

Public Health

Health Promotion School Newsletter Inserts

Revised August 31, 2022



Health Promotion School Newsletter Index by Topic

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Suggested Distribution

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HANDWASHING FOR HEALTH

Germs spread easily in a classroom. Handwashing is the best way to stop the spread of germs that cause colds, influenza (flu), diarrhea and other sicknesses. It is important that children learn how and when to wash their hands to lower their risk of getting sick.

How to Wash Hands:

- ◆ **Wet** your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap
- ◆ **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap
- ◆ **Scrub** all surfaces of your hands, including the palms, backs, fingers, between your fingers, and under your nails. Keep scrubbing for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
- ◆ **Rinse** your hands under clean, running water
- ◆ **Dry** your hands using a clean towel, paper or air dry them
- ◆ **Turn** off taps with a paper towel

When to Wash Hands:

- ◆ Before and after preparing, eating or handling food
- ◆ After using the toilet
- ◆ After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- ◆ After touching an animal, animal food or treats, animal cages, or animal feces (poop)
- ◆ After touching garbage
- ◆ If your hands are visibly dirty or greasy

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [HealthLinkBC](#) or dial 8-1-1 (a free call)
- ◆ [Do Bugs Need Drugs?](#)
- ◆ [Handwashing in Communities: Clean Hands Save Lives](#) (CDC)



BC HEALTHY KIDS DENTAL PROGRAM

Basic dental coverage is available for children through the Healthy Kids Program. Dependent children under 19 years of age may be covered for dental care if the family is approved to receive premium assistance for BC Medical Services Plan (MSP).

Children are eligible for up to \$2000 of basic dental services every two years. This includes services such as exams, x-rays, fillings, cleanings and extractions. Some services are limited. For example, the program does not cover orthodontic treatment. Healthy Kids may not cover all of the costs and there may be additional charges for each visit. Before treatment begins, confirm that your dentist is accepting children covered by the BC Healthy Kids Program, and what part of the services will be covered.

To use the services, take your child's BC Care Card to the dental office and they will confirm coverage before each appointment.

To find out if your child is covered call:

- ◆ **1-866-866-0800** (have your child's Care Card Number handy)

Or access the [Healthy Kids Program](#) website.

For more information:

- ◆ Island Health, Public Health - Dental:

Saanich Health Unit	250-519-5100
Esquimalt Health Unit	250-519-5311
Peninsula Health Unit	250-544-2400
West Shore Health Unit	250-519-3490
Duncan Health Unit	250-709-3050
Nanaimo Public Health	250-755-3342
Port Alberni Public Health Services	250-731-1315
Comox Valley Health Unit	250-331-8520
Campbell River Health Unit	250-850-2110
Port Hardy Health Unit	250-902-6071

KINDERGARTEN HEARING SCREENING

Children may have unknown hearing loss when they start school. Slight hearing loss or hearing loss in just one ear is hard to notice. Yet, these losses can cause school problems that are preventable. Each year, kindergarten children have their hearing checked at school by Public Health Vision and Hearing Screeners. Each year, the “Kindergarten Hearing Screening Program” helps find children with hearing loss. If a child does not pass the hearing screening, a letter is sent home to parents. If you receive a letter, it is important to make an appointment to have your child’s hearing tested at the Hearing Clinic. Many hearing problems can be treated if identified early.

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#) Hearing Clinic

Hearing Clinics:

Victoria	250-388-2250
West Shore	250-519-3490
Nanaimo	250-755-6269
Courtenay	250-331-8526

KINDERGARTEN IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

Public Health offers immunization clinics throughout the year for Kindergarten aged children.

The following are the most common vaccines given to children at this age. Some children may be missing some vaccines and have not completed their childhood immunizations. Public Health Nurses or Family Physicians can ensure that your child is fully immunized against the following vaccine preventable diseases.

Vaccine	Vaccine Schedule
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis and Polio (given in one poke)	Most children in kindergarten are due for this vaccine.
Varicella (Chickenpox)	Most children in kindergarten are due for a <u>second</u> dose of this vaccine. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Children who have had chickenpox disease or shingles when they were <u>over</u> one year of age do not need this vaccine. ◆ Children who had chickenpox disease when they were <u>younger</u> than one year of age OR who have never had chickenpox disease should have already been given 1 dose of this vaccine and now need a second dose. If the second dose is necessary, it can be mixed with the measles mumps and rubella, so the child will be getting only one poke.
Hepatitis B	Most children in kindergarten should have already been given 3 doses of this vaccine.
Measles, Mumps and Rubella (given in one poke)	Most children in kindergarten should have already been given 1 dose of this vaccine. Most children in kindergarten are due for a second dose of this vaccine. In kindergarten it can be mixed with chickenpox vaccine so children will be getting only one poke.
Meningococcal C	Most children in kindergarten should have already been given 2 doses of this vaccine.

All of these vaccines are provided free of charge by the health unit or your family doctor. To check your child's immunization status or to make an appointment, phone your local [Public Health Unit](#).

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [HealthLinkBC](#) or dial 8-1-1 (a free call)
- ◆ [HealthLink BC Files](#)
- ◆ Your family doctor
- ◆ www.immunizebc.ca

SPRING INTO SPRING

Island Health recognizes the importance of daily physical activity. Are your children getting 60 minutes of physical activity a day?

"Together, we can make active travel, like walking, cycling, or taking transit, part of our school routine - for the good of our physical and mental health and our communities."

~ Dr. Murray Fyfe, Medical Health Officer, Island Health

Spring is a great time to think about walking or wheeling to school. What a wonderful way to enjoy the smells and sights of spring!

- ◆ Active travel to and from school helps children and youth meet the goal of at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity. It also helps build life-long healthy habits.
- ◆ It's a great time to think about forming new habits. Only 9% of Canadian kids aged 5 to 17 get the 60 minutes of heart-pumping activity they need each day (2016 ParticipACTION Report Card).
- ◆ Talk with parents about getting kids walking and cycling together.
- ◆ For younger children, physical literacy skills such as balancing, hopping and jumping can be developed on the walk to school.

For more ideas and information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth](#) (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology)

HEAD LICE AWARENESS

Head lice are common in BC communities. Although they are a bother, **head lice are not a health risk.**

Head lice spread quickly by close, head-to-head contact. Lice cannot live on furniture or carpet, and they cannot jump or fly. There may be few or no symptoms, but itching may occur.

You can help by:

- ◆ Checking your child's head with the wet combing method of detection once a week throughout the year.
 - ◆ Review the pamphlet [How to Get Rid of Head Lice Wet Combing](#), available online, at your school and [Public Health Unit](#).
- ◆ Encouraging your child to wear their hair tied back.
- ◆ Treating if you notice live lice on your child's head.
- ◆ Reminding family and friends about the importance of routine head checks, using the wet combing method.

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ Read the HealthLink BC File on Head Lice [HealthLink BC File #06 Head Lice](#)

PREVENTING COLDS AND INFLUENZA (FLU)

Cold and influenza season is here. As the weather gets cooler and we move indoors, so do germs. Children need reminders to decrease the risk of colds and flu at school and home by:

- ◆ Washing hands often
- ◆ Coughing and sneezing into their elbow
- ◆ Keeping hands away from nose and mouth
- ◆ Not sharing food or drink with others
- ◆ Not sharing facecloths or towels

To help limit the spread of germs, please keep your child home from school and activities if they are feverish, coughing a lot, have thick yellow or green discharge from the nose, or are otherwise unwell.

Remember:

- ◆ Viruses cause colds and influenza
- ◆ Antibiotics will not make a cold or other virus go away faster
- ◆ The most effective treatment for a cold is rest and fluids
- ◆ The influenza vaccine will protect against specific types of influenza
- ◆ Call your doctor if your child has an earache, fever higher than 39° C (102° F), rash, is very sleepy or difficult to wake, very cranky or fussy, has trouble breathing or a cough that will not go away
- ◆ Handwashing is the most effective way to stop the spread of germs that cause colds, influenza, diarrhea, and other illnesses
- ◆ Wash hands, before and after eating or handling food, after using the toilet, handling pets, coughing, sneezing, or wiping noses

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [HealthLinkBC](#) or dial 8-1-1 (a free call)
- ◆ Your doctor

FIRST TIME? LET'S GET STARTED USING ACTIVE TRAVEL!

Island Health recognizes the importance of daily physical activity. Are your children getting 60 minutes of physical activity a day?

"Together, we can make active travel, like walking, cycling, or taking transit, part of our school routine - for the good of our physical and mental health and our communities."

~ Dr. Murray Fyfe, Medical Health Officer, Island Health

Walking and biking to school for the first time can be daunting for you and your kids. Here are a few tips to help you get organized:

- ◆ Plan a route beforehand. A safe and enjoyable walk or bike route to school may not be the same route as the one you drive. Map-out your route to take advantage of cut-throughs and off-street pathways.
- ◆ Pack lunches the night before to save time in the morning (get the kids to help).
- ◆ Don't let weather get in the way. Be prepared. Find out what the weather will be like the next day so that there's not a rush looking for gear. Dressing for the weather is important: sunscreen and hats for the warmer days; mitts and scarves for the chilly days; and proper rain gear on the wet days.
- ◆ For young children, think about how to make it fun (although they will have fun anyway!). Look for different types of birds, species of trees, how many people are wearing hats, or using umbrellas. See how long you can kick a pinecone.
- ◆ Is it really too far? If the kids are complaining, consider showing them this short film! [On the Way to School](#)

For more ideas and information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)

BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE EARS

Ear infections or middle ear fluid occur in nearly two-thirds of all children by the age of three years! Ear infections are the most common reason children see the doctor. Ear infections can lead to fluid behind the eardrum, leading to a temporary hearing loss. When the fluid is gone hearing usually goes back to normal. This can take up to three months. Frequent ear infections can cause difficulties with pronunciation, language and learning.

If your child has an ear problem, be sure to let the teacher know. Ear problems can make it hard for your child to hear, listen and learn at school. If the hearing loss persists, contact a [Public Health Unit](#) Hearing Clinic to arrange a hearing test for your child.

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#) Hearing Clinic

Hearing Clinics:

Victoria	250-388-2250
West Shore	250-519-3490
Nanaimo	250-755-6269
Courtenay	250-331-8526

ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES (E-CIGARETTES)

What are e-cigarettes?

E-cigarettes are popular “high tech” devices on sale at many convenience stores and stand-alone e-cigarette retailers. They are sometimes marketed as a safe alternative to smoking and the advertising is aimed at hooking youth.

E-cigarettes can look like pipes, pens, USB memory sticks or regular cigarettes, and are made up of a battery, cartridge and a heating element. E-cigarette liquid often has nicotine even though it is not legal to sell nicotine-containing fluid in Canada. The fluid comes in many attractive flavours, such as chocolate mint, strawberry, grape and watermelon. This is another method of attracting youth to try the product.

E-cigarettes send off a vapour, and the mist is inhaled into your lungs, much like a traditional cigarette.

Are they safe?

People who use them (or “vape”) are very excited about this product, yet there is a lot that we do not know about them, and they are not proven to be safe. For example, e-cigarettes:

- ◆ Can send out unknown and possibly harmful substances, some of which may cause cancer, are poisonous and have caused fires.
- ◆ May have nicotine and be addictive.
- ◆ Are not proven to help people quit smoking and may lead you to actually take it up!
- ◆ Are not approved by Health Canada to help you quit.
- ◆ Are another way that Big Tobacco wants to hook you and make money.

Island Health Tobacco Prevention does not support using electronic cigarettes:

- ◆ By young people.
- ◆ As a way to quit smoking.
- ◆ In any place where regular cigarettes are not allowed to be smoked.

For more information:

- ◆ Your Tobacco Prevention staff:

Victoria:	250-519-3426	Courtenay and	
Nanaimo:	250-755-6285	Campbell River:	250-755-6285

KINDERGARTEN VISION SCREENING

Children may have unknown vision problems that can lead to difficulty with reading and/or writing when they start school. During the school year, Public Health Screeners help find children with possible vision concerns by checking kindergarten children's vision. Letters are sent home to parents before the screening with information about screening, and after, with the results. If your child is referred, it is important that you take them for a complete eye exam with an eye doctor.

British Columbia's Medical Services Plan provides some coverage for eye exams for children under the age of 18, and the [BC Healthy Kids Program](#) provides limited funds once in a twelve-month period for prescription eyewear for children 0 – 18 years living in low-income families.

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [HealthLinkBC](#) or dial 8-1-1 (a free call)
- ◆ [BC Healthy Kids Program](#)

KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE ON HALLOWEEN

Trick-or-Treating is an exciting activity for many children. It can also be risky. Up to about 10 years of age, children do not have the skills to be safe in traffic.

Here are some tips to help keep your child safe:

- ◆ Make sure your child has a light and/or reflective clothing
- ◆ Have an adult go with your children, especially if they are under 10 years old
- ◆ If your child is not with an adult, make sure they are in a group of at least 3 people
- ◆ If you are not with your child, make sure you know where he is and who he is with
- ◆ Set a time with your child to be back home
- ◆ Teach your child road safety rules and to look, listen and think about traffic
- ◆ Teach your child about personal safety and to never go with anyone they don't know
- ◆ Teach your child not to eat treats until a parent has checked them
- ◆ Consider alternatives to trick-or-treating, such as a home party, a local community centre or mall

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Halloween Safety](#) (Government of Canada)
- ◆ [Halloween Safety: Tips for Families](#) (Canadian Paediatric Society)

MARIJUANA! TALK ABOUT IT

Adolescence is “the age of experimentation”. Sometimes the experimentation includes tobacco, alcohol and other drug use. Normal adolescent behaviours include exploring the world and taking risks. The adolescent brain hasn’t fully developed, making it difficult to foresee the consequences of their actions. Parents can make a difference in their teen’s decision to experiment with drugs. The most important thing parents can do is talk with their children about the issues facing youth today. These conversations go better when parents are calm and curious about what their children know about substance use, staying safe, and their ability to make decisions/understanding the benefits and the harms.

In our region, more teens are using marijuana than are smoking cigarettes. Most start experimenting with marijuana around 13 years of age. Pot, grass, weed, joint, bud, mary jane, hashish, hash and hash oil - marijuana has many names. Marijuana is the dried leaves and buds of *Cannabis Sativa* (a form of hemp). Marijuana is grayish-green to greenish brown in colour and looks similar to dried and crushed oregano. Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the active ingredient in marijuana that gives users the desired “high”. Hashish is a tar-like substance made from the female plant and is more potent than marijuana. Hash oil is the purest form of the drug and has the highest content of THC.

Marijuana increases the user’s perception of taste, colour, sound and sensations. Some of the most common physical effects of marijuana include red eyes, increased appetite, drowsiness, impaired coordination, dry mouth and throat, impaired concentration and occasionally hallucinations.

The Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, Family Smart and Kelty have produced a helpful guide in discussing cannabis with their youth. Access the guide [here](#).

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Discovery Youth & Family Substance Use Services](#) (Island Health)
- ◆ [HealthLinkBC](#) or dial 8-1-1 (a free call)
- ◆ [Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research](#) (University of Victoria)
- ◆ [McCreary Centre Society](#)
- ◆ [Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre](#)

THE MANY ACTIVE WAYS FOR YOUR CHILD TO GET TO SCHOOL

Island Health recognizes the importance of daily physical activity. Are your children getting 60 minutes of physical activity a day?

"Together, we can make active travel, like walking, cycling, or taking transit, part of our school routine - for the good of our physical and mental health and our communities."

~ Dr. Murray Fyfe, Medical Health Officer, Island Health

Walking or wheeling all the way to school or every day may not be possible for your family, but there are alternatives that you may not have considered. If you want to make the journey to school more active and get your kids into the lifelong habit of active travel, consider these options:

- ♦ Walking or wheeling (bicycle, skateboard, scooter, wheelchair) part way to school or one day a week for Freedom Friday or Walking Wednesday.
- ♦ Taking the school bus or public transit for all or part of the way.
- ♦ Ever heard of "Drive to Five"? A Drive to Five Zone is an area where parking is less congested but only a five-minute safe and comfortable walk from the school, so that kids can still stretch their legs (and their brains) with a five-minute walk.
- ♦ Ever heard of a "Walking School Bus"? Same idea as a school bus, but with walking. A group of students walk with adult chaperones along a designated route to school. Many schools have a walking school bus organized by parents. Get one going at your school!
- ♦ Ever heard of a "Bicycle Train"? Same idea as the Walking School Bus, but on wheels. It consists of a group of children with at least one Bicycle Train adult leader, cycling to school together along a designated route.

For more ideas and information:

- ♦ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ♦ [Drive to Five Toolkit](#) (CRD)

TOBACCO! TALK ABOUT IT

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in Canada. According to the 2008 Adolescent Health Survey, 26% of students have tried smoking, some starting as young as 9 years old. Someone who uses tobacco can become addicted to smoking after only 2 cigarettes or 1 wad of chewing tobacco. As a parent, you can help your child stay tobacco-free by talking openly about the dangers of tobacco and addiction, even if you use tobacco. Parents are a child's greatest role models and the research has shown that you can reduce your child's likelihood of using tobacco just by talking with them.

How can you protect your children from second-hand smoke?

According to the 2013 Adolescent Health Survey, 21% of youth were exposed to tobacco smoke inside their home or vehicle. Non-smokers exposed to tobacco smoke are more likely to suffer from asthma, colds, pneumonia, ear infections (children) and other respiratory problems. You can protect the non-smokers in your house by:

- ◆ Talking with your children about the dangers of second-hand smoke.
- ◆ Making your home and car smoke-free and encouraging your family and friends to do the same.
- ◆ Asking smokers to smoke outside and setting up a comfortable outdoor smoking section away from open doors and windows.
- ◆ Asking smokers to wash hands and remove jackets when returning inside after smoking.
- ◆ Visiting only smoke-free places.

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [HealthLinkBC](#) or dial 8-1-1 (a free call)
- ◆ [Quit Now](#) or call 1-877-455-2233
- ◆ [Smoke-Free Spaces](#) (Island Health)
- ◆ [Tobacco Control Program](#)
- ◆ [McCreary Centre Society](#)

THE ROUTE TO SCHOOL SHOULD ALWAYS START WITH SAFETY

Island Health recognizes the importance of daily physical activity. Are your children getting 60 minutes of physical activity a day?

"Together, we can make active travel, like walking, cycling, or taking transit, part of our school routine - for the good of our physical and mental health and our communities."

~ Dr. Murray Fyfe, Medical Health Officer, Island Health

Active travel to school has many benefits including the development of physical literacy. It's a great way for family and friends to connect meaningfully during travel time, and to form new habits of becoming active and spending more time outdoors. It's also a great time to teach your children an important skill that we often take for granted... **road sense**. Remember to teach age-appropriate rules of the road.

Here are a few tips to make sure the commute to school is safe:

- ◆ *Look.* Ask your children to make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street, and reinforce the importance of looking in both directions before crossing the street.
- ◆ *Listen.* Put away electronics, and remind your children to be alert, especially when crossing streets.
- ◆ *Be seen.* Wear bright clothes and reflective gear, especially at night and in poor weather.

Parents can map-out safe routes to school. Contact your children's school, as there may already be a list or map of popular routes. For parents who are concerned about their children walking alone, connect with neighbours or classmates – there is always safety in numbers.

Less children being driven to school = less traffic and safer roads. It's a WIN WIN.

For more ideas and information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Bicycle Safety](#) (CAA)
- ◆ [Road safety for your kids](#) (ICBC)
- ◆ [Active School Travel Planning](#) (CRD)

WHAT IS PHYSICAL LITERACY?

Physical literacy is when kids have developed the skills, confidence, and love of movement to be physically active for life. It allows kids to learn the skills and enjoy moving their body – to walk, run, ride a bike, play sports and be physically active. It is as important as learning to read and write.

Physical literacy:

- ◆ Begins when parents encourage movement in infancy
- ◆ Develops throughout life
- ◆ Can be a gift that is shared between generations

Kids develop physical literacy gradually through a variety of structured and unstructured activities. The nature of these activities changes as kids grow in age and ability.

0-3 years	3-5 years	5-8 years	8-12 years
Encourage early movement.	Expand on play, and keep it fun.	Increase the focus on fundamental movement and skills.	Introduce more complex skills as kids are ready.
Example: Catching bubbles	Example: Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes game	Example: Red Light Green Light game	Example: Hopscotch game

“Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.”

~ The International Physical Literacy Association, May 2014
[Canada’s Physical Literacy Consensus Statement June 2015](#)

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ Your local Parks and Recreation
- ◆ [Sport for Life](#)
- ◆ [Active for Life](#)
- ◆ [Physical Literacy](#)
- ◆ [Appetite to Play](#)
- ◆ [Healthy Schools BC](#)
- ◆ [2018 ParticipACTION Report Card: The Brain + Body Equation](#) (video)

WHY USE FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE?

Fluoride is absorbed into the tooth enamel making the tooth more resistant to decay. New teeth especially can benefit from fluoride, and school-aged children are getting their new adult teeth.

Daily use of fluoride toothpaste is a cheap and easy way to protect children's teeth from decay. A small amount of toothpaste about the size of a pea, used twice each day, is all you need.

Public water supplies on Vancouver Island do not have fluoride added. Therefore, it is very important to use fluoride toothpaste.

Spit out after brushing – don't rinse! This will allow small amounts of fluoride to stay in the mouth. The fluoride can help reverse areas of early tooth decay and slow down the decay process.

Toothpastes with special adult ingredients such as "anti-tartar", "whitening", and "anti-bacterial" agents are not recommended for children under age 12.

For more information:

- ◆ Island Health, Public Health - Dental:

Saanich Health Unit	250-519-5100
Esquimalt Health Unit	250-519-5311
Peninsula Health Unit	250-544-2400
West Shore Health Unit	250-519-3490
Duncan Health Unit	250-709-3050
Nanaimo Public Health	250-755-3342
Port Alberni Public Health Services	250-731-1315
Comox Valley Health Unit	250-331-8520
Campbell River Health Unit	250-850-2110
Port Hardy Health Unit	250-902-6071

PROTECTING YOUR CHILD'S HEARING

Some hearing facts...

- ◆ **Children have more trouble hearing in noisy environments than adults!** This is because their nervous systems are not mature. Children learn best in quiet, both at home and school.
- ◆ **Noise or loud music can hurt your child's ears!** Firecrackers are really dangerous – they can cause sudden permanent damage. Power tools, lawnmowers and even loud music can damage the delicate inner ear. When your child is around loud noises, protect them with earplugs or earmuffs or better still, avoid the noise.
- ◆ **Do you have concerns about your child's hearing?** Contact a [Public Health Unit](#) Hearing Clinic to arrange a hearing test for your child.

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#) Hearing Clinic

Hearing Clinics:

Victoria	250-388-2250
West Shore	250-519-3490
Nanaimo	250-755-6269
Courtenay	250-331-8526

BEWARE OF BATS!

About 10% of bats in British Columbia are infected with Rabies. Rabies is a virus that is spread to humans from sick bats through bites, scratches, saliva or touching. Rabies is a serious disease and **will** cause death if not treated quickly.

To prevent Rabies:

- ◆ Vaccinate your pet dogs or cats.
- ◆ Do not touch bats... **ever**.
- ◆ If you are bitten or scratched by a bat, wash the wound well with soap and water.
- ◆ If you find a bat in your house, leave the room right away. Call the Communicable Disease Program or [HealthLinkBC](#) at 8-1-1 (a free call).
- ◆ If you have **any** contact with a bat, including situations when a bat is in the room and you cannot exclude any possible bite, scratch or mucous membrane exposure (e.g. in a room with a bat, sleeping in a room/tent with a bat), **immediately** call the Island Health Communicable Disease Program, or go to the nearest hospital for a Rabies vaccination.

For more information:

- ◆ Island Health Communicable Disease Program:
 - South Island: 1-866-665-6626
 - Central Island: 1-866-770-7798
 - North Island: 1-877-887-8835
- ◆ [HealthLinkBC](#) at 8-1-1 (a free call)

SUN SMART

Too much sun (especially sunburns) can cause:

- ◆ Eye damage
- ◆ Skin cancer later in life
- ◆ Damage to immune system
- ◆ Skin damage that is cumulative; this means that the damage builds up over time

Those at highest risk of skin cancer are those with:

- ◆ Fair skin and blonde or red hair
- ◆ Skin that burns and freckles easily
- ◆ Lots of moles or large moles
- ◆ History of severe sunburns

Ultraviolet (UV) Index:

- ◆ UV Index is a measurement that determines how strong the sun is
- ◆ You and your child can sunburn in only 15 minutes depending on the UV Index
- ◆ UV Index is usually highest from late spring to early fall between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., so avoid unprotected sun exposure between these times
- ◆ Use sun protection (clothing, sunscreen, sunglasses, wide brimmed hat) if UV Index is greater than 3
- ◆ Even people with dark skin are at risk for skin damage and cancers

Ways to protect yourself and your child:

- ◆ **SEEK** out the shade
- ◆ **SLIP** on clothing that covers arms and legs
- ◆ **SLAP** on a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses
- ◆ **SLOP** on sunscreen
- ◆ **SLURP** lots of water

Sunscreen Tips:

- ◆ Avoid the mouth and eye area when applying sunscreen
- ◆ Use broad-spectrum sunscreen (with UVA and UVB coverage) with SPF 30 or higher
- ◆ Apply sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going outside

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [HealthLinkBC](#) or dial 8-1-1 (a free call)
- ◆ [Sun Safety - Health Canada](#)
- ◆ [Sun Safety for Every Day](#) (Canadian Dermatology Association)

LIFE-THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES AND SPECIAL DAYS

Special days like birthdays, Easter and year-end parties are times of celebration with friends and food. However, these can be very risky times for students with life-threatening food allergies.

School staff, parents and students can help to keep allergic students safe by creating “allergy-aware” classrooms and schools:

- ◆ Clear communication between parents and teachers about special days and any food that might be offered
- ◆ Avoidance strategies such as handwashing before and after eating and asking students not to share or trade food
- ◆ Celebrate with stickers, games or prizes instead of food
- ◆ Teach students about severe allergies and how they can help if a student is having a reaction
- ◆ Remind allergic students to tell an adult right away when they might be having a reaction
- ◆ Make sure all school staff know what to do if a student has a reaction

Refer to your school’s policies and regulations around life-threatening food allergies for more information.

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [AllergyAware.ca](#) (free, online courses about anaphylaxis)
- ◆ [Food Allergy Canada](#)
- ◆ [EpiPen.ca](#)
- ◆ [Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC](#) or dial 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian (a free call)
- ◆ [HealthLink BC File #100a Severe Allergic Reactions to Food Children and Teens](#)
- ◆ Your local Doctor or Pharmacist

KEEPING ACTIVE CHILDREN HYDRATED

When children are playing and active they may need to be encouraged to drink fluids to quench thirst and stay hydrated.

Water is the best choice.

Other choices: refrigerated milk, fortified soy, almond or rice beverages, and 100% vegetable and/or fruit juices.*

***Limit 100% pure vegetable or fruit juice to ½ cup (125 mL) per day.**

To meet daily calcium and vitamin D requirements to help build strong bones and teeth, low fat milk (skim, 1%, 2%) or fortified soy beverages are recommended in the following amounts:

- ♦ **2 to 8 years = 2 cups (500 mL) daily**
- ♦ **9 to 18 years = at least 2 cups (500 mL) daily**

Avoid beverages like pop, iced tea, sports drinks, diet beverages, fruit punches, “drinks” and “ades” (e.g. lemonade).

Avoid caffeinated beverages, such as tea, coffee, pop and energy drinks.

More on sports drinks:

Sports drinks have added flavour, carbohydrate – mostly as sugar – and electrolytes, like sodium and potassium. None of these “extras” are required unless activity is vigorous and lasting longer than 1 hour. A meal or snack + water to drink will provide carbohydrate and electrolytes similar to a sports drink, without the extra sugar.

Try providing “watery” foods like watermelon, oranges, cucumber or smoothies after activity, especially if your child finds it difficult to drink plain water.

For more information:

- ♦ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ♦ [Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC](#) or dial 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian (a free call)
- ♦ [Energy drinks and sports drinks](#) (Caring for Kids)
- ♦ [Sip Smart! BC](#)

BREAKFAST: THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY!

Breakfast boosts brainpower. Children who eat breakfast eat better and do better on math and reading tests. They eat more vegetables and fruit and they get more of the nutrients they need every day.

The brain uses carbohydrate as its main fuel. The body's carbohydrate stores are low after a night's sleep. Eating grains, vegetables and fruit at breakfast gives fuel for the brain so a child can do well at school.

A balanced morning meal includes protein, long-lasting, energy-providing carbohydrate and healthy fat.

Examples of healthy breakfasts:

- ◆ Overnight oats (mix ½ cup oats with 1 cup of yogurt or milk and let sit overnight) with slivered almonds or pumpkin seeds and fresh or dried fruit. Try adding a dash of cinnamon or a ¼ teaspoon of vanilla.
- ◆ Fruit yogurt smoothie with small homemade muffin or breakfast cookie (make a large batch and freeze)
- ◆ Scrambled eggs, whole grain English muffin and milk or fortified milk alternative
- ◆ Whole grain toast with peanut butter and a banana sliced on top

Check out the pamphlet *Jump-Start the day with BREAKFAST / Snack Attack!* available at your local [Public Health Unit](#).

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC](#) or dial 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian (a free call)
- ◆ [Dietitians of Canada](#)
- ◆ [Breakfast Club of Canada](#)

HEALTHY SNACKS

Snacks are part of healthy eating for children. Offer 2-3 healthy snacks a day as well as 3 meals spaced throughout the day to provide the nutrients and energy children need to learn and grow. Allowing a child to snack all day long increases the risk for tooth decay and children may not be hungry at meal times.

Tips for healthy snacking:

- ◆ Healthy snacks include protein, long-lasting, energy-providing carbohydrate and healthy fat.
- ◆ Check food labels before you buy packaged snack foods. Look for snack foods that are low in sugar and high in nutrients such as fibre and calcium.
- ◆ Sticky foods like crackers, raisins and granola bars cling to the teeth and increase the risk of tooth decay. Encourage children to rinse well with water after these snacks.

Keep these easy, healthy snacks on hand:

- ◆ Cut-up vegetables or fruit with salad dressing or yogurt dip
- ◆ Crackers and cheese
- ◆ Hummus and pita
- ◆ Yogurt and whole grain bread sticks
- ◆ Small homemade muffin or oatmeal cookie and fruit
- ◆ Whole grain cereal and milk
- ◆ Half a tuna sandwich

Need more healthy snack ideas? Check out *Jump-Start the day with BREAKFAST / Snack Attack!*, available at your school and [Public Health Unit](#).

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC](#) or dial 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian (a free call)
- ◆ [Dietitians of Canada](#)

EASY IDEAS WITH VEGGIES AND FRUIT

Most children don't get enough vegetables and fruit each day. Proportionally speaking, half of the foods they eat should be veggies and fruit.

Support your child to eat vegetables and fruit:

- ◆ Eat more vegetables and fruit when you have a meal together. Children learn by watching you.
- ◆ Involve children in buying and preparing vegetables and fruit. Try cut-up veggies and fruit such as cucumber slices, cherry tomatoes, cauliflower, oranges, apple, pear, melon or berries with salad dressing or yogurt for dipping.
- ◆ Cut and serve them in many ways. Try vegetables and fruit cold, hot or right from the freezer. Frozen grapes or blueberries make a terrific snack.
- ◆ Offer vegetables and fruit at snack and meal times. It can take up to 20 times of offering the same food before a child will accept it.

A child's intake varies from day to day. Trust that a healthy child will meet their nutrient needs over time.

Need fresh ideas? Check out halfyourplate.ca

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC](#) or dial 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian (a free call)
- ◆ [Dietitians of Canada](#)

WHY IS PHYSICAL LITERACY IMPORTANT?

Physical literacy is when kids have developed the skills, confidence, and love of movement to be physically active for life.

What are the benefits of physical literacy?

- ◆ Increased confidence
- ◆ More enjoyment
- ◆ Increased participation in activities
- ◆ Better opportunities to connect and socialize
- ◆ Do better at school
- ◆ Improved mental health and wellbeing
- ◆ Leads to being active for life
- ◆ Less stress
- ◆ Better health
- ◆ Less chances of developing chronic illness

Physical activity is a lot more fun when we're physically literate. If we want children to be active for life, they need to develop physical literacy at a young age.

"Together, we can make active travel, like walking, cycling, or taking transit, part of our school routine – for the good of our physical and mental health and our communities."

~ Dr. Murray Fyfe, Medical Health Officer, Island Health

"Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life."

~ The International Physical Literacy Association, May 2014
[Canada's Physical Literacy Consensus Statement June 2015](#)

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ Your local Parks and Recreation
- ◆ [Play Cowichan](#) (on Facebook)
- ◆ [Sport for Life](#)
- ◆ [Active for Life](#)
- ◆ [Physical Literacy](#)
- ◆ [Appetite to Play](#)
- ◆ [Healthy Schools BC](#)
- ◆ [2018 ParticipACTION Report Card: The Brain + Body Equation](#) (video)

PLAY IT SAFE WITH YOUR SMILE

Every year, sporting accidents cause broken teeth and injury to children's mouths. Mouth protectors help prevent injury to teeth and lips during sports such as ice and field hockey, baseball, basketball, soccer, lacrosse and rugby.

Adults can be good role models by wearing helmets and mouth guards to prevent sports injuries and encouraging children to do the same.

Mouth guard kits are available at sporting goods stores for under \$20.00. Ask the store about the best guard for the particular sport. These mouth guards are quick and easy to fit, but are not suitable for use over braces or other oral appliances. For a custom fit mouth guard, contact your dental office.

Accidents can happen. If a tooth is knocked out, there may be blood. This is upsetting to the child and the adult attending to the emergency. Reassure the child, take a deep breath yourself, then:

- ◆ Find the tooth if possible, hold by the crown and place in milk or water
- ◆ Rinse the mouth with warm water and apply cold compress
- ◆ Call a dentist immediately

Play it safe with your family's smile.

For more information:

- ◆ Island Health, Public Health - Dental:

Saanich Health Unit	250-519-5100
Esquimalt Health Unit	250-519-5311
Peninsula Health Unit	250-544-2400
West Shore Health Unit	250-519-3490
Duncan Health Unit	250-709-3050
Nanaimo Public Health	250-755-3342
Port Alberni Public Health Services	250-731-1315
Comox Valley Health Unit	250-331-8520
Campbell River Health Unit	250-850-2110
Port Hardy Health Unit	250-902-6071

DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE A VISION PROBLEM?

Eyes are very important. This guide can help you to determine if your child might have a vision problem.

Do your child's eyes look abnormal?

Eyes that turn in or out, eyelids that droop, or pupils that are different sizes may indicate your child has a vision problem. If there is swelling or crusting of the eyelids or pinkness in the eye itself, your child may have an infection.

What is your child saying?

If your child complains about headaches, sore eyes, blurred vision, words that jump or move around the page when reading or not being able to see the board, your child may have a vision problem.

What are you and the teacher noticing?

If you or the teacher notices your child tilts his/her head, covers one eye, rubs their eyes, frowns when concentrating on objects, has difficulty keeping their place when reading (uses a finger to follow along) or holds printed material in a strange position, your child may have a vision problem.

Other common signs of a vision problem are a lack of interest in activities that require concentrating on an object, lack of interest in reading, and daydreaming in class.

If you notice any of these problems or if there is a family history of vision problems, contact your eye doctor (optometrist). British Columbia's Medical Services Plan provides some coverage for eye exams for children under the age of 18, and the [Healthy Kids Program](#) provides limited funds once in a twelve-month period for prescription eyewear for children 0 – 18 years living in low-income families.

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ Your local eye doctor (optometrist)
- ◆ [HealthLinkBC](#) or dial 8-1-1 (a free call)

TRICK OR TEETH!

When it comes to Halloween candy and tooth health, the "all or nothing" approach is best. Giving children their Halloween candy over days or weeks is not the best choice. The risk of tooth decay increases with the amount of sugar and the number of times teeth are exposed to it.

Tooth safe suggestions for enjoying Halloween treats are:

- ◆ Serve a healthy dinner (or snack) before trick-or-treating. You will know your child has eaten **something** nutritious on this exciting night.
- ◆ Limit the number of times teeth are exposed to sugar by encouraging children to eat treats at one sitting. Offer water and be sure to brush their teeth afterwards.
- ◆ Cut down on the number of sugary treats children receive by handing out "tooth-friendly" options like stickers, temporary tattoos, fancy pens and pencils, or toothbrushes!

And of course, remember to floss and brush with fluoride toothpaste before going to bed, or there could be some very *scary* results!

For more information:

- ◆ Island Health, Public Health - Dental:

Saanich Health Unit	250-519-5100
Esquimalt Health Unit	250-519-5311
Peninsula Health Unit	250-544-2400
West Shore Health Unit	250-519-3490
Duncan Health Unit	250-709-3050
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Port Hardy Health Unit	250-902-6071

LOVE OUR BODIES, LOVE OURSELVES CELEBRATE WHAT YOUR BODY CAN DO!

Parents, teachers and caregivers play a key role in helping children and youth develop a positive body image and to feel good about themselves.

Here are some tips to help kids develop positive body image and self-esteem:

- ◆ Let kids know you love and accept them just the way they are!
- ◆ Give kids chances to learn what they are good at and what they enjoy
- ◆ Teach kids to value qualities such as kindness, honesty and curiosity
- ◆ Focus on the health benefits of being active (not just as a means to control weight)
- ◆ Model healthy behaviours and attitudes
- ◆ Talk about how healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes
- ◆ Avoid making comments about other people's weight, size or shape

Remember, you are a powerful role model: Eat well, Move daily, Hydrate often, Sleep lots, Feel your feelings, and Love your body.

More information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Love Our Bodies, Love Ourselves](#) (Jessie's Legacy)
- ◆ [Kelty Mental Health](#) Resources for Parents and School Staff
- ◆ [Being Me](#) Action Schools! BC Resources – activities to promote positive body image (Kindergarten to Grade 7)
- ◆ [Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC](#) or dial 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian (a free call)

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF PHYSICAL LITERACY?

Physical literacy is when kids have developed the skills, confidence, and love of movement to be physically active for life.

What are the elements of physical literacy?

- ♦ *Motivation and Confidence:* A person, who enjoys, is keen and feels confident to make physical activity an important part of life. For example, a child who wants to join the school soccer team.
- ♦ *Physical Competence:* A person who can learn the movement skills and patterns, and the ability to have different movement intensity and duration. For example, a child needs to learn how to catch before they can enjoy playing softball.
- ♦ *Knowledge and Understanding:* A person who knows and can describe the important qualities that affect movement, the health benefits and the safety features of being physically active in many settings and environments. For example, a child who learns how to swim safely at the local river.
- ♦ *Engagement in Physical Activities for Life:* A person who takes responsibility to be active on a regular basis and makes it a priority in their life. For example, children who walk to school.

"Together, we can make active travel, like walking, cycling, or taking transit, part of our school routine – for the good of our physical and mental health and our communities."

~ Dr. Murray Fyfe, Medical Health Officer, Island Health

"Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life."

~ The International Physical Literacy Association, May 2014
[Canada's Physical Literacy Consensus Statement June 2015](#)

For more information:

- ♦ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ♦ Your local Parks and Recreation
- ♦ [Sport for Life](#)
- ♦ [Active for Life](#)
- ♦ [Physical Literacy](#)
- ♦ [Appetite to Play](#)
- ♦ [Healthy Schools BC](#)
- ♦ [2018 ParticipACTION Report Card: The Brain + Body Equation](#) (video)

PHYSICAL LITERACY IS FUN!

Physical literacy is when kids have developed the skills, confidence, and love of movement to be physically active for life.

Children who have fun playing a sport or being physically active are more likely to stay active and healthy for their entire life. They are more likely to have higher physical literacy and have a better chance of becoming experts in sport.

If physical literacy principles are followed, children's sport can be fun, challenging and provide rich skill development. We also expect:

- ◆ More children will reach the top ranks of amateur and professional competition if they choose this path
- ◆ More children to have a higher level of physical literacy
- ◆ More children will stay physically active throughout their lives

One goal of physical literacy is to increase physical activity and make sure it is more fun for kids. Sport and physical activity need to be developmentally appropriate, safe and inclusive, and well organized. The focus is on the kids themselves and not the goals of the coaches or parents.

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For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ Your local Parks and Recreation
- ◆ [Sport for Life](#)
- ◆ [Active for Life](#)
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- ◆ [Healthy Schools BC](#)
- ◆ [2018 ParticipACTION Report Card: The Brain + Body Equation](#) (video)

EATING TOGETHER, EATING BETTER

With busy schedules, it can be hard to find time for family meals. **Making the time for family meals is worth it.**

Children who eat with an adult almost every day:

- ◆ Are more connected to their families and friends
- ◆ Do better in school
- ◆ Are less likely to engage in high risk behaviours like smoking, alcohol and drug use
- ◆ Have less risk of depression and suicide
- ◆ Make healthier food choices and are more likely to maintain healthy growth and weight

Not sure how to get started? Here are some ideas:

- ◆ Make family meals a priority. Schedule meals the same way you schedule other activities.
- ◆ Involve your children in planning, preparing and meal clean-up. Give everyone a job to do.
- ◆ Keep table talk positive and supportive. Focus on the good things that happened in everyone's day, such as things learned at school, good deeds done, a book you are reading or a joke you have heard.

For more ideas and resources, check out [Better Together!](#)

Children and teens say eating together as a family is one of the things they like to do with their parents. Eating together is good for the whole family.

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC](#) or dial 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian (a free call)
- ◆ [Ellyn Satter Institute](#)

MOVE MORE, SIT LESS!

UNDERSTANDING THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Bodies are made to move and children and youth need to be moving more. How much more?
At least 60 minutes every day!

What types of activity?

- ◆ Heart-pumping aerobic activity like running, basketball, soccer and biking at least 3 days each week
- ◆ Strengthening activities 3 days a week like climbing and swinging at the playground, push-ups, running, and jumping rope

Moving in all different ways helps children develop physical literacy AND a love of movement.

“Kids’ bodies have to move to get the wheels in their brains turning. They need to be active. Their brain health depends on it. A growing body of evidence indicates that physical activity in childhood is essential for a healthy brain.”

([The Brain + Body Equation, 2018 ParticipACTION Report Card](#))

Physical Literacy is when kids have developed the skills, confidence, and love of movement to be physically active for life.

Parents who are active tend to have children who enjoy being active.

Adults need at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. If you and your family are not meeting the recommendations, begin slowly and gradually increase the amount of time you spend being active. Find a few fun activities that the whole family can do together. If you need ideas, check your local recreation centre.

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth](#)
- ◆ [Physical Activity Tips for Children \(5-11 years\)](#)
- ◆ [ParticipACTION](#)
- ◆ [HealthLink BC - Physical Activity for Children and Teens](#) or dial 8-1-1 (a free call)

SCREEN TIME AND YOUR CHILD

Kids are spending more time on screens than ever before. Screens are everywhere and are often used by teachers and students for school-related work. As with most things in life, there should always be a balance!

Too much screen time in children has been linked with:

- ◆ Sleep problems
- ◆ Reduced attention span and learning challenges
- ◆ Increased anxiety and depression
- ◆ Increased risk of overweight and obesity

The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth (ages 5-17 years) recommend:

- ◆ Limit recreational screen time to less than 2 hours per day
- ◆ Aim for at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity

The **4Ms** for Balancing Screen Time:

Minimize screen time: Maintain daily “screen-free” times, especially for family meals. Get outside and be active as a family, read together, and enroll your child in recreational programs in your community.

Model healthy screen use: Remember that your child watches and copies you. Limit the amount of time you spend on the phone, on the computer, watching TV or on other electronic devices.

Be **mindful** about screen time: Monitor your family’s digital use and set limits. Keep TVs and computers in a central place where the whole family can see and use them and out of your child’s bedroom.

Mitigate (reduce) the risks associated with screen time: Be present and engaged when screens are used and co-view when possible. Choose programs that are educational.

For more ideas and information including tips for parents, children and youth to navigate the digital world:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Media Smarts](#)
- ◆ [Common Sense Media](#)
- ◆ [24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth](#)
- ◆ Your local recreation centre

FEEDING THE LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch is an important time for children at school. The midday meal gives kids energy to concentrate, learn and be active all afternoon.

To make a balanced lunch, choose foods that include protein, long-lasting, energy-providing carbohydrate and healthy fat.

Make lunch interesting. Mix and match any of these ideas for a tasty, healthy lunch:

½ of Your Plate: Vegetables and fruit	¼ of Your Plate: Plant-based or lean animal protein	¼ of Your Plate: Whole grains
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Celery and carrot sticks or peppers ◆ Sliced cucumber ◆ Broccoli and cauliflower “trees” ◆ Fresh, frozen or canned fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Tofu and soy based products ◆ Nuts and seeds ◆ Bean spreads or dips ◆ Lean meat ◆ Tuna or salmon ◆ Chili ◆ Eggs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Milk ◆ Chocolate milk ◆ Yogurt ◆ Cheese ◆ Fortified soy beverage ◆ Cottage cheese
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Whole grain bread ◆ Crackers ◆ Mini bagels or buns ◆ Tortilla ◆ Roti or naan bread ◆ Pita bread ◆ Small muffins

Kids are more likely to eat lunch when they help make it. Involve children in planning and packing lunches. Young children can wash fruits and veggies and can choose from what is offered. Older children can make their lunch with your help.

Pack a safe lunch

1. Wash your hands well with warm soapy water.
2. Pack your child’s lunch in an insulated lunchbox.
3. Keep hot foods hot in a thermos.
4. Keep cold foods cold with an ice pack.
5. Remind children to wash their hands before eating.
6. After school each day, wipe down your child’s lunchbox with warm soapy water.

For more information and great lunch ideas:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC](#) or dial 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian (a free call)
- ◆ [Better Together BC](#)
- ◆ [Lunches to Go](#) (PDF) (HealthLink BC)

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

Are you curious about how to help your child eat well, have a healthy weight and develop a healthy relationship with food?

Ways to help children develop a healthy relationship with food:

- ◆ Offer 3 meals and 2-3 snacks regularly throughout the day.
- ◆ Offer a variety of healthy foods. Offer your child the same foods as the rest of the family.
- ◆ **Let children decide whether to eat and how much to eat.**
- ◆ If your child refuses to eat, remove uneaten food without comment. A skipped meal will not harm a healthy child.
- ◆ Never force or bribe your child to eat.
- ◆ Don't withhold food as punishment or offer it as a reward.

Healthy foods served in a relaxed family atmosphere is the best way to help children develop a healthy relationship with food:

- ◆ Enjoy food together - sit down and eat with your child!
- ◆ Turn off the TV, cell phones and other devices.
- ◆ Keep family meals positive and supportive. Check out the meal time conversation ideas at [BetterTogetherBC](#).

Trust that healthy children will eat what they need. If your child is not growing well or has health issues, contact your health care provider.

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ [Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC](#) or dial 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian (a free call)
- ◆ [BetterTogetherBC](#)
- ◆ [Ellyn Satter Institute](#)
- ◆ [Canada's Food Guide](#)

MAKE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PART OF THE DAY, EVERY DAY

Games, climbing, walking, biking, dancing... What do your kids like to do every day? Do they get outside and play or walk and wheel to school? Children may just need the space and time to be active.

“Access to active play in nature and outdoors - with its risks - is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children’s opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings - at home, at school, in child care, the community and nature.”

(Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play, 2015)

What are the benefits?

- ◆ Better sleep
- ◆ Better able to handle emotional challenges
- ◆ Better able to concentrate
- ◆ Stronger body, both inside and out
- ◆ Improve physical literacy (**Physical Literacy** is when kids have developed the skills, confidence, and love of movement to be physically active for life)

The benefits are clear – active kids are healthier and happier, both mind and body!

For more information:

- ◆ Your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- ◆ Your local Parks and Recreation
- ◆ [24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth](#)
- ◆ [HealthLinkBC - Physical Activity for Children and Teens](#) or dial 8-1-1 (a free call)