

HEALTHY SCHOOLS



'I Run Me' - Local Running Club puts Students in Charge of Their Health

A Local 'Healthy School' Success Story

Two area elementary schools, Grandview Central in Dunnville and River Heights in Caledonia, took steps to make their schools healthier by establishing 'Freedom Runners' clubs earlier this spring. The clubs met throughout the week during recess and nutrition breaks, either for a non-competitive run or for a group discussion around a variety of health and character development topics.

Principals, teachers, education assistants and other staff members ran alongside the students and kindly volunteered their break time to be positive role models. While staff members offered supervision and support, the students in the older grades took on a leadership role while the group ran and also helped facilitate health sessions for younger students. They also

reached out to the wider school community by creating bulletin boards decorated with important health messages.

The club's running shirts sport the motto 'I Run Me'. The slogan was chosen to represent the fact that members of Freedom Runners are in control of their own health and decisions, and will not be influenced by the many media images, marketing strategies and other pressures that try to convince them to make unhealthy choices.

The Freedom Runners covered a range of health topics and explored the Grand Erie District School Board's positive character attributes. In partnership with the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, the students also received training about the creative ways companies try to make their unhealthy or unnecessary products look so appealing to young people. Issues such as candy-flavoured tobacco products and marketing tactics such as celebrity endorsement of fast food and slick advertising of sugary drinks and alcohol were discussed.

The Health Unit is happy to support initiatives like Freedom Runners, because most health habits, positive or negative, develop early in a person's life, and they can be hard to change later on. Additionally, school and public health staff alike recognize that healthy, active students are better learners and that the benefits of programs like Freedom Runners extend well beyond the classroom.

Parents, community members and the two schools celebrated their tremendous success by joining together in a 2km Freedom Run along the Grand River in Caledonia on June 19th. Students were awarded with medals, prizes and healthy snacks to celebrate their membership in Freedom Runners.

Want to see your school featured in the Healthy Schools Newsletter? Tell us about what your school is doing to make your school community healthy. Or do you have other ideas about how you could make healthy changes in your school? Let your school or the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit know, because we'd love to work together with you!

"We know companies try lots of sneaky ways to get young people like me to buy or use their products. But they don't care about our health and what's best for us, they just want our money,"

- Matthew Turner, Freedom Runners Mentor



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Feature RECIPE



Mini Pizza Sandwiches

Preparation time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Makes: 4 sandwiches

Pizza is always a lunch time favourite and letting kids create their own flavours is a big treat.

Ingredients

- 4 thin round whole wheat or multigrain buns
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) tomato or pasta sauce
- 1 small green pepper, chopped
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) pineapple tidbits
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) shredded part skim mozzarella cheese

Directions:

1. Open buns and lay out on baking sheet. Spread sauce over each bun.
2. Sprinkle half of the buns with pepper, pineapple and cheese. Top with remaining buns.
3. Bake in preheated 400°F (200°C) oven for about 10 minutes or until bread is crisp and golden and cheese is melted.

Have questions about healthy eating or nutrition? Call Eat Right Ontario at 1-877-510-5102 to speak to a registered dietitian for free.

Taken from Eat Right Ontario, July 2014, www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Recipes/Kid-friendly-award-winning-recipes/Mini-Pizza-Sandwiches.aspx

Food Advertising & OUR KIDS

“Can you buy this, please?”

Canadian children are facing a growing number of food and beverage ads that feature products that are high in calories, low in nutrition and not part of a balanced diet. Sugary cereals, soda and fast food are made even more appealing to kids with the help of catchy jingles, dancing leprechauns or other cartoon characters.

Why should parents be concerned?

Research has linked the watching of food and beverage ads to increased food intake. Children aged 7 to 11 years ate 45% more snacks when they watched TV that featured food ads compared to programming without food ads, even when they were not hungry (Dietitians of Canada, 2010).

From a very young age, huge food companies target marketing at children when they are most impressionable. This creates an unfair playing ground as:

- Most children 8 years and under do not fully understand the persuasive intent of marketing messages
- Most children 4 years and under cannot tell the difference between TV advertising and shows (Institute of Medicine, 2006)

Advertising regularly challenges the efforts of parents and teachers who encourage

healthy food choices. These ads try to ensure that children will recognize their product and focus on the “fun” factor when choosing food instead of what they have learned from their family or school.

What can parents do?

Here are some tips from Common Sense Media to combat junk-food ads:

- **Keep them away from advertising as much as possible.** Let them watch commercial-free TV & DVDs, or if you have DVR service, skip through ads.
- **Take the TV out of your kid’s bedroom.** There is a link between children’s weight and TV in their bedrooms.
- **Teach kids under 7 the difference between a TV program and a commercial.**
- **Talk about health, not appearance.** Help your kids have a balanced approach to food by focusing on healthy food choices, not diet.
- **Start a conversation.** Ask your children what they know about who created the ad and what words, images, celebrities or sounds were used to attract their attention.

Visit www.common sense media.org for more tips on protecting children in a world of media and technology and listings of age appropriate movies, books, websites and apps.

Kids are being HOOKED by Hollywood

Try to fill in the blanks: “Let it go, let it go, can’t _____ _____ _____.” If you were able to easily finish the lyric from the Frozen anthem, then odds are you’ve spent some time in the past year with a girl (or possibly boy) under the age of 12.

The countless make-believe princesses twirling in the living room, belting out the

Disney ballad share something in common with the millions of young boys who had pretend lightsaber battles in their backyards decades ago... they were both impacted by something they saw on the big screen.

Exposure to smoking in movies and other forms of media has been shown to be one of the main reasons young people

start smoking. At first reading that fact may sound hard to believe, but consider how smoking is usually portrayed in movies. Actors and actresses often make tobacco use look cool, sexy, rebellious, independent, macho, and like a sign of sophistication and success... many of the same traits desired by impressionable adolescents trying to shape and define their identity.

Tobacco companies are well aware of how influential media and movies can be. The tobacco industry has a history of paying actors and film producers to use their products or display their brands in movies, a form of subtle, but effective, marketing. Tobacco companies are desperate to get teens hooked as replacement customers for the tens of thousands of adult smokers who quit or die from a tobacco-related illness each year. Perhaps it shouldn't be surprising then that, over the past 10 years, 86% of the movies containing tobacco were youth-rated (G, PG, or 14A) in Ontario.

The movie rating system in Ontario takes into account violence, nudity, coarse language and other factors when assigning ratings to films, but not tobacco, despite the fact that tobacco remains the number one cause of preventable death and disease.

Local, national and international health organizations are advocating to ban tobacco from youth-rated movies, but there are also steps parents and caregivers can take to help protect their children from being subtly led into a life-long tobacco addiction:

- Talk to your kids about the smoking they see in the media. Make them media savvy, so they are aware when they are being marketed at by companies, and why.
- Visit 'Hooked by Hollywood' on Facebook to check out whether new release movies contain smoking
- Tweet @HookedHollywood if you spot smoking in a youth-rated movie.
- Spread the word by talking to other parents, friends and on social media about the impact of smoking in youth-rated movies.

Family movie nights can be a great way to bring everyone together for some fun and entertainment, but they can also provide great teachable moments to discuss real-world issues and choices kids may be faced with.

For more information on the issue of smoking in movies, visit www.smokefreemovies.ca.

CONTAGIOUS CONTENT: Vaccine Debate Going Viral Online

Over the past few years, outbreaks of measles, whooping cough and mumps have been reported across Canada and into the United States. All of these diseases are preventable with vaccines, so why are these previously rare diseases seemingly making a comeback?

Most doctors and public health officials agree on one main culprit: **the spread of misinformation about vaccines on social media sites.**

Despite the overwhelming evidence and consensus among experts that vaccines are safe and effective, the vaccine

"debate" often surfaces online.

The anti-vaccine movement was first sparked by a 1998 study in a British medical journal linking the MMR vaccine to autism. That study has been thoroughly discredited and the journal later removed the article, calling the research an "elaborate fraud". The author was also banned from practising medicine in his home country. Numerous studies have since also disproven the link between vaccines and autism.

Unfortunately, this has led to the rise of additional myths, such as the notion that

Screen Time

Children are spending countless hours in front of computers, cellphones, T.V.s and other electronic devices. Although, spending time in front of screens seems like commonplace, there are a variety of negative health outcomes linked with increased screen time in children:

- Less time being physically active
- Increased body weight
- Poor sleep
- Increased food intake

How much is too much?

The Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines recommends:

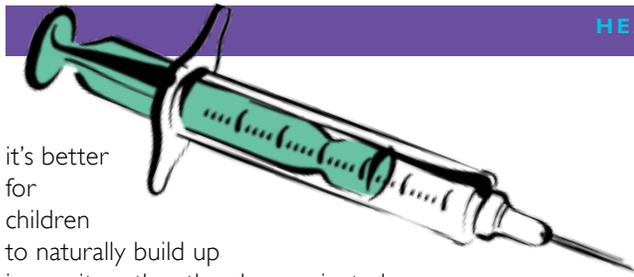
- Less than 1 hour of daily screen time for children in the early years, and
- 2 hours or less for school-aged children and youth

What can Parents Do?

If you are having difficulty limiting screen time, there are some simple steps you can take to start making the change:

- Remove the T.V., computer and cellphones from your child's bedroom
- No screen time while eating
- Be a good role model and limit your own screen time
- Establish some household rules and record screen time
- Challenge your family to 1 week without T.V. (or other electronics)





it's better for children to naturally build up immunity rather than be vaccinated or that infants and toddlers who receive more than one vaccine at a time will overwhelm their immune system. Still others claim that vaccines contain dangerous ingredients or cause the disease they are designed to prevent.

All of these rumours have been disproven by the medical community, but that does not prevent them from popping up on social media sites, parenting forums and other websites. This creates additional challenges for medical and public health experts as:

- People are more inclined to listen to a 'friend' on Facebook or a celebrity on T.V. than to read a scientific paper or listen to advice from a doctor, researcher or public health agency who they have never met
- Posts and tweets often play upon basic emotions, evoking doubt, guilt, irrational fear and the overwhelming desire to keep children safe and healthy
- Ironically, vaccines have been so effective that many of us have forgotten how horrific many of these diseases can be
- Kids do not come with an instruction manual – so parents are left to look for information, answers and guidance in many places

Similar to the way students learn about media literacy in school, parents need to critically examine things they see online or on T.V. regarding vaccines, and do additional research using credible sources to make the best decision for their child.

If you come across an anti-vaccine post online, providing facts and evidence in response to address the inaccurate statements can be a challenge. It's important not to attack or insult the person making the claims, but calmly and firmly present the facts. Responding to myths or false statements may not change the opinion of the original poster, but you might be able to educate some others who stumble across the conversation.

We can all do our part to help make the truth about vaccines go viral.

IMMUNIZATION for School Pupils Act

The Immunization of School Pupils Act is a law in Ontario that states all students at school must be fully immunized against the following diseases: **Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Meningococcal (Meningitis), Pertusis (Whooping Cough) and Varicella (Chickenpox).**

Families transferring from another county or province **must provide a full immunization history for their school age children to the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit.** This information will not be transferred with the child's school record. If you do not have an up to date record, you can call the Health Unit in the area where your child previously attended school.

What if I don't want my child to have any needles?

A high rate of immunization helps to ensure that outbreaks of diseases do not occur in our community. The Immunization of School Pupils Act requires all students to be adequately immunized or families must provide one of the following to the health unit:

- A statement of medical exemption, which is to be completed by your doctor, or;
- A statement of conscience or religious belief which is completed by you then signed by a person with special legal authority.

These forms may be obtained at the Haldimand -Norfolk Health Unit 12 Gilbertson Drive, Simcoe Ontario or on the Health Units website www.hnhu.org

What do I do when my doctor gives my child a needle?

The Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit (HNHU) is responsible for collecting and maintaining the immunization records of all children enrolled in school within the county. Ask the doctor to write the immunization on the record card. Keep this card. It is your record. It is the job of the parent/guardian to tell public health when the doctor gives their child a needle.

For more information, please contact a member of the Vaccine Preventable disease Team by calling the HNHU at 519-426-6170 or 905-318-6623.

Records can be faxed to 519-426-9974.

To read more about the Act, go to www.ontario.ca/vaccines



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