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Health Briefs

Information for a healthy workplace

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit

Fall 2006

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Why Dads Matter (Part I)*

Melinda Billett, BScN, RN, Public Health Nurse

What if there was a way to help children enjoy school more, achieve higher grades and graduate? What if there was a way to help children experience less depression and emotional distress? **There is a way: *involved fathers.***

What is an involved father?

The Father Involvement Initiative - Ontario Network (FII-ON) describes an involved father as¹:

- ▶ A father who knows and enjoys his kids
- ▶ One who shares the work and the play of raising his kids with his partner
- ▶ A father who can handle the daily routine of his children
- ▶ A man who has his own direct, close relationship with his children

Being an involved father can start before your child is even born by²:

- ▶ Talking to your partner about what you expect as parents.
- ▶ Going with your partner to prenatal visits and classes.
- ▶ Interacting with other fathers and 'fathers-to-be.'
- ▶ Supporting your partner in making lifestyle choices and making changes with her. Walk together, eat healthy foods, and quit smoking together.
- ▶ Talking to your unborn baby since (s)he can hear you as early as 20 weeks.
- ▶ Helping your partner with her household chores especially if she is feeling lousy during pregnancy.
- ▶ Preparing for the new baby and being SAFETY conscious! Learn how to install a car seat, and work the crib. Take infant CPR and First Aid.
- ▶ Planning for finances, work & child care options with your partner.
- ▶ Preparing early for labour & birth. PRACTICE!
- ▶ During labour, reassuring and encouraging your partner often.
- ▶ Enjoying the birth of your baby.

Research shows that when dads are involved with their kids, both children and dads benefit. Children with involved dads have better problem solving skills and are more likely to grow up to be successful adults. Teens who strongly identify with their dads are less likely to spend time in jail and to become unwed parents³. Involved fathers are more likely to be satisfied with life and to experience happiness in marriage ten to twenty years after their first child is born³.

* Watch for "**Why Dads Matter: Part II – babies and beyond**" in a future newsletter.

For more information, go to:

- Canadian Father Involvement Initiative at <http://www.cfi.ca>
- Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit under pregnancy at <http://www.healthunit.org>

Footnotes

¹ *Father Involvement Initiative-Ontario Network. (2001). Involved fathers: A guide for today's dad (2nd ed).*

² *Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit. Pregnancy and fathers. Retrieved July 24, 2006 from http://www.healthunit.org/pregnancy/pregnancy/pregnancy_fathers.htm*

³ *Daly, K., & Allen, S. (2002). The effects of father involvement: A summary of the research evidence. Father Toolkit, 133-144.*

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Take time for your health: Take time for Pap tests

Submitted by Tawnya Boileau, BScN, RN, Public Health Nurse

Early morning meeting, kids' soccer practice, taking the dog for its shots; between career obligations and family responsibilities, it's no secret women are squeezed for time. Too often, though, what gets squeezed out is time for women's own health care. When it comes to cervical cancer, however, taking the time for health care is critical.

According to Cancer Care Ontario's Cervical Screening Program, each week, 10 women in Ontario will develop cancer of the cervix, and three will die from the disease.

These numbers are all the more tragic in light of the fact that virtually all cases of cervical cancer — and deaths from the disease — can be prevented with regular Pap tests, says Dr. Sara Taman, physician-in-chief at University of Toronto Health Services.

"All women who are or who have ever been sexually active need to have regular Pap tests until they're in their 70s," says Dr. Taman. That includes women who are menopausal, women who no longer have sex, and even some women who have had a hysterectomy.

If taking a few minutes to make an appointment seems like the last item on your to-do list, remember that regular Pap tests are the best way to prevent cervical cancer. Taking some time for screening can make the difference for a lifetime of health.

Call your doctor or nurse practitioner to book a Pap test appointment!

No doctor?

Call one of the following locations to book a free Pap test with a female Nurse Practitioner:

North Lanark County Community Health Centre

Clinic date: October 16, 2006 from 3 pm- 7pm
Phone #: 613-259-2182

VON Community Family Health Team (Brockville)

Clinic date: October 17, 2006 from 3 pm- 7 pm
Phone #: 613-345-5077

Country Roads Community Health Centre (Portland)

Clinic date: October 26, 2006 from 3 pm – 7 pm
Phone #: 613-272-3302

Merrickville Community Health Centre

Clinic date: November 7, 2006 from 3 pm – 7 pm
Phone #: 613-269-3400



For more information on the Pap test and cervical cancer:

- Talk to your nurse, doctor or nurse practitioner
- Call the Canadian Cancer Society at 1-888-939-3333 or visit www.cancer.ca
- Visit the Cervical Screening link at www.cancercare.on.ca
- Call the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit's Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 or visit the cancer section at www.healthunit.org

This article courtesy of the OCSF and the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit.



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A hangover may be the least of your worries

Sandy Acheson, R.N., University of Victoria Post-RN Student

Most people know that drinking too much alcohol can lead to some unwelcome symptoms the next day. But the trademark headache, upset stomach and fatigue you experience from a hangover may be the least of your concerns. According to the World Health Organization, alcohol is the third most harmful risk factor for chronic disease (WHO, 2003).



Research indicates that drinking more than 1 standard drink per day for women and 2 for men is associated with increased risks of high blood pressure, stroke and some types of cancer. As the amount of alcohol consumed increases, the risk of these conditions also increases. Drinking more than 1-2 drinks per day and binge drinking (more than 5 drinks at one time) can double the risk of ischemic stroke and increase the risk of hemorrhagic stroke two-to three-fold. Alcohol use at these levels increases the risk of stroke by raising the blood pressure and contributing to obesity.

So if you don't drink, don't start. But if you choose to drink alcohol on occasion, the best advice is to limit your intake to no more than one to two standard drinks a day. The weekly limit for women is nine drinks; for men, it's 14. And remember, there are some situations where you should not drink at all (e.g., pregnancy, addiction, some chronic illnesses, driving).

The Smiths Falls FOCUS Community Coalition is one of 22 FOCUS communities in the province of Ontario. The FOCUS Community Program is an initiative of the Ministry of Health Promotion. The overall goal of the program is to prevent problems, including injuries and chronic disease associated with alcohol and other drug use. For more information contact the Smiths Falls FOCUS Community Coalition at 613-283-2740 or visit our website at www.smithsfallsfocus.org.



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Moving When You're Un-motivated

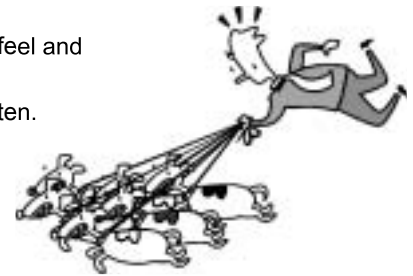
Shannon MacIntyre, BScN, RN, Public Health Nurse

Most people recognize that they should be more active. When it comes to actually being more active, many find it difficult to get motivated to get started. Here are some tips on ways to get going and be more physically active.

Visit your health care provider first to ensure that it is safe for you to begin.

Think about:

- Setting realistic **goals** for how you want your body to feel and perform, not how you want your body to look.
- Finding an activity you **enjoy** doing, and do it more often.
- Finding **friends** and/or family that you can be active with. You may find it more enjoyable.
- Making a **plan** you can follow such as "I will walk 15 minutes after lunch and dinner 4 days a week". This is easier to follow than a general resolution such as "I will exercise more".
- **Scheduling** your activity like you would a meeting or an appointment. You may feel more obligated to stick to it.
- Joining a **class**, or scheduling activities with a friend. It is easier to stay committed this way.
- **Acknowledging** that there may be some discomfort when you begin a new activity, but it should pass.
- **Varying** your activities and trying new things (gardening, walking, stretching).
- Balancing activity with **rest**. The body needs to repair itself after each workout.



To keep safe when active:

- Start **slowly** and progress gradually, remembering to warm up, cool down and stretch.
- Ensure the **environment** is well lit and safe.
- Wear appropriate **safety equipment**, and other protective gear such as a helmet and sunscreen.
- **Dress** appropriately for weather conditions, and wear appropriate footwear for the activity.
- Be aware of **signs of over-exertion**; listen to your body.
- Drink plenty of **water**.
- Follow **Canada's Food Guide** to Healthy Eating to make sure you have enough fuel for your body.

Remember that small changes are easier to stick to.

For more information or resources to help you get moving when you are un-motivated visit our website under **physical activity** at www.healthunit.org or call your nearest health unit and speak to a public health nurse.

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Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit Dental Team targets Smokeless Tobacco use in High Schools

Lainie Taylor, C.D.A., Certified Dental Assistant

As part of Oral Health Month, Certified Dental Assistants from the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit, provided a presentation to high school students at Almonte District High School on the dangers and risks of smokeless tobacco.

Smokeless tobacco, also known as *spit tobacco*, *dip* or *chew*, is harmful, highly addictive and may lead to oral cancer. The amount of nicotine in *dip* or *chew* can be 1 to 5 times the amount found in one cigarette. Spit tobacco contains over 28 known cancer-causing agents. Here are just a few: Formaldehyde (embalming fluid), Cyanide (gas chamber chemical), Arsenic (rat poisoning) and Polonium-210 (nuclear waste).



The presentation included a video based on the true story of Gruen Von Behrens, a young man who began using spit tobacco at the age of 13 yrs. By age 17, he had been diagnosed with oral cancer. Since then, he's had almost 30 disfiguring surgeries to save his life, including one surgery that removed half his neck muscles, lymph nodes, and half his tongue.

After viewing the video, students attended an interactive information display. The display included information on smokeless tobacco as well as the consequences of using it. Students also participated in an interactive game to test their knowledge of this topic. Handouts were also available for students to take home, including a tin of sugar free mints. The tin was designed to look like a tin of chew or spit tobacco. The message on the tin was "*Smokeless Tobacco - Think before you Chew*".

Many students commented they found the session very informative and thought provoking, and felt the video had an impact on them. Many said they had tried smokeless tobacco and now after having seen the consequences of using this harmful substance, would choose not to continue using the product.

Some students and adults we spoke with that day mentioned they knew very little about smokeless tobacco, with some not even knowing it existed. We do know that some students are using this product in the high schools and it is our goal to bring this presentation to all of the high schools in our area in the near future.

For more information on the dangers and risks of "smokeless tobacco" call the HealthAction line at 1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5865 and ask to speak to Dental Services.

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Injection Steroid Users – Why They Are At Risk For Hepatitis C

Muriel Campbell, BScN, RN, Public Health Nurse

Joanne Desormeaux, B.N.Sc., RN, Public Health Nurse

Anabolic Androgenic Steroids (or artificially produced hormones) have become popular with individuals who wish to improve endurance, strength and muscle mass. The effects of steroid use on the body, however, can be extremely harmful.

Physical effects of taking steroids can include:

- > **heart and liver problems**
- > **blood clots**
- > **increased blood pressure**
- > **reduced fertility**
- > **stunted growth in adolescence**
- > **feminization in males**
- > **masculinization in females.**

People who inject steroids and share their injection drug use equipment should also be aware that they are at risk for becoming infected with viruses which can be found in the blood such as HIV and Hepatitis B. They have an even greater risk for becoming infected with the Hepatitis C virus since it survives longer outside the body.

Hepatitis C is a disease of the liver caused by the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). The Hepatitis C Virus was identified in 1989 and it is estimated that 250,000 Canadians are infected with the virus. One third of those with Hepatitis C do not know they are infected and may be unwittingly passing the virus onto others.

This virus enters the body through blood-to-blood contact with an infected person. Such contact can occur when there is sharing of any blood-contaminated injection drug use equipment. Equipment used to inject steroids such as needles and syringes may contain tiny amounts of blood not visible to the naked eye. If the HCV is in this blood, anyone who injects with this equipment can become infected. Of the five thousand new infections occurring in Canada each year the majority are a result of sharing injection drug equipment.

The Hepatitis C Virus can cause serious damage to the liver, and can lead to scarring, liver cancer and even death. Many infectious people do not know they have the virus because for some, there will be no symptoms and for others, symptoms may not appear for 20-30 years. During this time the virus can still be spread to others. People who do have symptoms may experience fatigue, yellowing of the eyes and skin (jaundice), loss of appetite, pale feces and dark urine.

While the Hepatitis C Virus is most commonly transmitted through injection drug use including steroids, other populations at risk are those who share straws for snorting drugs, those who share crack pipes for smoking drugs, blood transfusion recipients (prior to 1990) and people with tattoos/body piercings acquired with non-sterile equipment.

A simple blood test can detect the Hepatitis C Virus. If you think you may have been exposed to the Hepatitis C virus through injection drug use or other means, contact your Health Care Provider or the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit.

To find out more about how to access clean drug use equipment contact the Leeds Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit "Cleanworks" program at 1-800-660-5853.



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Going Screen Free and Healthy

Melanie Ramsay RN, BNSc, Public Health Nurse

Spending less time in front of a screen can free up time for being physically active.

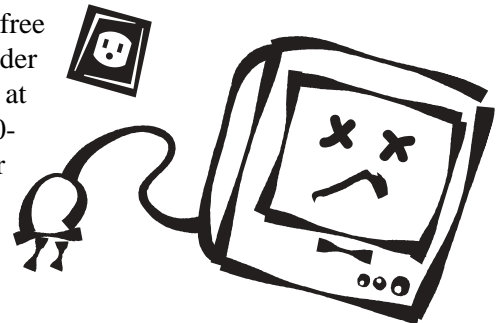
If you are not as active or eating as healthy as you would like, you may want to explore how much time you spend doing activities that involve time in front of a screen (such as watching TV, movies, or on the computer). This may be an opportunity to try a screen free period of time or to set limits on screen activities. Tips from the TV Turn-Off Challenge can help you to make some lifestyle changes.

Helpful tips to decrease screen time:

- Keep the TV off during dinner. Research suggests that families who have the TV off at mealtime have healthier eating habits than those who do not. (Coon et al, Pediatrics, 2001)
- Remove the TV set from children's bedrooms. Studies indicate that if there is TV in a child's bedroom, the risk of being obese is increased by 31%. (Dennison et al, Pediatrics, 2002)
- Place clear limits on television viewing. Allow 30 minutes each day or 1 hour every other day. Try being positive, instead of saying "you can't watch TV" say, "Let's turn off the TV so we can..."
- Replace TV watching with something more active. Look for fun activities in your community.
- Move the television set to a less visible, hard to reach location in the home.
- Avoid using the TV as a reward or a punishment. This gives the TV more power.

Resources with helpful tips on going screen free and increasing physical activity are available under *physical activity* on the Health Unit's website at www.healthunit.org. You can also call 1-800-660-5853 or e-mail us at info@healthunit.org for more information.

A special thank you to all the workplaces that participated in the TV Turn-Off Challenge Week from April 3-9th 2006. Your enthusiasm and creativity is to be commended. Keep up the good work!!



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Pandemic Influenza (Part 1)

Claire Farella, MScN, BScN, RN, Public Health Nurse
Bonnie Erwin, BScN, RN, Public Health Nurse

What is Pandemic Influenza?

Pandemic influenza occurs when a new influenza virus appears to which the human population has little or no immunity. This results in several, simultaneous epidemics world wide with enormous numbers of illnesses and deaths.



How does Pandemic Influenza Occur?

When **all four** of the following occur:

- A new influenza A virus is detected
- Human-to-human transmission happens easily
- The new virus causes serious clinical illness and death
- The population has little or no immunity to the virus

Ordinary Influenza	Pandemic Influenza
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs every winter between November and April • Peaks for a few months during the winter and then declines • Affects 10% of population • Part of the population will have some immunity either because of previous exposure or they have been immunized with the annual flu vaccine. • Symptoms are unpleasant but most people do not become seriously ill or die • The very young, very old and people with certain chronic illnesses are most at risk • Can be prevented with annual vaccination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs 3 times a century (approx every 30 years), Spanish Flu 1918, Asian Flu 1957 and Hong Kong 1968. • Occurs any time during the year • Occurs in 2 to 3 waves several months apart, each wave lasting 6-8 weeks • May affect 25% of population • More serious infections and deaths will occur • People of every age may be at risk • No vaccine available at beginning of pandemic, will take 6 months to develop • When available the whole population will be offered immunization • Antiviral medication may be used for treatment

What you can do?

Some basic measures that you can take to reduce your risk of infection during a pandemic:

- The **most important measure is to practice hand hygiene; frequent hand washing** reduces the risk of picking the virus up from surfaces and passing it on to others.
- Practice cough etiquette such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid large crowds of people when the pandemic is in your community.
- When vaccine is available get immunized.

Resource: Information obtained from Ontario Health Pandemic Influenza Plan (2005), MOHLTC

Pandemic Influenza Part 2
- in next edition



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Food Insecurity Increases the Risk of Disease

Dianne Oickle, MSc, RD Registered Dietitian/Public Health Nutritionist

Food insecurity happens when a person or family does not have enough food to eat and/or is worried about getting food. Food insecurity can lead to poor dietary intake, not having enough to eat, not eating enough vegetables and fruit, and eating cheaper foods that are not as good for you. All of these factors put people living with food insecurity at higher risk of chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, cancer and obesity.

Within Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark counties, there are a number of groups that are at high risk of food insecurity (Statistics Canada, 2001).

- 11.8% of children live in low income families
- 10% of the population lives below the low income cut-off point
- 8.2% of the population is unemployed
- 12.7% of families are headed by one parent
- 28% of seniors live alone
- 6.7% of the population has less than a grade 9 education

There are many families where one or both parents work but income is still not enough to cover basic needs. As the price of gas, hydro, and food increases, family incomes are not increasing, making it harder for people to provide food for their family. Nutritious Food Basket data shows that the cost of food has increased more than 15% across the tri-county over the past 8 years.

Statistics Canada 2001 data shows that, of the total population of Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark:

- 11.3% worried there would not be enough to eat because of a lack of money
- 6.4% did not have enough to eat because of a lack of money
- 13.8% did not eat the quality or variety of foods they wanted to eat because of a lack of money

In 2001, the overall rate of low income in private households across Ontario was 14.4%. Within Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark counties, several communities have a poverty rate higher than the provincial average (Statistics Canada, 2001):

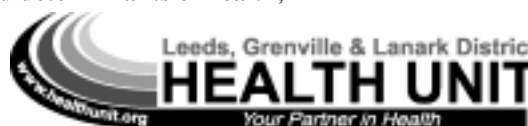
Prescott	22.0%	Gananoque	15.0%
Westport	18.5%	Perth	14.6%
Smiths Falls	18.4%	Brockville	14.2%

If people do not have enough to eat, then why is the rate of obesity so high? Someone living in poverty, who is also obese, may be able to eat enough calories to allow them to maintain or gain weight, but often those calories are from cheap foods with fewer nutrients. Although being overweight may make it look like someone has enough food to eat, they may not be getting enough vitamins and minerals, further increasing their risk of chronic disease already imposed by being overweight or obese.

You may not see poverty and food insecurity in your community, but it *does* exist. Understanding this is an important step in making options for healthy lifestyle choices available in our workplaces, schools, and communities.

For more information on food insecurity and determinants of health,

contact the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit's Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 (613-345-5685) and ask to speak with a Registered Dietitian.



Health Unit Offices

Almonte
79 Spring Street
Unit #3, Compartment #13
Almonte, Ontario
K0A 1A0
(613) 256-1203

Brockville
458 Laurier Blvd
Brockville, Ontario
K6V 7A3
(613) 345-5685

Kemptville
2685 Concession Rd.
Kemptville, Ontario
K0G 1J0
(613) 258-5941

Smiths Falls
52 Abbott Street North
Unit 2
Smiths Falls, Ontario
K7A 1W3
(613) 283-2740

Gananoque
375 William St. S.
Suite 200
Gananoque, Ontario
K7G 1T2
(613) 382-4231

Health Action Line
1-800-660-5853

Website:
www.healthunit.org



If you have any questions or would like your business added to our mailing list please call the Health Action Line and ask for Lynda Earl.



Health Briefs

Information for a healthy workplace

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit

Fall 2006

Libraries Receive Children's Books to Help Them Learn and Cope with Breast Cancer

Bonnie Schmittker, RN, PHN, Public Health Nurse

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Library Project has provided local libraries with the following books to help children learn and cope when someone they know has breast cancer.

Please Don't Go (Ages 9 – 12 yrs)

Sarah must cope with all the changes that occur when her mother is treated for breast cancer.

Our Family Has Cancer, Too! (Ages 11 - 12 years)

When their mother is diagnosed with cancer, sixth grader Tim and his younger brother visit her in the hospital, learn about radiation and chemotherapy, and help with the chores at home.

The Paper Chain (Ages 4 – 8 years)

When Mom gets cancer all of the family's routines are disrupted, but with surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and rest, she eventually gets well enough to do the things they did before she got sick.

My Mummy is Sick, A story about Breast Cancer (Preschool age)

The story, told through the eyes of a preschooler, follows the mother's experience with her illness and how it affects the family.



Selections of these books have been placed in all elementary school libraries and local public libraries within Leeds, Grenville and Lanark. Five adult books can also be found in your local public library. These books were placed Spring 2005.

For additional information on Breast cancer:

Canadian Cancer Society
1-888-939-3333 www.cancer.ca

Ontario Breast Screening Program
1-800-668-9304 www.cancercare.on.ca

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit
1-800-660-5853 www.healthunit.org

The Leeds Grenville & Lanark Counties Library Project was made possible by the generous support of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.



The partners in this project are:

- *Survivors of breast cancer*
- *Rideau Lakes Public Library*
- *Country Roads Community Health Centre*
- *Breast Health Coalition of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark*
- *Regional Cancer Program for Southeastern Ontario*
- *Canadian Cancer Society*
- *Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit*

