



**simcoe muskoka**  
DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

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*Your Health Connection*



# Health MATTERS

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## Sex and the single senior

*Baby Boomers may be taking as many risks as young adults when it comes to sexual activity*



Are you a snowbird? New or just returning to the dating scene? Just found your high school sweetheart on Facebook after 35 years?

Whatever your situation, if you are between the ages of 45 and 64, you may find yourself talking to your mirror instead of having pillow talk after reading this article.

Many snowbirds are now returning to their Ontario homes for the warm months. They may be bringing back something they're unaware they acquired while they were down south enjoying the sun.

Surprisingly, studies continue to show an increase in syphilis, chlamydia and gonorrhoea cases in the United Kingdom, United States and Canada in the 45 to 64 year-old-age group. In fact, the rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are growing faster in those between 40 and 59 than those 15 to 29 years old.

In Florida, seniors account for 17 per cent of all HIV cases, which is, coincidentally, the same proportion of those 65 and older in the state's general population. In fact, the Senior HIV Intervention Project in Fort Lauderdale states that women over 60 are their fastest growing risk group for HIV infection.

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### Why?

A Florida survey of seniors went on to discover that less than 20 per cent of older adults had ever had HIV testing and less than 25 per cent of men and almost none of the women used condoms. While health educators spend a lot of time talking with young adults about healthy sexuality and preventing risks, this information is just as important for those a few years older.

### What do you need to know?

Information, awareness and support are available from several sources.

- ◆ **Your local health unit** – Confidential consultations are available. Learn about STIs; how to test, treat and more importantly prevent them.
- ◆ **Your health care professional** – At your next routine exam ask to be tested for STI's. STI testing is not part of a routine check-up and an STI will not show up in blood or urine tests ordered for other purposes.
- ◆ **Your partner** – Talk to your new partner about STI testing and protection; some people may not have symptoms, so without testing they won't know they have an STI.
- ◆ **Yourself** – Practise telling your mirror "I use protection with my partner for three months and then we both get tested." Learn how to lube and use condoms. Buy a special wallet to store your condoms away from heat or light. Know how to find expiry dates and with your partner, practise donning and doffing a condom with the light on and off.

Above all, whatever your age or your situation, enjoy your sexuality safely.



# Avoid disaster during disasters

*Would you be ready if an emergency struck your town and affected your home?*

Would you have supplies to help you get through a lengthy power failure, or would you be ready to suddenly evacuate your home? Life can change in an instant, so it makes sense to be prepared. Here's how.

## Have a Plan

Have a written plan and make sure everyone in your family knows where it is and what their roles are in an emergency. Your plan should note where you will go in case of disaster. What if you're at work and the kids are at daycare? Who's responsible for grabbing the emergency kit? Your plan should include a list of emergency contacts. Reviewing your plan periodically will help your entire family stay calm and be prepared in an emergency.

## Have a Kit

Create emergency kits for your home and car. The kits should meet the needs of each family member including infants, elderly or those with special needs or disabilities. Make sure dietary needs, allergies, medications, and assistive devices such as hearing aids and canes are all accounted for.

## Food and Water

Select food your family likes and eats on a regular basis. Families with breastfeeding infants should continue breastfeeding during an emergency. For infants not currently breastfeeding, include a supply of infant formula within your kit (preferably ready-to-serve formula, since in emergencies, there may not be a guarantee of safe water supply for concentrate).

Your 7-to-10-day food and water kit should include:

- ◆ non-perishable food that does not need refrigeration,
- ◆ enough water for two litres of water per person per day, and two more litres per person per day for cooking or cleaning,
- ◆ light, unbreakable dishes,
- ◆ manual can opener and utensils.

Check expiry dates on food items – especially ready-to-serve infant formula – and remember to rotate and replace food at least once a year.



## Other Equipment and Supplies

- ◆ Flashlight
- ◆ Radio (battery-powered)
- ◆ Important documents (identification)
- ◆ Utensils
- ◆ Clothing & footwear
- ◆ Hygiene products
- ◆ Sleeping bag & blankets

## In your vehicle

A kit in your vehicle should include: bottled water, first aid kit, flares, flashlight, spare shoes (or winter boots if the season calls for it), and simple tools such as screwdriver, knife, pliers, rope and heavy tape.

## For your pets

Don't forget to include food and water for pets. Research pet policies at local motels or hotels and municipal evacuation shelters; have copies of all veterinarian vaccination records and have backup shelter plans with friends or neighbours.

You and your family can be confident you are ready if an emergency happens. But try to stay ahead of the game. You can get notifications through Ontario's Emergency Public Warning System and receive advisories through email or text messaging, or follow them on Twitter and Facebook. Check out their website at [www.emergencymanagementontario.ca](http://www.emergencymanagementontario.ca).

For more information on Emergency Preparedness visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).



# Family mealtime — a great start for your kids

*Spending time with your children and eating—both are high priorities and both can be done at the same time, at a family meal.*

Shared meals are an opportunity to be together: to share daily experiences, enjoy each other’s company and plan family activities. Eating together has nutritional perks for children as well. As parents, you are a role model most of the time, and mealtime is no exception. Because eating habits and food preferences are established early in life, getting into a routine of regular family meals as soon as possible makes great sense.

## Family meals...

Promote healthy eating and healthy weights

Children who eat meals with their family eat more balanced meals and a wider variety of foods. Family meals are linked with better food choices (more vegetables and fruit) and nutrient intakes (more vitamins and minerals, less saturated and trans fat) as well as healthier weights in children.

Create routines that strengthen family bonds

Children who eat meals at regular times with their family feel comforted and secure knowing when they will eat. Even if choices are limited, being together routinely makes a difference.

Provide an opportunity for learning about food

Parents are important role models whose behaviour around food helps children learn how to make and eat healthy food choices.

Carry on traditions

Eating together as a family allows for family and cultural traditions about food to be passed along.

## How to manage the challenges

Make a plan. Decide what your family will eat – for the day, or better yet, for the entire week. Make the plan, make the list and buy the foods you need in advance. Make meals that most family members will enjoy.



Keep it simple. Make quick and easy-to-prepare healthy meals. For links to healthy recipes, visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) and look for Recipes and Tips in the Healthy Eating Basics section.

Involve children in meal planning and preparation. Children who are involved are more likely to enjoy the meal and eat it.

For ideas on how to get your children involved, check out [www.eatrightontario.ca](http://www.eatrightontario.ca) and look for Cooking with Kids.

Put away the screens. Screens such as TVs, mobile phones, computers and video games can ‘undo’ the benefits of family mealtimes.

## With young children, have realistic expectations

- ◆ Make sure they’re hungry at mealtime. Avoid snacks within two hours of a meal (and that includes milk or juice).
- ◆ Spills are to be expected while they learn eating skills.
- ◆ A half-hour’s time limit will help you manage their short attention spans.
- ◆ Let children decide how much to eat and if they want to eat.
- ◆ Children thrive on routine. Try to establish a set time and routine for meals.

For more information on managing family meals, dealing with mealtime challenges, or have other child-related nutrition questions, visit [www.facebook.com/PlaytogetherGrowtogether](https://www.facebook.com/PlaytogetherGrowtogether).



# Clearing the air in your apartment

## *Working to make multi-unit housing smoke free*

If you have ever smelled tobacco smoke in an apartment or condo hallway, you can imagine what life is like for the non-smokers who live there.

In apartments in houses, townhouse units or co-ops, drifting second-hand smoke can enter living space through shared walls, cracks in floors and ceilings, hallways, ventilation systems and from balconies, doors and windows.

We know that exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of cancers, lung disease and many childhood illnesses. To reduce those risks, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act prohibits smoking in all indoor public and work spaces. In multi-unit dwellings this law covers hallways, laundry and common rooms. It doesn't cover the private living space behind closed doors.



## The no-smoking lease

It's up to the landlords or owners to make their building smoke free. It's legal and enforceable. The only stipulation is that any new smoking restrictions cannot be imposed on existing tenants living in the units. It can be added to a lease once the unit becomes vacant.

Local managers, including the Barrie Municipal Non-Profit Housing Corporation and many small building owners, have begun to include no-smoking clauses in new leases, making the buildings 100 per cent smoke free over time.

It's a win-win for everyone. It works to protect the health of tenants while protecting landlords' investments in their property. Some of the benefits for landlords include:

- ◆ **Lower repair and refurbishing costs** – Cleaning a smoker's unit can be two to three times more expensive than a smoke-free unit.
- ◆ **Reduced risk of fire** – Smoking materials and open flame (cigarettes, lighters and matches) are the number one cause of fatal residential fires. Landlords who have smoke-free policies not only reduce the risk of fire but may also be eligible for reduced insurance premiums.
- ◆ **Attractive to renters** – More than 70 per cent of Simcoe Muskoka adults 20 and over do not smoke. A smoke-free unit or building makes business sense.

## Getting started

Both tenants and landlords can take steps to clear the air in their units and buildings. Here are a few tips to get started.

### *Tenants*

- ◆ When renting or buying, specify you want to be in a smoke-free building.
- ◆ If you are being exposed to drifting secondhand smoke, suggest solutions to your landlord. Statistics show that more smokers are making their homes smoke free to protect their families.
- ◆ Check out our website at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) for links to resources to support your quest for smoke-free housing.

### *Landlords/Condo Owners*

- ◆ **Learn your rights** – You can include a no-smoking clause in leases or sales agreements, designate a building as smoke free, and move to become 100 per cent smoke free through attrition.
- ◆ **Advertise your smoke-free units to attract renters** – When selling ensure the real estate ad specifies a condo is smoke free or in a smoke-free building.
- ◆ **Check out** [www.smokefreehousingontario.ca](http://www.smokefreehousingontario.ca) for samples of leases, experiences elsewhere and other supports you can use to help make your property smoke free.

