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Health Briefs

Information for a healthy workplace

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit - Spring/Summer 2004

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Regular Pap Tests Can Save Your Life!

Submitted by Tawnya Boileau, Public Health Nurse

Mothers, daughters, wives, sisters, aunts, grandmothers... lend me your eyes! Taking time to read this important information could save your life.

Each week in Ontario, 11 women will develop cervical cancer and 3 women will die from it. If you have ever had sex, you may be at risk of developing cancer of the cervix and becoming one of these statistics.

The good news is that cervical cancer can be 90% preventable! Cancer starts with small cell changes on the cervix (located at the top of the vagina). With regular Pap tests, changes can be found early when they can be treated and before they become cancerous.

What are the risk factors for cervical cancer?

- **Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)** HPV is a family of viruses that is found in and around the genital organs of men and women. This virus is passed between people mainly through skin-to-skin sexual contact. HPV is very common and it is estimated that 60-80% of people who have had sex have been exposed to HPV at some time. The type of HPV that causes warts in the genital area does not cause cervical cancer. However, there are types of HPV (that may not show any symptoms) that are definitely linked to cervical cancer. If these types of HPV are not detected early and treated, they can lead to cancer.
- **Sexual Activity** Sexual activity can expose you to the types of HPV virus that can cause cervical cancer. Therefore, any woman who has ever been sexually active, even once, is at risk. Sexual activity before the age of 18, as well as, having multiple partners can increase your risk of cervical cancer. Even if you are not sexually active anymore or have gone through menopause, you may still be at risk.
- **Smoking** Smoking and second hand smoke may cause a mild HPV to become cancer of the cervix.
- **Lowered Immune System (your body's defenses)** Most HPV infections will go away on their own. However, if your immune system is lowered, you may not be able to fight a HPV infection that could develop into cervical cancer.

How can you reduce your risk of cervical cancer?

- **Protect yourself:** Use a condom and limit your number of sexual partners
- **Avoid tobacco:** Be smoke free
- **Take Care:** Choose healthy foods, be physically active and get enough rest
- **Have regular Pap tests until at least age 70**

When is the best time for a Pap Test?

- When you do not have your period,
- When you have not had sex for 1 day (24 hours),
- When you have not put anything such as foams or medication in your vagina for 2 days (48 hours).



*Adapted from Ontario Cervical Screening
Program Resources, 2003*

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Spark Up The Barbeque

Submitted by Jennifer Bricker, Public Health Inspector

With the lazy days of summer on the way it's time to spark up the BBQ and start enjoying another season of grilled delights. It's important to remember to not only use the right spice but to BBQ foods in a safe way to make sure that our good meal doesn't turn into a food borne illness.



Here are a few tips to keep barbequing safe and enjoyable:

Buying foods:

- Buy meat products last. Bring them home quickly and refrigerate or freeze them right away.
- Store raw meats on the bottom shelf of the fridge to prevent other foods from becoming contaminated.

Thawing Foods

Never thaw foods at room temperature. Thaw in the fridge, microwave or under cold water.

Food Preparation

- Always wash your hands before handling food
- Do not use the sauce that raw meats are marinated in for basting. Instead set aside some sauce before marinating and use it for basting.
- Disinfect all cutting boards, counter tops, knives, plates and utensils that have come in contact with raw meats. A couple of capfuls of bleach in a sink of water will do the trick.
- Use a clean plate to bring cooked foods from the grill to the table. Never reuse the raw meat plate.

Cooking:

- Ensure that all meats are properly cooked before serving.
- Ground meats and poultry must be cooked until it is no longer pink and the juices run clear.
- Poultry should be pre-cooked in an oven or boiled in water before being placed on the BBQ.

Let's get out and enjoy the pleasures of our outdoor BBQ's and remember to make it tasty and make it safe.

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Dear Dora

My son is seven years old and in grade 2 but he only weighs 48lbs. I was wondering, does he really need to be in a booster seat in the car?

— *Wondering in Westport*

Dear Wondering

Yes your son should be in a booster seat. Age doesn't matter, size does. Booster seats are available to be used for children starting at 40lbs, going up to 100lbs, as long as you have lap/shoulder seat belt system in the back seat of your vehicle. A Booster seat raises a child so that they are positioned properly with the seat belt across their pelvis and chest.

Here is a quick checklist for you to follow to know when he can move from a booster seat into the adult seat belt system.

- ▶ Their **seated height** from the base of the tailbone to the top of the head is at least 25 inches (63 cm)
- ▶ Their **standing height** from the ground to the top of the head should be at least 4 feet 9 inches (145 cm).
- ▶ Your child weighs at least 60 lbs.

If a child has not reached these measurements, it's best to keep him or her in a booster seat, regardless of age.

If you still need a little convincing to keep your child in a booster seat, consider the following:

- ▶ Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of Canadian children and are the second leading cause of injuries for children between age 1 and 14.
- ▶ A poorly fitting seat belt may ride up on the abdomen or allow the child to 'jack-knife' forward or even become ejected from the seatbelt.
- ▶ In a crash the child may have spinal injuries, or severe organ damage from the seat belt resting on their belly, not on their pelvis.

Buckle up and drive safely!

Source: Safe Kids Canada, www.safekidscanada.ca,

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Healthy Food for Your Fast-Paced Life

Submitted by Heather Deegan, Registered Dietitian/Public Health Nutritionist

Are you constantly on the run, busy with work, family and social commitments? Do you sometimes feel like you have no time to cook, plan a healthy meal or eat healthy? Well, you are not alone. With the fast pace of life today, it seems impossible at times to buy and prepare healthy foods.

Consumer Trends

An Agriculture Canada report "Consumer Food Trends for the 1990s" shows Canadians have little time to cook and are not preparing as many meals from scratch. There is also an increased consumer demand for meals that can be eaten with hands, presumably for the daily commute or to be eaten at the desk/computer/workstation. The common theme is a demand for food products that will save time.

How Do You Save Time?

With little time to shop or cook, convenience foods seem to be the answer for many people. The downfall with many convenience-type foods is that they are often high in fat and high in salt, two things almost everyone should cut back on. However, pre-prepared, pre-packaged foods aren't your only option. What is more convenient than a whole wheat bagel with a slice of cheese and a mug of juice? How about a fried egg sandwich with a glass of milk? These are great for breakfast on-the-run or a quick snack to tide you over until your next meal.

Time Saving Tips

- If there is food left over from dinner, put it in plastic containers right away and place it on the top shelf in the fridge so it is easy to grab for lunch the next day.
- Make double batches of recipes when you have time to cook (like on the weekend) and freeze the extra food for lunch or dinner the next week.
- If you don't have time to wash and chop vegetables, buy peeled carrots, mixed bagged lettuce and frozen vegetables.

- If you are eating pre-prepared, pre-packaged frozen meals, include some extra cooked or raw vegetables (like a salad) in your meal, as frozen meals often contain very few of these.

Recipe Ideas

Try something new in your travel mug. Instead of coffee in the morning, go for a peanut butter and banana breakfast shake. Toss 1 cup milk, 1 frozen banana and a teaspoon of vanilla in a blender. Add 1 tablespoon of peanut butter while blending.

Throw together a meal-in-one salad. Toss some lettuce with a can of rinsed chick peas or canned tuna and some of your favorite vegetables. Top with shredded cheese and some salad dressing. Add a whole wheat roll to balance out the meal.

Wrap it up. Use leftover pasta or rice with leftover meat and vegetables to fill a soft tortilla shell. Add your favourite sauce (black bean, peanut or barbecue) and wrap it all together for a quick meal.

Make your own gourmet pizza. Buy a pizza crust and top with your favourite sauce (pesto, barbecue, tomato) and some vegetables, a sprinkle of cheese and throw it in the oven for 10 minutes.

If you would like more information on fitting healthy eating into your busy lifestyle, contact the Health Unit's Health Action Line and ask to speak with a Registered Dietitian.

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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 7th 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:

Drive Sober	Drive free from impairment (drugs, alcohol, drowsiness) and distraction (cell phones, loud music).
Look First	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.
Buckle Up	Ensure seatbelts and car seats are properly adjusted and installed.
Wear the Gear	Wear the appropriate safety equipment for the activity (including approved bicycle, motorcycle, ATV, and snowmobile helmets).
Get Trained	Know the rules of the road. Take a defensive driving course. Get trained in First Aid and CPR.

Reference: World Health Organization, 2004

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"But the Guys at Work Think ... Real Men Don't Take Parental Leave."

Submitted by: Denise Kall, Public Health Nurse

So, you're going to be a father! That means that there will be a lot of changes coming up for you, your partner and your household. You'll need to discuss maternity leave, finances and childcare. Your partner may ask you to take parental leave. Your grandfather & your father never took time off to care for children. Why should you? What will the guys at work think?

Clearly, things have changed or you wouldn't even be discussing taking time off work to spend with your child. The type of work that each of you do and career opportunities come into play when looking at your choices about who will stay home with the baby. Sometimes, those factors will make the decision clear. But when it doesn't, there are some real benefits of staying home with your child that you may not have considered.

Our 'father' role models have always been as the 'provider' who had a 'hands-off' approach to his children. Today, since most families need two incomes, there is a movement for fathers to become more involved. According to The Father Involvement Initiative (<http://www.cfi.ca/fion/index.htm>), being involved means:

- A father who knows and enjoys his kids
- One who shares with his partner the work and play of raising them
- One who understands them well
- One who can handle their daily routines

In other words, an involved father is a man who has his own direct, close relationship with his children. In the early days, involvement means changing diapers and other child care tasks, reading books together, and lots of talking, cooing, playing and exploring with your infant. Children learn how to react to the world through meaningful relationships with the adults around them.

Many men assume that babies are a mother's domain and miss an opportunity to form a close bond with their child. Forming that bond comes during everyday childcare, where many men feel out of place. You may stand up to an angry boss or supervise a large work project, but you may feel very nervous at the sight of a crying baby.

You'll get over it when you can become comfortable with childcare tasks. It will become easier if you dive right in, make mistakes, learn from experience, and gain confidence for the next time. Being an at-home dad isn't for everyone. Not all fathers have the option to take parental leave, but they do all have the option to become an involved father.

If you & your partner make the decision for you to take parental leave, be prepared for how people will react. What will the guys at work think? They may make jokes, like you're incompetent in the work-world, or you're a slacker, or even that your wife is the one who 'wears the pants' in the family. Not to worry: those at home will think you are an amazing father. You & your family will always come out as the real winners.

More information about maternity & parental leave is available through the Ontario Ministry of Labour (www.gov.on.ca/LAB/english/es/factsheets/fs_preg.html) and Human Resources Development Canada (www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/home.shtml); see FAQ re: Employment Insurance).

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Let's Beat Those Pesky Mosquitoes

Submitted by Kim McCann, Public Health Inspector

West Nile Virus is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Not all mosquitoes carry the virus; the mosquito most commonly associated with West Nile Virus is called the *Culex pipien*. The *Culex pipien* mosquito is commonly known as the northern house mosquito. It prefers to live in artificial containers and in your eaves troughs that is holding standing water.

It is true that West Nile Virus can cause an infection in the brain, but it is very rare. Healthy adults or children may become infected with the virus but the chances of becoming severely ill are very low. Most people that become severely ill are those who are elderly or immuno-compromised. Protecting yourself from getting bitten by mosquitoes is the best way of avoiding West Nile Virus.

Here are some helpful tips to beat those pesky mosquito bites:



1. Adults should use insect repellent containing no more than 30% DEET.
2. Health Canada recommends that repellents used on children 2-12 years of age contains no more than 10% DEET.
3. Do not use insect repellents on children less than 2 years old; so be sure to cover up all exposed skin.
4. Remove any standing water on your property to prevent (remove) any mosquito breeding areas.

For more information on West Nile Virus control and personal protection, please visit our Health Unit's website 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/

For those wishing to take the Summer Active Challenge information is available on the Summer Active website 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



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A Consumer's Guide to Dental Products Part I

Submitted by Leslie Redmond, Registered Dental Hygienist

With advancements in technology, and an increased awareness of the importance of good oral health, many new dental products are available to the consumer. The following is a guide to the basic aids for daily oral hygiene.



Toothbrushes

There are many on the market today. They fall into two categories – manual and automatic.

Before choosing a toothbrush, know what it will do for you:

1. Remove food and plaque.
2. Disrupt the process of plaque formation.
3. Stimulate the gums (gingiva), keeping them healthy and “well-exercised”.

The manual toothbrush comes in many sizes, designs and levels of stiffness. Generally, a softer brush is most effective.

The automatic toothbrush also comes in different designs with various brushing methods and other features that should be considered in the selection process.

Here are some things to consider when choosing an electric toothbrush:

1. Individual size
2. Effectiveness and ease to manipulate.
3. Ease to clean and maintain.
4. Durability.
5. Cost.
6. Options i.e., replaceable brush heads, batteries.

Toothpaste

Consumers are bombarded with produce advertising. The purpose of toothpaste is to work with the toothbrush in the removal of plaque, food and stains. It does this with abrasives and foaming ingredients.

In addition to cleaning teeth, advertising campaigns make claims about less sensitivity, less tarter, whiter teeth, and more. The only advice to consumers is to look for the Canadian Dental Association crest stamped on the toothpaste tube. Talk to a dental professional about the product that would be good for you.

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Dental Products (Part1) *continued from previous page*

Dental Floss

The purpose of dental floss is to:

1. Clean in between teeth where the toothbrush cannot reach.
2. Allow saliva to flow in between teeth to help keep them clean with a natural washing action.
3. Help massage gums, keeping them strong and healthy.

Once again, there is a wide choice available, including waxed and unwaxed, flavoured, and scented, shred resistant and whitening floss. Manufacturers also offer many different thicknesses of floss.

There is also a variety of specialty items such as dental tape, Superfloss T, floss threaders, and an assortment of floss holders. There is something on the market for every person's need. You can discuss these products with a dental professional who will help you to incorporate them into your regular home care routine.

Mouth Rinses

There are also many mouth rinses on the market. Before choosing a mouth rinse, determine what you want to accomplish by adding the rinse to your routine.

1. Antibacterial rinses help reduce bacteria, which causes gum disease but do not remove plaque or bacteria.
2. Rinses that contain fluoride help prevent decay and root decay.
3. If bad breath is a concern, mouth rinse will only mask the problem. The source of bad breath could be improper brushing and flossing, or a digestive disorder.

Chewing Gum

Sugar-free gum sweetened with Xylitol helps reduce acids in the month, which cause tooth decay. Some gums are now approved by the Canadian Dental Associations for their cavity inhibiting properties.

Gum must be sugar-free and chewed for 20 minutes to be effective.

Be sure to check the next issue of Health Briefs for a guide to dental products for more specific needs, including tooth-whitening products.

If you are unsure about any dental product, consult your dental professional or contact a Registered Dental Hygienist or Certified Dental Assistant with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit.

Adapted from materials provided by the ODHA website www.odha.ca

Editors Note: Look for Part 2 of this series in our next edition of Health Briefs, available September 2004.

