Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Elementary Schools

Environmental Health

**Hot Weather Has Arrived!**

Help your child stay cool at school by giving them plenty of water and encouraging them to drink even if they’re not thirsty. Kids don’t sweat or release heat from their bodies as easily as adults, so they can become dehydrated quickly. Dress them in light weight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing and don’t forget to put sunscreen on before they leave home in the morning.

For more tips to help your family stay cool this summer, visit the health unit’s website at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/) or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

**Turn Off Your Car While you Wait**

Please turn your engine off when dropping off or picking up your child from school. Idling cars release exhaust that is harmful to the environment, our health and the health of our students. That’s why it’s also good to get into the habit of turning your car off any time you’re stopped and in park for more than 60 seconds. Thank you for doing your part to keep our kids and our environment healthy!

For more information on vehicle idling, visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

**Cold Weather**

Physical activity and fresh air are important in a child’s life. When we are experiencing extreme cold temperatures it’s important to plan ahead and listen to the weather forecast before sending children out to play or off to school for the day. Dress them in several layers of loose fitting clothing. Also, cover any exposed skin as frost bite can occur within 30 seconds. Keep children indoors if the temperature or wind chill falls below minus 27°C. Always be alert for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

For more information on extreme cold and ways to protect your children, visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

**Lyme and blacklegged ticks**

An infected blacklegged tick can spread Lyme disease bacteria to humans through a bite. Blacklegged ticks are often found in forests or overgrown areas where long grasses or leaf litter are present. After you or your children participate in outdoor activities in areas where ticks may be present, it is important to shower and check for ticks.

If you find a tick, use a pair of fine-tipped tweezers to carefully grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible. Pull it straight out, gently but firmly.

Don't squeeze it. Squeezing the tick can cause the Lyme disease agent (if it’s present) to be accidentally introduced into your body.

Don't put anything on the tick, or try to burn the tick off.

For more information on how to remove a tick, prevention tips and how to submit a tick for identification and testing visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or call *Health Connection* 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520

**West Nile virus (WNv) and mosquitoes**

By preventing mosquito bites – you can protect yourself and your family from WNv.

Remove sites on your property where mosquitoes can breed. Keep the lawn cut and empty any items in your yard with standing water such as old tires, pool covers, and bird baths.

Try to stay indoors when mosquitoes are most active (dusk to dawn). When you are outside, wear light-colored clothing, long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Use a mosquito repellent containing DEET or Icaridin and be sure to follow the manufacturer’s recommendations.

For more information on WNv and how to protect you and your family, visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or call *Health Connection* 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

**Safe Water**

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit along with the Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks work with the Simcoe Muskoka School Boards in their efforts to ensure children are protected from unnecessary exposure to lead from drinking water. All schools are required to flush their plumbing regularly and sample their water to test for lead. Samples must be collected at every tap that provides drinking water or is used to prepare food or drink for children under the age of 18.

Schools are required to test both standing (water that has been sitting in the distribution lines) and flushed water (water which has run through the lines). Flushing has been shown to reduce lead levels in water and is a recognized lead reduction strategy. If a school’s drinking water test result is above the provincial drinking water standard for lead, it is reported to the local Medical Officer of Health and the Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks to ensure corrective actions are carried out and the problem is resolved.

**Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Secondary Schools**

**Personal Safety and Injury Prevention - Environmental Health**

**Hot Weather Is Here!**

Keep cool this summer when the temperatures and humidity are high:

* Draw blinds/curtains to prevent radiant heat from entering the room
* Drink plenty of fluids (non-caffeinated) – even more than thirst indicates
* Dress in lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing
* Stay cool in the shade – and if possible, in an air-conditioned place
* Keep outdoor physical activity to an absolute minimum when temperatures are at their peak (between 11am and 4pm), or get physically active indoors in air conditioned facilities.

For more information about extreme heat and how to stay cool, visit the health unit’s website at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/) or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

**Turn Off Your Car**

Are you 16 and just got your license? Congratulations! As a new driver, make sure you don’t pick up on any bad habits that can affect you and our environment. Please turn your engine off when meeting friends at the mall, school parking lots, etc. Idling cars release exhaust that is harmful to the environment, your health and the health of your fellow students. That’s why it’s good to get into the habit of turning your car off any time you’re stopped and in park for more than 60 seconds. Thank you for doing your part to keeping our environment healthy!

For more information on idling and how to make your school an idle-free zone, visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

**Safe Water**

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit along with the Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks work with the Simcoe Muskoka School Boards in their efforts to ensure children are protected from unnecessary exposure to lead from drinking water. All schools are required to flush their plumbing regularly and sample their water to test for lead. Samples must be collected at every tap that provides drinking water or is used to prepare food or drink for children under the age of 18.

Schools are required to test both standing (water that has been sitting in the distribution lines) and flushed water (water which has run through the lines). Flushing has been shown to reduce lead levels in water and is a recognized lead reduction strategy. If a school’s drinking water test result is above the provincial drinking water standard for lead, it is reported to the local Medical Officer of Health and the Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks to ensure corrective actions are carried out and the problem is resolved.