Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Elementary Schools

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention - Safety

**Concussion – What Every Parent Needs to Know!**

Any hit on the head can cause concussion and serious long lasting symptoms if not treated carefully. Concussions are invisible injuries, so it’s important to treat every hit on the head with caution even if there is no loss of consciousness. When your child or student hits their head, watch for symptoms, such as: trouble remembering, low energy, headaches, sensitivity to light and noise, or being more emotional than usual. If you see any of these, stop play and take them to a doctor right away. Remember to tell their principal, coaches and teacher about any head injuries that happen outside of school. Depending on the injury, your child may need a personalized plan, time off from school work, sports or other activities to help them fully recover.

For more information on concussion prevention and management visit <http://www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics/item/concussion>.

**Concussion - Coaches, Athletes & Rowans Law Day**

Champions know, your brain matters for a life time, do you? Parents can download the free[**toolkit**](https://teachingtools.ophea.net/supplements/rowans-law-day-toolkit-schools) from @OpheaCanada: Support & Spread Concussion Ed in your school community on September 25th.

For more information on concussion prevention and management visit [Parachute Canada.](http://www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics/item/concussion)

**Water Safety: Drowning Prevention**

**Did you know?** 90% of shallow water drowning’s occur when an adult is not watching. Keep your child safe around water with these tips:

* Stay within sight and arm’s reach when a child is near water; bathtubs, pools, lakes, rivers and streams.
* Put down electronic devices; most drowning’s are silent and happen in just a few seconds.
* Register your child in swimming lessons.
* Make sure young children or children who have trouble swimming for a long time on their own wear a life jacket when in or around the water and in boats.
* Fence your pool – 7 out of 10 child drowning’s can be prevented with four-sided pool fencing.
* Be Prepared: learn to swim and get trained in CPR and first aid.

For more information visit: [www.parachutecanada.org](http://www.parachutecanada.org) and click on Injury Topics and Drowning Prevention or <http://www.lifesavingsociety.com/swim-to-survive.aspx>.

**Safety on Wheels**

Biking before and after school? Teach your child to be safe with these simple safety rules:

* Always wear a helmet – teach them to fit it properly each time they ride.
* Before the age of 10 years children can’t judge the speed of oncoming traffic and should not ride alone – then show them safe places they are allowed to ride.
* Obey the rules of the road – teach them how to use hand signals, watch for traffic and how to cross safely.

Before they ride, check their bike to make sure it’s the right size. Together check that the brakes and bell work, and that the tires have good pressure. Set a good example by wearing a helmet when you bike with your child. For more safety tips, visit [cycling Ontario](https://www.ontario.ca/page/cycling-ontario) and look for the [Young Cyclists Guide](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/pdfs/young-cyclist-guide.pdf).

**Sun Sense**

When your shadow is short.

Stay out of the sun.   
When your shadow is tall.   
Go out and have fun!     
Slip on a shirt.   
Slap on a hat.  
Slop on some sun screen.

Seek shade.

Slide on sunglasses!

**Stay Safe in the Sun**

It only takes one bad sunburn in childhood to increase the risk of developing skin cancer later in life. Follow these sun safety tips to keep you and your family safe this summer:

* Check the daily UV forecast. When the UV index is 3 or higher protect your skin as much as possible. Limit your time in the sun between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. when harmful UV rays are present even on a cloudy day.
* Cover up. Wear a wide brimmed hat that shades the face, neck, and ears and light-coloured, loose- fitting clothes covering as much of the body as possible (e.g. long sleeved shirt and pants).
* Use a “broad spectrum” “water resistant” sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Apply a generous amount to uncovered skin. Reapply after swimming, sweating or toweling off. Don’t forget a sunscreen lip balm.
* Seek shade or bring your own, e.g. an umbrella.
* Protect your eyes. Wear sunglasses or prescription eyeglasses with UV-protective lenses.
* Avoid using tanning beds or deliberately trying to get a sun tan and avoid getting a sun burn. Remember no tan is a safe tan!

Use sources of vitamin D that are safer than exposing yourself to UV rays such as cow’s milk, fortified plant-based beverages, fatty fish like salmon and sardines, margarine, egg yolk, and fortified yogurt.

For more sun safety tips, visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 to speak with a public health nurse.

**Talking to your child before an emergency**

Talking to your child about emergencies before they happen can help take some fear away and help them be prepared. Here are some ideas to get you started:

* Teach your child about natural hazards like tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, ice storms, and blizzards – and what to do when they happen.
* Talk to them about what to do at school if an emergency happens.
* Teach them what to do in case of a fire; plan emergency exits and a safe meeting spot.
* Make sure your child knows how to use 9-1-1 and when to call.
* Create a family emergency plan and prepare a home emergency kit together. Check the link below for what to include in your kit!

For more tips visit [www.getprepared.ca](http://www.getprepared.ca) or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

**Talking to your child after an emergency**

We all react to emergencies differently; children are no different. You play a big role in helping your child to understand and cope with emergencies.

* Take their fears seriously and tell them that it's okay to be scared.
* Explain the event as best you can, and acknowledge what's frightening about what happened.
* Tell your kids what you think and feel. Doing so helps them feel less alone.
* Try to maintain familiar routines, like mealtimes and regular bedtime hours.

It may also be helpful for your child to talk to a professional such as a psychologist or social worker. Talk to your doctor or health care provider about options available to you. For more tips visit [www.getprepared.ca](http://www.getprepared.ca) or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

**Booster Seats Save Lives**

Eight years of age may not be the magic number! Most children in JK, SK and Grade 1 require booster seats to travel safely. Children between the ages of 4 to 9 do not fit into a seat belt properly. If your child is moved out of a booster seat too soon they can be at risk of serious injury or death in a crash. Keep them in a booster seat until they are at least 4’9” or 145cm tall, and their knees bend at the edge of the seat when sitting with their back pressed firmly against the back of the seat. You’ll know the seatbelt fits properly if it crosses low on their hips and the chest strap lies across their shoulder and middle of the chest. Remember, sports equipment is great on the field or on the ice, but is off limits in a booster seat!

Parachute Canada has a great video [Guide to Installing a Booster Seat](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8jm3Y7Itmc&index=2&list=PL7plicVImnW45mR_4Oq1SAbuK0ZM33eLf) and other helpful resources for parents online. Visit <http://www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics/topic/C2>.

**Medicine Cabinet out of Reach?**

Young children are naturally curious. Follow these tips to teach them safety rules about medicines, and other products around the house that could be poisonous if swallowed:

* Keep medications and other household products including alcohol, pain killers and cannabis in their original containers.
* Keep them locked and out of reach from your children.
* Teach your child about the dangers of taking medication not prescribed for them, or without the help of an adult.
* Never refer to medication as candy!
* Finally, remember to clean out and get rid of any expired or unused medicine regularly and take them to your local pharmacy for free, safe disposal.

If you think your child has taken medication or swallowed something harmful, contact the Ontario Poison Center right away by calling 1-800-268-9017.

**Substance use**

Teachers, parents or trusted adults, you are an important influence in the lives of young people. [Start talking](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/Drugs/parentinganddrugs) at an early age about alcohol, cannabis, edibles, opioids and other drugs, it is never too early! Students who use [substances at a younger age,](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/Drugs/parentinganddrugs) regularly and often, can harm their developing brains and may experience social, mental and physical health changes. Brains are still developing until 25 years of age! Talking about alcohol, cannabis and edibles in open and non-judgmental ways, helps students [make informed decisions](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/Drugs/parentinganddrugs) about, if, or how, they will use substances. Need resources to help the conversation? Being aware of the [Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines (LRCUG)](https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/pdfs---reports-and-books---research/canadas-lower-risk-guidelines-cannabis-pdf.pdf) and [The Blunt Truth](http://www.camh.ca/-/media/images/all-other-images/research-lrcug-for-youth/lrcug_for_youth-eng-pdf.pdf?la=en&hash=15D9E4FBB8DBA73B665C3267E64FE233F937A298) helps students make safer choices about vaping or using cannabis. Are you ready for these conversations? Learn more about [what parents (and allies of youth) need to know about cannabis](http://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/guides-and-publications/cannabis-information-document-smha-camh-en.pdf?la=en&hash=15CD762F279DEA07868332363FF02358BD63CF37). Learn how to talk about cannabis with the [Cannabis Talk Kit](https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/Cannabis-Talk-Kit_EN.pdf) and [DrugsFreeKids.ca](https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/).

**Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Secondary Schools**

**Personal Safety and Injury Prevention - Safety**

**Concussions can happen anywhere, not only during sports!**

Any impact, or fall involving jarring of the brain can cause concussion and serious long lasting symptoms if left undiagnosed or untreated. Concussions are invisible injuries, so it’s important to teach awareness of signs and symptoms. If your student hits their head, watch for symptoms such as: trouble remembering, low energy, headaches, sensitivity to light and noise, or being more emotional than usual. If you see any of these, stop play and take them to a doctor right away. Remember to inform their principal, coaches and teacher about any head injuries that happen outside of school. Depending on the injury, your student may need a personalized plan, time off from school/ work, [return to school](https://parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/concussion/) sports or other activities to help them fully recover. [For athletes](https://parachute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Concussion-Guide-for-Athletes.pdf) and more information on concussion prevention and management visit <http://www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics/item/concussion>. https://parachute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Concussion-Guide-for-Athletes.pdf

**Has your Teen Started Driving?**

Getting a driver’s license and riding as a passenger with friends is an exciting milestone for many teens, but it can also be a stressful and challenging stage for parents. Balancing new freedoms, and giving them their independence while teaching them to be safe is challenging. Be patient and look for opportunities to help your teen be safe behind the wheel or as a passenger travelling with friends. They need to navigate learning driving laws, plus develop important skills related to peer pressure, substance use and speeding/stunt driving.

For more information, visit the health unit’s website [Road Safety for Young Drivers](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/InjuryPrevention/RoadSafety/Drivers.aspx), [Parachute Canada Safety Programs](http://www.parachutecanada.org/programs) or call *Health Connection* at 721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

**Know the Law on Bike Helmets?**

If your teen is under the age of 18 and riding a bike for work, school or recreation, it is the law to wear a helmet. . Helmets help prevent head injuries in minor crashes and falls, however they do not prevent concussions. . Talk to your teen about rules of the road – teach them to share the road, watch for all traffic and ride without distraction. Encourage them to find safe places to cycle like skate parks, bike paths, and streets with lower speed limits. Finally, remember bikes require working brakes, inflated tires, reflectors and should be the correct size.. For more information about [safe wheeling](https://parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/helmets/helmets-for-bicycles-skateboarding-inline-skating-scooter-riding/), or [SMDHU info for cyclists](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/InjuryPrevention/RoadSafety/Share-the-Road#8e4eec43-328e-491c-a397-f38f59b0c0c2) or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 to speak with a public health nurse.

**Positive Mental Health:**

Research shows loneliness can heighten risks, and may be higher in those who are Indigenous, individuals with mobility challenges, and those who identify as LGBTQ check out Support for you. Students and families in isolation or quarantine may experience confusion, anger, symptoms of post-traumatic stress, and isolation. Social distancing may increase the need for mental-health services. It is important we all [feel connected.](https://cmha.ca/news/covid-19-and-mental-health) A buddy system is an option for all ages, and a ‘buddy,’ is someone who can check on you or do errands for you if needed. It is good for all of us to stay in touch, with a simple phone call or video chat, FaceTime, Skype or other technologies. Connections [bring a smile](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Promos/Novel-Coronavirus/Support-for-You#6d047459-8491-4a40-b3fb-d770ba6f27e2), and often hope

**Positive Mental Health:**

**What can we do to become more resilient?** It’s common to experience fear and worry during uncertain times. For some people worries can become excessive, and can have a negative effect on our health and immune system. Relying on substances to manage stress can fuel addictions. Reaching out, building healthy connections, close social relationships and helping others, creates [resilience in the face of a crisis.](https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/are-you-in-crisis/)

Positive Mental Health: **Suicide Awareness**: Most persons thinking of suicide want help to [stay alive](https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/are-you-in-crisis/) - yet the leading cause of injury deaths in [Simcoe Muskoka](http://www.simcoemuskokahealthstats.org/topics/leading-causes/of-deaths/injury-related-deaths) is intentional self-harm. Asking directly if someone is thinking of suicide, will not give someone the idea, it [gives the invitation to talk about it](https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/are-you-in-crisis/) so they don’t feel alone.

For more information: [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

**Substance Use**

Teachers, parents and trusted adults, you are an important influence in the lives of young people. [Start talking](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/Drugs/parentinganddrugs) at an early age about alcohol, cannabis, edibles, opioids and other drugs, it is never too early! Students who use [substances at a younger age,](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/Drugs/parentinganddrugs) regularly and often, can harm their developing brains and may experience social, mental and physical health changes. Brains are still developing until 25 years of age! Talking about alcohol, cannabis and edibles in open and non-judgmental ways, helps students [make informed decisions](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/Drugs/parentinganddrugs) about if, or how, they will use substances. Need resources to help the conversation flow? Being aware of the [Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines (LRCUG)](https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/pdfs---reports-and-books---research/canadas-lower-risk-guidelines-cannabis-pdf.pdf) and [The Blunt Truth](http://www.camh.ca/-/media/images/all-other-images/research-lrcug-for-youth/lrcug_for_youth-eng-pdf.pdf?la=en&hash=15D9E4FBB8DBA73B665C3267E64FE233F937A298) helps students make safer choices about vaping or using cannabis. Are you ready for these conversations? Learn more about what parents (and allies of youth) need to know, to talk about cannabis with the [Cannabis Talk Kit](https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/Cannabis-Talk-Kit_EN.pdf) and [DrugsFreeKids.ca](https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/). For more information: <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/Drugs/parentinganddrugs>