

The Daily Apple

Healthy Families...Keeping in the Know



Spring 2012 VOLUME 16

www.niagararegion.ca

NIAGARA REGION PUBLIC HEALTH

PARENT NEWSLETTER

Prescription drug misuse

Prescription drugs, often from home medicine cabinets, are being used by some local kids to get high. In Niagara, more high school students (1 out of 5) report misusing prescription drugs within the last year than smoking cigarettes! Many of them say they got the drugs from their own homes.

Kids are also taking part in a new trend called "Smartie Parties." They take prescription drugs from their own homes to a party, dump them into a big bowl, and each take a handful to get high. They usually mix these drugs with alcohol which can be extremely dangerous and sometimes deadly.

Niagara Regional Police Service has also seen an increase in assaults and home robberies where prescription drugs are stolen. Of course prescription drugs are necessary when used properly, but they can also be dangerous if they get into the wrong hands.

Prescription Drug Drop-Off



For a list of locations near you, please visit
www.niagararegion.ca/health
(search: take back your drugs)

Do you have bottles of old or unused prescription drugs lying around your home or sitting in your medicine cabinet?

Get into the habit of getting these drugs out of your house!

A safe and easy way to get rid of them is by coming to our

Niagara Prescription Drug Drop-Off
on Saturday May 12,
from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

at various locations around the region.

This is an anonymous drop off, just remove or black out the labels.

You can help keep children, families and our community safe!

Inside This Issue

- Youth mental health well-being
- Mobile beach monitoring
- Summer sun safety
- Travel safety and awareness
- Cavity prevention

Comments and questions regarding this publication are welcome at dailyapple@niagararegion.ca or 905-688-8248, ext. 7444 or toll free at 1-888-505-6074



Youth Net Niagara

In November 2011, Niagara Region Public Health's Secondary School Health program launched Youth Net Niagara as a pilot program in two secondary schools in the region. Youth Net, a national program, is a mental health promotion and early intervention program for youth ages 13 to 18 years old.

We have six incredible volunteer Youth Net Facilitators from Brock University who facilitate 60 to 70 minute focus groups with students to discuss their opinions on mental health, mental illness, circumstances that cause them stress and how they cope with stress. The secondary school nurse and health promoter work together with the in-school 'safety net' of staff members including guidance counsellors, child and youth counsellors, chaplaincy leaders and student success teachers. The program has been very effective in linking students to in-school or community support when they are dealing with difficult situations.

Youth Net Niagara also has a strong partnership with Pathstone Mental Health where students can seek additional support when required.

With many successes experienced during the pilot, there are hopes to expand the program to additional high schools in the future.

Call 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7355 for more information.



DO YOU FEEL LIKE A
stranger
IN YOUR OWN LIFE?

Don't Let
psychosis
rock your
world

Recognize the signs and symptoms of psychosis which may include:

- Hearing voices
- Being suspicious
- Imagining things
- Mood changes
- Withdrawing from friends and family

For more information:
905-688-2854 ext. 7262



Mobile Beach Monitoring

Nagara Region Public Health tests beaches during the summer to make sure the level of bacteria in the water is safe for swimming. These results are available online at www.niagararegion.ca/water and will be easily accessible on your mobile device this summer. While you are out and about enjoying the summer weather, make an informed decision on the spot before visiting Niagara's beaches. This mobile-friendly webpage will know which beach you are closest to and give you its latest update immediately.



Welcome the summer sun safely



The sun's shining and it's time to get outside to play! Before you run outside, remember the "Five Ss"...

- **Slip:** on clothes that will protect your skin from the sun (loose-fitting and tightly woven are best)
- **Slop:** on some sunscreen that is at least SPF 30 and filters UVA & UVB rays (broad-spectrum). Put sunscreen on 20 minutes BEFORE you go outside, so it can soak in. Don't forget your ears, nose and feet if you are wearing sandals! Lips should also be protected with SPF 30 lip balm.
- **Slap:** on a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face, ears and neck
- **Seek:** shade when outside between 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- **Slide:** on some sunglasses that have 100% UVA & UVB filters

Attention moms, dads, coaches and caregivers:

Sun damage can happen quickly, so remember sunscreen for outdoor play dates, lunch break, gym class, track and field and other outdoor activities.



No tan is a safe tan

Think it's safer to use a tanning bed? Think again! Tanning beds have a mixture of UVB and/or UVA rays. The UVA rays can be up to five times stronger than the summer sun at its strongest! Using a tanning bed can increase your chances of getting melanoma by up to 75%. Enjoy the skin you're in and protect it.

Public Health ... Only a Phone Call Away

Health Connection Line

For confidential health information relating to public health issues
905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074

Dental Health Line, ext. 7399

For information on dental programs and services

Flu Information Line, ext. 7443

For flu shot clinic schedule and general information about the flu shot

Health Bus Line, ext. 7512

For schedule of community locations

Immunization Reporting Line, ext. 7459

For parents/guardians to report their child's immunization(s)

Parent Talk Information Line, ext. 7555

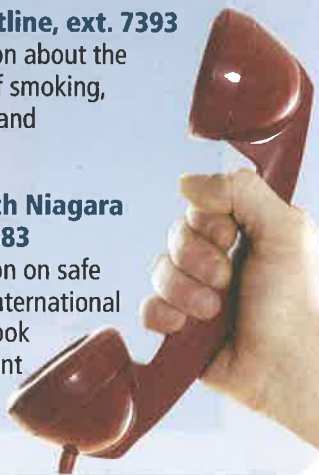
For information on pregnancy, parenting, breastfeeding, postpartum depression, child development, clinics, car seat safety and classes, and Ontario Early Years Centres

Tobacco Hotline, ext. 7393

For information about the health risks of smoking, ways to quit, and smoking laws

Travel Health Niagara Line, ext. 7383

For information on safe and healthy international travel or to book an appointment for our Travel Health Clinic



OUR LOCATIONS:

Main Office/Office of the Medical Officer of Health

2201 St. Davids Road,
Campbell East
Thorold
Phone: 905-688-3762
Toll Free: 1-800-263-7248
Fax: 905-682-3901

Branch Offices

Niagara Falls

5710 Kitchener Street
Phone: 905-356-1538
Fax: 905-356-7377
Sexual Health Centre
Phone: 905-358-3636
Fax: 905-358-2717

Welland

200 Division Street
Phone: 905-735-5697
Fax: 905-735-4895
Sexual Health Centre
Phone: 905-734-1014
Fax: 905-734-1770

Fort Erie

43 Hagey Avenue
Phone: 905-871-6513
Fax: 905-871-3020
Sexual Health Centre
Phone: 905-871-5320
Fax: 905-871-3333

St. Catharines

Sexual Health Centre
277 Welland Avenue
Phone: 905-688-3817
Toll Free: 1-800-263-5757
Fax: 905-688-6063

Thorold

Community Mental Health Program
3550 Schmon Pkwy, 2nd Floor, Unit #2
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7
Phone: 905-688-2854
Fax: 905-684-9798

Niagara-on-the-Lake

Emergency Services Division
509 Glendale Avenue East
Phone: 905-984-5050
Fax: 905-688-5079

Public Health in Niagara

We PROTECT Niagara residents by:

- Testing water
- Inspecting food premises
- Providing safe food handling training
- Conducting environmental investigations
- Enforcing tobacco laws
- Preventing the spread of infectious diseases and sexually transmitted infections
- Providing paramedic and ambulance dispatch services

We PROMOTE health by:

- Offering prenatal classes
- Providing parenting information
- Conducting home visits for new parents
- Offering support to schools
- Providing confidential sexual health services
- Offering breastfeeding support
- Encouraging regular physical activity and healthy eating
- Providing counselling for adults experiencing serious and persistent mental illness

We PREVENT disease and injury by:

- Offering child, adult, and travel-related vaccinations
- Promoting road safety for drivers and pedestrians
- Educating citizens about heart disease risk factors
- Holding car seat education classes
- Providing dental care for eligible children
- Raising awareness around substance misuse
- Encouraging regular cancer screenings, such as pap smears and mammograms



These are just some of the many services we offer.
If you are interested in learning more about
Public Health, please visit www.niagararegion.ca/health

April 2012

Be aware. Travel safe.



Social, cultural and economic conditions, including health care, in other countries can be significantly different from those in Canada. When travelling outside of Canada you should be aware that such conditions could affect your health, access to medical help, and personal safety.

We want you and your family to be safe during your vacation travels!

We can help you prepare for your trip by providing you with education, vaccines and travel information geared to your specific destination. It is best if we meet with you six weeks before you leave to ensure we can meet your pre-travel needs.

Niagara Region Public Health Travel Clinic counsels single, family and group travellers. We are able to provide the recommended vaccines and prescriptions to prevent or treat diseases such as Hepatitis A, malaria or travellers' diarrhea.

**Call 905-688-8248 or
1-888-505-6074 ext. 7330 or
email travel@niagararegion.ca
for more information.**



Niagara bike medics

Niagara Emergency Medical Services' Bike Medic unit consists of two paramedics on mountain bikes. Mainly, they ride in the tourist area of Niagara Falls, within a two kilometre radius. The bike team also travels to special events held across the region such as festivals, marathons, and walks, where it's easier and quicker for a paramedic to get to a patient on a bike.

You'll find bike medics out and about all summer, from the May long weekend until Labour Day in September. Ready to handle any call from their bike, these medics are equipped with oxygen, defibrillator,

trauma equipment, airways, suction, and symptom relief drugs.

This team has been peddling for over 11 years and is specially trained to ride in traffic, among tourists, in wet weather, on streets and through trails. Easily manoeuvring through traffic and crowds, a bike medic can cancel an ambulance unit if it wasn't needed, allowing the ambulance crew to be available for the next emergency call.

While working on the bikes, medics also promote helmet safety along with Niagara Parks Police and Niagara Regional Police Service through the Brain Injury Association.

**The Niagara Bike Medic team reminds you
to ride safe and always wear your helmet!**



Cavities are preventable

Although preventable, cavities are the most common chronic disease of children aged six to 19 years. Municipalities in the Niagara region do not add fluoride to their water supply and natural levels of fluoride are much lower than the recommended levels to prevent cavities. If you use well water, you should have your water tested to determine fluoride levels.

To help your child develop good dental habits, it is important to have them:

- Brush twice a day with a pea-sized portion of fluoride toothpaste
- Floss daily
- Limit snacks and drinks high in sugar
- Visit a dental professional regularly

For information on dental programs please call the Dental Health Information Line at 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7399.

Do you get your drinking water from a well, a cistern or other source?

Remember to test your drinking water at least seasonally. Pick-up and drop off water test kits for free throughout the Niagara region.

Visit www.niagararegion.ca and search "well water" for more information.

Help Wanted



Are you an advocate for active living?

Become a Volunteer Physical Activity Advisor!

As a qualified Volunteer Physical Activity Advisor you will:

- Share your passion for active living
- Help motivate others to be more active
- Host fun and informative presentations/displays about the benefits of physical activity
- Receive regular training and educational updates



Training begins in October 2012. We will work with your availability.

Make a difference in your community and help others to become more active.

Call 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7395 for more information.

Have it made in the shade, be a Sun Hut Volunteer

Coming to events near you this summer

Tanning increases your chances of getting skin cancer by up to 75%, so protect your skin. Join youth from across Niagara to create a campaign that will make a difference!

What's in it for you?

- Have a voice
- Get volunteer hours
- Work with a strong youth team
- Gain valuable work experience

Must be a secondary school student to apply.

Call 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7395 for more information.

Niagara Region Public Health's youth group, REACT, is accepting applications for paid Peer Leaders

As a Peer Leader, you will:

- Develop events and health campaigns for your peers
- Work with a great youth team
- Gain new skills and receive lots of training
- Make a difference in your community

Applicants must be secondary school students. Positions start in September 2012, with evening and some weekend work required.

Go to www.niagararegion.ca under the careers tab to apply online.

