

# *Community Organizations and Businesses Take the Challenge*

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Only one-third or less of adults 18 years and older are physically active and many are not meeting national guidelines for healthy eating.

Research about local Grade 1 children shows:

- half may not be meeting Health Canada's physical activity and nutrition guidelines. 1 in 4 do not have a healthy weight
- children's eating and activity choices are influenced by family mealtimes, foods eaten away from home, TV and computer screen time, parents' physical activity, and neighbourhood recreational space.

*Busy lifestyles put pressure* on family mealtimes and leave little time for walking to nearby activities. Community organizations and business settings that have nutritious foods available and that offer a variety of enjoyable recreation and physical activity opportunities help people make healthier choices.

You can be part of the solution if you: offer recreation services; sell healthy food products; run a sports facility; serve healthy daycare meals and snacks; coach a sports team; sponsor a community charity run; lead a walking group; or vote for healthy public policy at municipal council. Working together you can make a strong statement to the community about the importance of building a lifetime of good health.

## *What Can Community Organizations and Businesses Do?*

### **Be aware**

*of the benefits of  
physical activity and  
healthy eating*

- Reinforce healthy messages by developing or providing credible health information for your clients using recognized sources.
  - Simcoe County District Health Unit ([www.simcoehealth.org](http://www.simcoehealth.org))
  - Health Canada ([www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca))
  - Dietitians of Canada ([www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca))
  - Canadian Health Network ([www.canadian-health-network.ca](http://www.canadian-health-network.ca))
- Provide a brochure rack with consumer information.
  - *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*
  - *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living*
  - *Who decides what your child eats – the media, the food industry or you?*
  - *Walk This Way* bookmark
  - *Ready, Steady, Walk* brochure
- Use common physical activity and nutrition messages to reinforce awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Market them positively in your advertisements, newsletters, message boards and the media.
- Sponsor credible speakers about lifestyle topics like maintaining a healthy weight, fitting physical activity into a busy schedule, or getting children to eat vegetables.
- Give consumers nutrition information on menus and store shelves, and in consumer flyers.
- Ensure parenting classes provide information about healthy eating, healthy weights, physical activity, healthy body image, and self esteem.

## What Can Community Organizations and Businesses Do?

### Make it easy

*to eat healthy and  
be active every day*

- Reorganize retail food outlets to position healthier foods at eye level, have junk-food free checkouts, and price nutritious foods lower than non-nutritious foods when possible.
- Ensure nutritious choices are offered in municipal facilities (snack bars and vending machines), in restaurants, and in child care and seniors' centres.
  - Provide food and drinks that are high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, salt and unnecessary additives.
  - Feature fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat meats/alternatives, and dairy products.
  - Provide a variety of portion sizes to meet different appetites and incomes.
- Promote the use of indoor and outdoor space to encourage physical activity.
  - Configure indoor space for exercise breaks in meetings and programs.
  - Provide maps of nearby routes for walks on lunch and breaks.
- Focus group or business social events on active recreation and give recreation passes as prizes.
- Plan and promote a variety of recreational activities for teens and offer alternative scheduling like late-night programs.
- Feature media stories on recreation programs, walking or hiking events and the availability of safe and accessible trails.
- Provide baby-friendly areas that encourage breastfeeding and tell your customers. Call Health Connection to get a decal and poster, and join a growing list of baby-friendly places in Simcoe County.

### Be involved

*with your community  
to support healthy  
lifestyles*

- Adopt nutrition guidelines developed for community programs in *Nutrition for Young Children (Ages 1 - 6) in Community Settings—Best Practice Guidelines*.
- Work together with recreation providers, sports associations, businesses, and social service agencies to increase physical activity opportunities and offer recreation subsidies.
- Work with other organizations to offer healthy cooking classes, community kitchens, community gardens and good food box programs.
- Offer programs that allow families and friends to be active together, and provide guidelines for healthy snacks.
- Sponsor sports teams and provide healthy snacks.
- Involve participants in improving programs to meet their lifestyle needs.

### Speak out

*for changes that  
will make your  
community a healthier  
place to live*

- Call or write your local politicians and attend public meetings to support them in decisions that promote health.
- Support municipal plans that include housing, shopping, schools, and parks that are accessible by safe walking routes and bike lanes.
- Join local groups to provide a strong voice for healthy community changes.
- Encourage the media and corporations to use healthy weight models and messages in their ads.

Health Connection is your phone or web link to quick answers about current health issues that affect your program participants or customers. Access resources referred to on this fact sheet and much more. Find out about community programs and services to support community residents in their efforts to make healthy choices. You can speak one-to-one with a public health professional Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., or visit the health unit website.

Call or Click:  

 HEALTH CONNECTION  
 ■ 721-7520 ■ 1-877-721-7520  
 ■ [www.simcoehealth.org](http://www.simcoehealth.org)