health of children and youth.

We owe it to our children to make a positive difference in their health. I look forward to working with you in creating healthier schools. Together we can accomplish much!

*"It's better to build children than to repair adults"* — Author unknown.

— Paula Stewart, MD, FRCPC

## THANK YOU!

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit would like to express a sincere thank you to all principals, teachers, and support staff for your hard work and participation in promoting infection control within the classroom during the 2009/2010 school year. Your efforts were a success in helping stop the spread of infection.

# STAYING INFORMED MATTERS

## Infection Control In The Classroom

The Health Unit is continuing to promote and encourage teachers to incorporate infection control practices into the classroom and assist in preventing the spread of infection. A resource package has been sent to your school with sample posters and fact sheets. We also encourage you to view a complete list of resources designed for schools/daycares/parents on our website at: [www.healthunit.org/H1N1/schoolsdaycares.html](http://www.healthunit.org/H1N1/schoolsdaycares.html).

As well, here are some quick reminders for the classroom:

- Encourage hand cleaning with hand sanitizer or soap and water
- Ensure access to tissues and garbage
- Educate your students about hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or use your sleeve)
- Encourage parents not to send children to school when they are ill

If you have any questions regarding Infection Control in your school or classroom, please call the Health Unit at 613-345-5685 or 613-283-2740.

## Building Developmental Assets: Creating a safe space for intellectual & emotional growth

Developmental Assets are 40 common sense, positive experiences and qualities that help influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults. Creating a **safe** environment at school is one way to help young people develop assets.



feel safe taking risks, expressing themselves, and being themselves in your classroom?

Tips to make your classroom a safe space for intellectual and emotional growth:

- Challenge yourself to welcome and discuss diverse viewpoints.
- Give students space to take risks, express ideas, and wrestle with concepts without fear of humiliation.
- Challenge students to support and develop their opinions.
- Emphasize to the class that while you don't have to accept alternative opinions as your own, you do have to respect and thoughtfully examine the ideas behind them.
- Be active in classroom discussions and classroom dynamics to make sure students are not being silenced by negativity from their peers.

## Safety Comes in Many Forms.

Physical safety is a serious issue for schools, and every effort should be made to make sure students never have to worry about their personal safety while they're in school. But what about emotional and intellectual safety? Do your students

For more information and tips on building Developmental Assets visit: [www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets](http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets)

## Smoke-Free Ontario Act Reminder



The Health Unit enforces the provisions of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. We would like to remind you that school properties are smoke-free zones. This applies to all schools, at all times, even when used by the community for activities and events. This also includes smoking in motor vehicles on school property.

Schools have a responsibility to ensure compliance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act by posting signage and advising anyone who violates the Act to stop or leave the property. Parents should be reminded that it is against the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to smoke in a vehicle with anyone under the age of 16.

If you require support from the Health Unit, a School Incident Report can be faxed to 613-345-2879, or emailed to us. For questions or information about smoking or the Act contact us at: [sfoa@healthunit.org](mailto:sfoa@healthunit.org)

# STAYING INFORMED MATTERS

Somebody is watching you...



## Role Modeling Healthy Behaviours for Your Students

Your students are always watching and listening. What you say and do has an impact on what students see as "normal". Teachers and staff members can be positive role models by being aware of their verbal and non-verbal behaviours in front of students by showing healthy eating behaviours, being active and demonstrating a positive body image.

Here are some tips to help you have a positive impact on your students' self-esteem and body image:

### Focus on:

- Making positive comments about your accomplishments (e.g. learning a new activity or skill)
- Talking about improvements in your strength, endurance, trying a new vegetable or learning something new
- Changing the subject or re-directing the conversation (e.g. ask what they are doing that weekend)
- Complimenting people on their good qualities and personality traits

### Try to avoid:

- Making negative comments about your own body
- Talking about dieting or weight loss with other staff
- Engaging in conversations about diets weight loss or fat
- Complimenting people on their appearance (e.g. weight loss)

## 2010-2011

### Sexual Health Teaching

For the coming school year, the Sexual Health Nurse assigned to your school will contact you early in the year to offer teaching for grade 7/8's. In addition, your Public Health Nurse (listed on front cover of newsletter) will be available to provide teachers with support for the grade 5/6 puberty, anatomy and reproduction sections of the curriculum.

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### HPV Vaccine for Grade 8 Girls

The Health Unit will be offering Hepatitis B and Meningococcal vaccines to all grade 7 students and the HPV vaccine to all grade 8 girls again this school year. Please check your school schedule for dates and times, or visit: [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org)

Grade 8 girls who started their vaccinations but were not able to finish them during the school year are eligible to complete the series at the Health Unit by calling 1-800-660-5853 or their local Health Unit office.

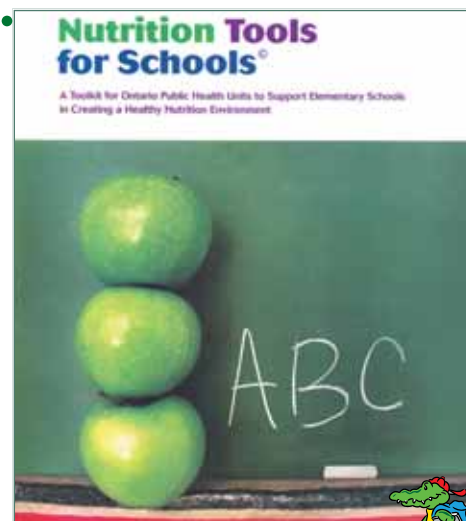
## New School Nutrition Policy .....

The Ministry of Education has taken an essential step toward improving the nutrition environment in schools by releasing the new School Food and Beverage Policy ([www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/policy.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/policy.html)). The new policy provides nutrition standards that apply to all food and beverages sold to students at school and will come into effect in September, 2011.

What about food offered at school, during classroom celebrations, field

trips or as a reward for good behaviour? How can we act consistently in these situations to help reinforce what children are learning and help them eat well at school?

Take the next step with Nutrition Tools for Schools®. Your local public health staff can work with you in applying nutrition standards to all areas where food is offered and sold. By doing this you can make the healthy choice the easy choice for students...throughout the entire school day!



# YOUR HEALTH MATTERS TOO

## Making Time for Physical Activity at Work



### Can You Recognize **STRESS** At Work?

Prolonged, unrelieved stress does cause physical, psychological, and behavioural health problems. However, when workplace stress is recognized, your healthy workplace committee can initiate creative supportive workplace policies and environments to address your stress at work. Can you recognize a stressed individual at work? Here is a list of physical, psychological, and behavioural reactions caused by stress at work:

#### Physical

- Migraines
- Sleep disorders
- Muscular tension
- Excess weight loss or excess weight gain
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Increased blood pressure
- Allergies
- Increased cholesterol rate
- Dermatological disorders

#### Psychological

- Depression
- Discouragement
- Boredom
- Anxiety
- Memory Loss
- Dissatisfaction
- Frustration
- Irritability
- Pessimism

#### Behavioural

- Absenteeism
- Drug abuse or dependency
- Excessive consumption of medicine
- Sexual disorders
- Impatience
- Aggressiveness
- Eating disorders
- Diminished creativity and initiative
- Interpersonal relationship problems
- Frequent mood swings
- Superficial relationships
- Lower tolerance of frustration
- Disinterest
- Isolation

For more information, please visit: [www.cgsst.com](http://www.cgsst.com)

Can't find time in your day to exercise? That is a common reason why people don't get the recommended amount of physical activity, as outlined in Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Healthy Living. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, "16 million adult Canadians spend half of their waking hours at work"<sup>1</sup>.

Since most people have to be at work all day, building physical activity into your day is one way to find the time. If you don't live far from work, you could walk or bike a few days a week. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, or create a walking or running group with some co-workers. On your coffee or lunch breaks, you could take a lap or two around your building. Do you have a buddy who shares a common sports interest? Go to the nearest park at lunch armed with a soccer/basket ball and play a game.

Having a physically active lifestyle has multiple health benefits including: having a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, colorectal and breast cancer, osteoporosis, and obesity. Not to mention, you will have more energy and sleep better. There are many ways to stay physically active at work. The most challenging part is changing your routine and taking the first step to a new healthy habit.

For more information and tips to become physically active at work, visit our website at: [www.healthunit.org/physact/default.htm](http://www.healthunit.org/physact/default.htm)

<sup>1</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada. "Business Case for Active Living at Work." <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alw-vat/index-eng.php> (Feb. 19, 2010).

