

WINTER 2007



Healthy Canadians

newsletter



A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO PROVIDING INFORMATION TO
FAMILIES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAD HEALTHIER LIVES AND BUILD
HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES.



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HEALTHY CANADIANS
NEWSLETTER

Welcome!

Canada's Minister of Health says simple changes will make your family healthier

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the first edition of *Healthy Canadians*, a newsletter dedicated to providing information to families to enable them to lead healthier lives and build healthier communities. I've always felt that giving Canadians information on healthy living and making the healthy choices, the easy choices, would go a long way in improving health outcomes. And here's the good news—taking steps to encourage and promote healthy eating and an active connected lifestyle can be both easy and fun. The secret lies in making small, achievable changes, one step at a time.

Most parents would like to spend more time doing things as a family. You can combine this goal with health improvements by making some simple changes:

- Try planning your meals ahead of time in order to increase the number of evening meals you eat together as a family. Research shows that families who eat together also communicate better and eat healthier. Make these meals nutritious and relaxing. Talk to your kids and listen to what they have to say.
- Enjoy one active family outing each week, such as going swimming, biking or on a hike with a backpack lunch. Kids are more active when their parents are active role models.
- Get involved as a family in one community event this season. For instance, volunteer for a charity, join in a neighbourhood activity, help deliver flyers or organize a school event. Again, the research shows that families who are active in their communities tend to live healthier and safer lives.

These kinds of simple, fun changes have the best chance of being embraced and becoming routine family activities. For more tips and tricks on living healthy, visit our Web site at www.healthycanadians.ca. Go ahead – take simple steps towards a healthy lifestyle. Remember, it's for life!

Minister Tony Clement
Minister of Health

Healthy Canadians Newsletter is published by the Government of Canada. Sponsoring departments include: Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada, Canadian Heritage (Sport Canada) and the Canada Revenue Agency. All material is reviewed by qualified professionals; however the Government of Canada does not assume responsibility for all opinions expressed in *Healthy Canadians* Newsletter. Please consult your physician or pharmacist if you have questions or concerns.

Please call 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232) to order additional copies or visit www.healthycanadians.ca for the online version of *Healthy Canadians* Newsletter. For more information on healthy families and practical tips on healthy active living, visit www.healthycanadians.ca.

The new Children's Fitness Tax Credit can help you keep your child moving. For information on the tax credit and eligible activities, visit www.cra.gc.ca/fitness or call 1 800 959-8281.

Tips to help your family get moving – and your child more active

Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth recommends that inactive children and youth increase the amount of time they currently spend being physically active by at least 30 minutes more per day and decrease the time they currently spend on sedentary activities – such as watching TV, playing computer games and surfing the internet – by at least 30 minutes per day.

The increase in physical activity should include a combination of moderate activity (such as brisk walking, skating and bike riding) with vigorous activity (such as running and playing soccer).

The guidelines recommend that inactive children and youth accumulate this increase in physical activity per day in periods of at least 5 to 10 minutes or more. Over several months, children and youth should accumulate at least 90 minutes more physical activity per day and decrease at least 90 minutes per day the amount of time spent on sedentary activities like watching videos and sitting at a computer.

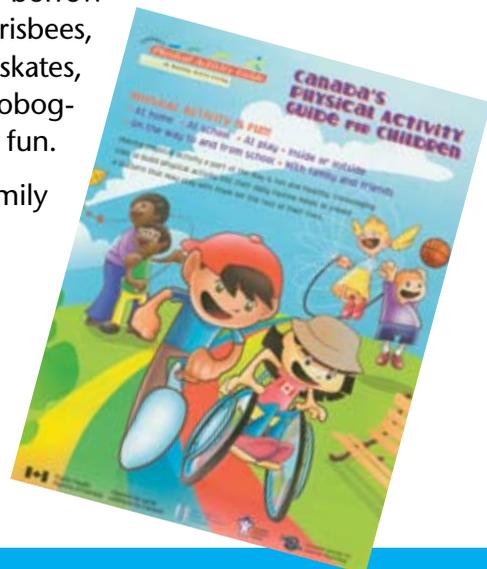
Setting a physical activity friendly environment

- Discuss the importance of physical activity with your children.
- Encourage them to be active everyday – at home – at school – at play – inside or outside – on the way to and from school – with family and friends.
- Be a positive role model by being active yourself.

Here are some things you can do together

Parents and children can work together to set goals to build more physical activity into their day, including how to meet the recommendations from *Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth*:

- Go to your local recreation centre to play or swim, work out, play basketball or other games.
- Put on some music and dance.
- Try bowling or curling just for fun.
- Sign up for a sport that interests your child.
- Set up a cycling challenge for your family to see if you can go a certain distance.
- Have a family or neighbourhood Olympics at the local track.
- Get out or borrow some balls, Frisbees, bikes, in-line skates, ice skates or toboggans, and have fun.
- Go for a family hike or walk.



For more information on the children and youth guides and how to order your copies go to www.healthycanadians.ca

Heart-Healthy Eating Quiz



Try this true-false quiz

- All fats are bad for your heart.**
 True False
- The only way to lower high blood pressure is to eat less sodium (salt).**
 True False
- Whole milk is better for your heart than 1%, 2% or skim milk**
 True False
- Eating fibre from fruits, vegetables and whole grains may help lower your chances of getting heart disease.**
 True False
- Eating a diet high in trans fats (frequently found in hard margarines, commercially baked goods and fried foods) may increase the risk of heart disease.**
 True False
- Canada's Food Guide is a good guide for heart-smart eating.**
 True False

For more information on heart-healthy eating, please visit www.healthycanadians.ca

ANSWERS

- FALSE:** Not all fats are bad. Replacing saturated and trans fats with unsaturated fats such as canola, olive or soybean oils can actually be good for your heart. The right type and amount of fat have their place in a healthy diet. Canada's Food Guide recommends a small amount (30 to 45 ml) of unsaturated fat each day.
- FALSE:** Eating less sodium (salt) is one way to help lower blood pressure. Other strategies include maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, moderating your alcohol intake and eating foods that contain potassium (e.g., vegetables, fruit). Some people require medications to help lower high blood pressure.
- FALSE:** Because 2% and nonfat (skim) milk have less saturated fat than whole milk, they are heart-healthier choices.
- TRUE:** A high-fibre diet can help lower cholesterol and prevent heart disease, can help maintain a healthy weight and may prevent high blood pressure. We get fibre from grain products like whole wheat breads and pasta, oat or bran cereals and brown rice. Fruit, vegetables, and legumes such as beans, lentils and chickpeas are also good sources of fibre.
- TRUE:** Trans fat raises "bad" cholesterol (LDL) levels and lowers "good" cholesterol (HDL) levels, significantly increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke. The best way to deal with trans fats is to limit your intake. You can find out if a product contains trans fats by reading food labels. It is mandatory for companies to list trans fat contents for prepackaged foods.
- TRUE:** Following Canada's Food Guide will mean that you will eat well for your heart. Find out more about Canada's Food Guide by visiting www.healthycanadians.ca.

Bannock for Your Sweetheart

There's lots of room for personal touches in bannock—the traditional bread of many Aboriginal communities. You and the kids can make the recipe below with raisins or currants, and serve warm bannock cakes with strawberry jam.

- Mix together the following ingredients:
 - 4 cups (1 L) whole-grain flour
 - 4 teaspoons (20 mL) baking powder
 - 1 teaspoon (5 mL) salt
 - 4 tablespoons (60 mL) oil
 - 1 cup (250 mL) raisins or currants
- Add enough water to achieve a bread dough consistency. Mix ingredients well and knead for approximately 10 minutes.
- Form the dough into cakes about one-half inch (1.25 cm) thick and dust lightly with flour.
- Lightly grease a frying pan with sprayed oil and heat it. Lay the bannock cakes in the frying pan. Shake the pan at intervals to prevent the bannock from sticking to the pan. Once a bottom crust has formed and the dough has hardened enough to hold together, turn the bannock cakes over.
- Cooking time takes 12 to 15 minutes. Insert a clean toothpick into the bannock. If it comes out clean, it is ready to eat.