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Building healthy families: Are you ready?

Building Healthy Families: Are you ready? is a campaign to foster healthy birth outcomes. The goal of the campaign is to provide important health messages to assist those who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy to have the healthiest pregnancy possible.

People are aware that their health during pregnancy can affect the health of their unborn baby. They are less aware of the importance of good health for both men and women prior to conception and the impact it may have on the health of their future babies.

The preconception and prenatal periods are ideal times for health messaging to be discussed and opportune times for decision-making. Lifestyle changes made during preconception and early pregnancy can positively impact birth outcomes.

If couples are thinking about having a baby, they should book a preconception appointment with their health care provider to learn about what they can do to have the healthiest pregnancy possible. Couples should visit their health care provider as early as possible if they are already pregnant.

It's never too early to start learning about having a healthy pregnancy.

York Region Community and Health Services offer a variety of programs and services to promote healthy birth outcomes and prepare families for parenthood. They include:

- Prenatal Childbirth classes
- All Babies Count Prenatal Nutrition program
- Prenatal Breastfeeding classes
- Prenatal Parenting classes
- Breastfeeding clinics
- Healthy Babies Healthy Children program (home visiting support)
- Transition to Parenting program
- Parenting workshops
- Oral health information and resources

For more information please visit our website at www.york.ca/childandfamilyhealth or call Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653.



Members of the Healthy Beginnings Committee

Child & Family Health

[Evelyn te Nyenhuis](#) (Breastfeeding)
[Cheryl McLean](#) (Dental) [Anita Paul](#) (Reproductive Health)
[Christine Kasperavicius](#) (Child Health)

Social Services

[Sarah Horton](#) (Early Intervention Services)

Health Protection

[Tamika Latibeaudiere](#) (Food Safety)

Healthy Living

[Laura Atkinson](#), [Rebecca Davids](#) and [Mary Turfryer](#)
 (Nutrition Services)
[Kristina Juskey](#) (Health Connection)

Infectious Diseases Control

[Deb Elford](#) (Vaccine Preventable Diseases)

What's New in Consumer Resources

- Look for the next issue for new resources

What's New in Professional Resources?

- [Dietary exposures and allergy prevention in high-risk infants](#) by the Canadian Paediatric Society

Share your story contest

During the month of March (Nutrition Month), families are invited to share successes, tips and challenges they have overcome to make planning, shopping, cooking and/or eating together work for their family.

It's a great activity for March Break!

All families who work or live in York Region who submit their story will receive a **family prize pack** and a chance to win one of two **\$200 grocery store gift cards!**

Starting March 1st, families can enter the *Cook Up Some Fun!* Share Your Story contest by submitting their story here: <http://fluidsurveys.com/s/CUSFShareYourStory/> or can go to the *Cook Up Some Fun!* website at www.york.ca/nutrition (click on *Cook Up Some Fun!* located under Related Pages).

Families may also like to sign up at the *Cook Up Some Fun!* website to receive twice monthly emails with recipes and practical ideas for planning, shopping, cooking and eating together as a family.

When families have fun cooking together, they tend to eat together more frequently, and are more likely to have healthier eating habits, be at a healthy weight and have less chance of developing eating disorders. Children also tend to have stronger language skills and teens are less likely to engage in risky behaviours.

Cooking is a wonderful way for parents to spend positive time with their children and can help kids to:

- Learn new words and concepts needed for reading
- Develop small muscle strength and coordination needed for writing
- Learn problem solving and measuring skills needed for math

For ways to support and promote *Cook Up Some Fun!* with families, visit the "Professionals and Teachers" and/or "Health Professionals" sections of the website.

For questions about the campaign, contact Laura Atkinson (905-895-4512 ext. 74849), Rebecca Davids (ext. 74672) or Mary Turfryer (ext. 74338) from Nutrition Services.



Immunization record review

Immunization is one of the most successful and cost-effective strategies to promote health and prevent illness related to vaccine-preventable diseases.

The immunization of children attending licensed child care centres is directed by the [Day Nurseries Act, 1990](#), while the immunization of students is covered in the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*. These Acts require that children be fully immunized according to the recommendations of the Medical Officer of Health. York Region Community and Health Services, Public Health Branch Immunization Services are responsible for maintaining up-to-date immunization records for these children on an annual basis.

Reporting a child's immunization information has never been easier! We are pleased to announce that we are now able to receive immunization records from parents in our new [online](#) immunization reporting update form.

If parents choose not to vaccinate their child(ren), written documentation of a religious, conscientious or

medical exemption must be provided. For medical exemptions, a written statement from a physician or nurse practitioner stating why the child should not be immunized is required. For all other exemptions, a letter from the parent declaring their religious or conscientious objection is required.

If an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease occurs, children who are not immunized may be excluded from attending school or a child care centre to reduce their risk of getting the disease. For this reason, it is important that immunization records be up-to-date.

Ensuring that children are fully vaccinated helps protect our community from serious vaccine-preventable diseases.

For questions about the *Day Nurseries Act*, the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* or the immunization record review process, please call York Region Public Health Immunization Services at 1-877-794-1880, ext. 67565, or press 9 to speak with a nurse.

Region in process of becoming BFI

York Region Community and Health Services Department has been working toward Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) accreditation. BFI designation is awarded to facilities that provide high quality health teaching and support regarding infant/young child feeding. Breastfeeding is an important public health issue. Children who are not breastfed are more likely to experience illness and disease. Mothers who do not breastfeed are more likely to experience weight retention, certain cancers and other chronic diseases.

There are three stages to the BFI accreditation process. The first stage was the Document Review which was

submitted in spring 2013. The second stage is a site visit that occurred January 28, 2014. The third stage is the final assessment which will occur in 2014. During these site visits, assessors formally and informally interview staff and clients. At the final assessment, designation may be awarded.

These site visits were a wonderful opportunity for staff to demonstrate the great services we provide for York Region families.

For more information, please contact the BFI Implementation team at babyfriendly@york.ca.



Raw milk

Did you know it can be hard to tell the difference between raw, pasteurized or organic milk? When in doubt, ask if the product has been pasteurized.



- **Raw milk** is milk that has not been pasteurized and may contain harmful bacteria including Salmonella, E. coli, Campylobacter and Listeria
- **Pasteurized milk** is milk that has gone through a pasteurization (heating) process, killing off harmful bacteria that can make people sick
- **Organic milk** is milk that has been produced using organic farming practices with respect to pesticides, fertilizers and feed and has been pasteurized (check the label)

What is the law in Canada?

In Canada, it is against the law to sell or give away raw milk or raw milk products.

Does pasteurization change the quality of milk?

There is little loss of vitamins and minerals with pasteurization. As per Health Canada, Vitamin D is added to pasteurized milk which is important for strong bones and may play a role in preventing other diseases.

What happens if I drink raw milk or eat raw milk products?

You could get a food poisoning. Common symptoms are bloody diarrhea, stomach cramps, fever, headache and fatigue. Most healthy people recover within a short period of time but some could develop long-term health conditions including arthritis. The more raw milk you consume, the more likely you are to get sick.

Who is more at risk of becoming sick?

Young children, older adults, pregnant women and people who have other health problems are at a higher risk of getting sick from raw milk. These people may not be strong enough to fight off infection and could face long-term, severe, or even life-threatening illness such as kidney failure.

Did you know that if you are sick from drinking raw milk you can infect others? When sick people touch household items, food or other people, bacteria can spread and make others sick.

If you are unsure about the milk product, ask the retailer if it has been pasteurized.

For more information on pasteurized or raw milk visit www.york.ca/foodsafety or call York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653, TTY 1-866-252-9933.

Preterm care pathways

Early Intervention Services provides Preterm Care Pathways to children born prematurely (37 weeks gestation or earlier). Children born prematurely are more at risk for developmental delays and need a professional to monitor their development.

Early Interventionists use Preterm Care Pathways to determine what type of service a child will need based on the degree of prematurity, medical history and family situation.

Preterm Care Pathways uses specific screening tools to monitor children at set intervals for the first few years of their lives. An Early Interventionist will review the screening schedule with the family at the initial appointment. To ask about Early Intervention Services, which are provided at no cost, call 1-888-703-KIDS (5437) toll free or 905-830-9487 in Newmarket. Information is also available on www.york.ca. Look under Services, click on Children's Services. Accessible formats are available on request by calling 1-888-256-1112 or TTY 905-762-0401.



Human milk in child care

York Region Community and Health Services and Health Canada recommend that children continue to receive breastmilk up to (and beyond) their second birthday.

Breastmilk continues to provide nutrition and facilitates in brain and immune system development.

Many mothers return to the workforce or school before their child turns two, but that does not mean

breastfeeding must end! Children in child care settings can continue to receive expressed breastmilk.

A new factsheet, entitled *Human milk in child care settings* will be available soon in the *Come Grow With Us* manual. This factsheet provides information for child care providers on safe storage and handling of human milk. For more information, please contact Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 or visit www.york.ca.

Dietary exposure and allergy prevention in high-risk infants

In December 2013, the Canadian Pediatric Society published a joint position statement with the Canadian Society of Clinical Allergy and Immunology – *Dietary exposures and allergy prevention in high-risk infants*. Published in *Paediatrics & Child Health* (Paediatr Child Health 2013;18(10):545-9).

This Canadian position statement reviews the current evidence on dietary exposures and allergy prevention in infants at high risk for developing allergic conditions. This statement summarizes for health care practitioners, the best available evidence in regard to preventing allergic conditions. It includes practice guidance on dietary recommendations for pregnancy, breastfeeding, infant formula feeding and the introduction of solid foods.

The statement is endorsed by Dietitians of Canada and also includes links to resources for parents.

Key practice points:

- There is *no* benefit to delaying the introduction of any specific solid food, including highly allergenic proteins, past six months of age
- There is no need to avoid certain allergenic foods during pregnancy and lactation
- Affirms the immunological role of breastfeeding
- Offers guidance on the choice of infant formula for mothers who cannot breastfeed or make the informed decision to use infant formula

You can access the position paper on the Canadian Paediatric Society website www.cps.ca.

