

Niagara Region Public Health School Health Newsletter

May 2024

Vision Health Month

Visual health is an important part of a child's overall health and well-being. Proper vision is important for a child's movement and coordination, independence, play and learning. If left untreated, vision problems may become serious and prevent a child from reaching their full potential.



A yearly eye exam is **FREE** – the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) covers the cost of an eye exam every 12 months for children up to the age of 19 with a valid OHIP card. [Find an eye doctor near you.](#)

Also, contact an eye doctor if you see **ANY** of these signs:

- Squinting or holding objects close to the eyes
- One eye that turns out or in
- Blinking often
- Rubbing, tearing, itchy or burning eyes
- Turning or tilting the head to the side often
- Reporting blurry or double vision
- Covering or closing one eye
- Reporting headaches, nausea or eye strain

For more information on vision screening, please visit <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/schools/vision-screening.aspx>.

Mental Health Week 2024: A Call to be Kind

Showing compassion toward others can have a huge impact on someone's life. Mental Health Week in Canada runs from May 6 to 12, and this year's theme is focussed on the healing power of compassion. One of the most important ways that we can demonstrate compassion is through active listening without judgment. Actively listening can create a safe space for people to share their thoughts and feelings. You can do this by avoiding interrupting or dismissing their experiences.



Let's all learn to be more present, attentive, and empathetic.

- [Explore how compassion connects us all](#)
- [Learn to safely support someone struggling with their mental health](#)

#CompassionConnects #MentalHealthWeek

Dangerous Nicotine Product Accessible to Children and Youth: Nicotine Pouches

Local health experts are warning of the dangers posed to young people about new flavoured nicotine pouches. There are multiple brands (Zonnic, Zyn etc.) and concentrations of nicotine pouches currently available for purchase in Canada.

Although this product is not intended for those under 18, youth are becoming their main market. These products come in flavours such as berry frost and tropical breeze. Health Canada approved Zonnic last as a quit smoking aid under the country's natural health product regulations, with no restrictions on how it's advertised, where it's sold, or at what age someone can buy it. This means that these products are being sold in local convenience stores and gas stations to youth without any age verification and are found to be stored next to candy and gum.

What's the danger?

Nicotine is a highly toxic and powerfully addictive substance. Children and teenagers are at a higher risk due to the addictive properties of nicotine as brain develops into adulthood. Even using small amounts of nicotine may increase the risk of developing a dependence on nicotine in the future.



Please talk to your children about nicotine pouches and other nicotine products to discuss the risks associated with their use.

For more information about these products, visit: [Dangers of Nicotine Pouches - Canada.ca](https://www.healthcanada.ca/nicotine-pouches)



Educational Resources

ParticipACTION Community Challenge

Partake in [ParticipACTION Community Challenge](https://www.participation.com/programs/community-challenge/) June 1 – 30, 2024!

Participate in the challenge this June to get moving, connect with others and help students within the Niagara community get crowned Canada's Most Active Community!

What is the Community Challenge?

The ParticipACTION Community Challenge is a national [physical activity](#) and sport initiative that encourages everyone in Canada to get active throughout June in search of Canada's Most Active Community.

For more information visit <https://www.participation.com/programs/community-challenge/>



Mental Wellness Teaching Tools

Maintaining positive relationships with students within a caring school community that is safe, welcoming and inclusive contributes to students' social-emotional wellness and readiness to learn.



Visit our [school health teaching tools page](#) and check out 'Supporting mental wellness' dropdown

Elementary teaching tools	
Personal safety and injury prevention	+
Substance use, addictions and related behaviours	+
Human development and sexual health	+
Supporting mental wellness	+

These evidence-based resources focus on promoting positive mental health in classrooms by providing wellness tools that work to increase protective factors and resiliency.